
THE CYPRUS REVIEW

a journal of social, economic and political issues

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VOLUME 5
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Jeanette Choisi

The Turkish Cypriot Elite-Its Social Function and Legitimation 7

Michalis Michaelides

The Turkish Cypriot Working Class and the Cyprus Labour Movement 33

Niyazi Kizilyurek

From Traditionalism to Nationalism and Beyond 58

Maria Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis

Unofficial Intercommunal Contacts and their Contribution to Peace-Building in Conflict Societies: The Case of Cyprus 68

Christos Koliass

Greek Extended Deterrence: The Effects of the Cyprus Problem on Greek Defence 88

Plus Commentary Articles by:

Andreas Charalambous and Phedon Nicolaides 95

And Book Reviews of:

Cyprus Beyond the Nation,
by Niyazi Kizilyurek (Ploutis Servas) 109

Cyprus Yearbook 1992,
by Cyprus Research Centre KY.KE.M (Sofronis Sofroniou) 114

The Unbearable Patriotism of PFK,

argument: 'natural' nationalism (UK)
↓
'artificial' or 'externally' imposed
redirection (TC)

THE TURKISH CYPRIOT ELITE - ITS SOCIAL FUNCTION AND LEGITIMATION

Jeanette Choisi

Abstract

This paper examines the historical evolution of Turkish nationalism within the Turkish Cypriot community and the role that the British have played in its formation and development. It is argued that unlike Greek nationalism which developed early on and gained ground widely within the Greek-Cypriot Community, Turkish nationalism developed first as a result of personal ambitions and later on as a result of British encouragement in an effort to counter the Enosis movement.

This paper examines the development of Turkish nationalism in Cyprus in relation to the efforts of the Turkish Cypriot elite to maintain its authority and status on the one hand and of the British to maintain their colonial rule on the other. The paper is divided in four parts. The first part examines the conditions prevailing in Cyprus during the Ottoman colonization of the island. The second part examines the origins of the Kemalist opposition to the Ottoman regime and the way it has gradually led to the development of Turkish nationalism within the Turkish Cypriot community. The third part examines the collapse of traditionalism within the Turkish Cypriot community and the prevalence of nationalist Kemalists. It also draws some conclusions regarding the nature of the nationalistic movement which developed within the Turkish Cypriot community. Finally, the last section examines how Turkish nationalism, in alliance with British Colonialism, has faced off the Enosis movement during the 1950s.

The Ottoman Colonization of Cyprus

Cyprus became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1571.¹ At the time there were approximately 170,000 Greeks² living on the island. Shortly after the establishment of the Ottoman rule the High Gate began settling ex soldiers, farmers and craftsmen mainly from Anatolia aiming at stabilizing the economic and political situation on the island.³ This was deemed necessary, not only because the whole Frankish and Venetian upper class fell victims of the Ottoman war in Cyprus, but because the losses among the wider population seemed to be so high that the insufficient density of the population posed a major handicap to the new rulers in their effort to normalize the situation on the island.⁴

The Moslem settlers, who did not in all cases leave their homeland with their consent⁵ (see appendix), were distributed over the whole island in deserted villages and on expropriated property.⁶ They constituted, together with the Greek Cypriot farmers, the majority of the rural population. It should be noted that the ratio of moslems to the total population was in 1598 around 20%⁷, due to the conversion of Christians to moslems.⁸ Being the new upper class, the Ottoman military and bureaucracy elite as well as the Ulema, replaced the Frankish-Venetian Feudal rulers.⁹

The settlement of moslems, brought up a new element of national, cultural and social differentiation between the two communities.¹⁰ The complete demographic mix of both national groups in 1832 is presented in the following table:

Table 1: Demographic mix of both national communities in 1832

| Administrative District | Mixed Villages | Christian Villages | Moslem Villages | Total |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Morphou | 15 | 13 | 3 | 31 |
| 2. Lefka | 1 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| 3. Orini | 11 | 11 | 4 | 26 |
| 4. Kyrenia | 10 | 15 | 5 | 30 |
| 5. Kythrea | 16 | 13 | 6 | 35 |
| 6. Larnaca | 19 | 10 | 4 | 33 |
| 7. Mesaorea | 23 | 23 | 16 | 62 |
| 8. Chrysochou | 16 | 13 | 14 | 43 |
| 9. Paphos and Kouklia | 29 | 29 | 18 | 76 |
| 10. Limassol and Episkopi | 12 | 27 | 11 | 50 |
| 11. Kilani and Avdimou | 10 | 16 | 3 | 29 |
| 12. Karpasia and Famagusta | 10 | 22 | 7 | 39 |
| Total | 172 | 198 | 92 | 462 |
| Percent of Total | 37,23% | 42,86% | 19,91% | 100% ¹¹ |

However the village community, the extended family and the rural way of life were primary socialization factors that binded the two national groups together making their peaceful coexistence a reality.¹²

In 1914 the British annexed Cyprus with the treaty of Lausanne. As of 24 July 1923, Turkey had to give up all rights over the island so that "the pious and conservative Cypriot Moslems could no longer look for help or even guidance from Turkey".¹³

With the end of the Ottoman domination, the moslem elite lost its social legitimation and political power. The religious foundation (Evkaf) was "nationalized" by the British

and the colonial administration abolished the post of the Mufti.¹⁴ As a result, Islam lost any institutional authority which it could exert as a binding social force. The former rulers became the ruled. The Turkish Cypriot civil service elite became part of the British administration and was gradually anglicized.¹⁵

At the beginning of British colonial rule, the Turkish Cypriots lacked both a firm social structure and significant political influence. They became an unimportant minority¹⁶ in a society controlled by the Greek Cypriots. Unlike the Greek Cypriot upper class, which through the cultural and ideological binding to the 1828 founded Greek national state, could anchor a Greek identity feeling among the Greek-Cypriot population relatively early on, the Turkish Cypriot elite lacked a national state, upon which they could refer and through which they could win legitimation for enforcing a Turkish identity feeling. The Turkish Cypriot upper class managed to develop a Turkish nationalism later on with the establishment of a Turkish national state. The ideological-cultural dependence of both Cypriot ruling classes on the Greek and Turkish national states occurred as a result of Cyprus's constant domination by foreign powers which led to the belief that an independent, united state could not be set up at any time.¹⁷ The two nationally different elites came into existence due to the social and political changes taking place during the Ottoman domination and British colonialism. The two elites tried to win political and economic influence on the island. Within the Greek Cypriot upper class, the already existing cultural attachment to the Greek state developed soon to a Greek nationalism. This nationalism because of its dual function as a reinforcer of the threatened cultural identity and as an expression of an anti-British sentiment, managed to gain grounds within the larger Greek Cypriot population. The Turkish Cypriot elite had joined forces early on with the British colonial administration in an effort to overcome its unimportant social status. However, after 1924 as a reaction to the growing Greek nationalism Turkish nationalism developed. This was facilitated by the confrontation between the Greek national state on the one hand and the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish national state on the other.¹⁸ The British colonial strategy of "Divide et Impera" influenced the development of both nationalisms so that no common Cypriot nationalism could come into being.

The "Munir Bey Era" and the Kemalist Opposition

In contrast to the Greek Cypriot upper class, the moslem civil servants' elite, was afraid of losing its dominant position in the administration, and was thus skeptical at the beginning of the British takeover.¹⁹ However, after the British took over the island the Turkish Cypriot civil servants' original mistrust gradually passed away.²⁰ In fact Turkish Cypriots were treated favourably concerning new posts in the administration.

In the process of revising the structure of the Civil Service, the Turkish Cypriots were given posts in all institutions of the new administration, namely in the legislative and executive councils, in various national commissions (according to their population share of about 20%) and in district, town and village commissions (with a ratio as high

as 1 to 3). In 1919 over half of the members of the police force were Turkish Cypriots.²¹

Through the utilization of a social proportional representation system, the functioning of the colonial institutions was secured. This was achieved by placing loyal Turkish Cypriot representatives against Greek Cypriot representatives, who came relatively early on into conflict with the British colonial administration. The British, due to their political traditions, adhered to the maxim "no domination without democratic institutions". As a result, the British were dependent on the loyalty and the pro-British voting behavior of the Turkish-Cypriot representatives in order to retain the functioning of the "democratic" institutions necessary for securing the colonial administration.²²

This became especially evident by the political constellation in the Legislation Council. Together with the votes of the Turkish representatives, the British were almost always successful in ruling out the Greek Cypriot opposition and imposing British interests.²³ In this regard, the functioning of the colonial administration was almost exclusively dependent upon the good will of the Turkish Cypriots. The British were thus able to maintain their own "democratic principles" without adopting political institutions through the so called "Order in Council" - direct statutory decrees by the British crown superior to the decisions of the Legislative Council.²⁴ At the end of the 1920's the state of affairs in Cyprus was, in need of change. The former British Governor Storr and his deputy Nicholson formed proposals for constitutional changes.

Opposition to the British began emerging during the 1920s despite the fact that the greatest part of the Turkish Cypriot upper class followed political civil-servant careers and was allied with the colonial administration against the Enosis aspirations of the Greek Cypriot elite. The apparent loyalty to the British at the time was conditional. In secret, the Turkish-Cypriots demanded the return of the island to Turkey.²⁵ This is evident from a letter written by Turkish Cypriot Nejami Potamializade to the British king:

"I had emphasized the loyalty of the Moslems as one of the strongest arguments against the cession of Cyprus to Greece in my letters published in the New East on May 2 and July 11, 1919. (...) A leading article was published in a Turkish paper of Nicosia lately (15.12.1919), which I think is intended to destroy my (...) argument, and to lend assistance to the cause of the Greeks (...). I have the honor to send Your Excellency this letter of protest. (...) The persons who had met at Nicosia on December 11 and 12, 1918 were by no means the due representatives of the people. None of them had the credentials of the people authorising them to decide and act as their representatives in the way described in that article. (...) It was, therefore, a transgression that these persons should call their meeting "The National Assembly", and assume to represent the whole Moslem inhabitants of Cyprus. (...) Among the Moslems of Cyprus there may be a few which cannot be called loyal British subjects, but I hope there is no reason to ascribe this disloyalty to so many thousands."²⁶

Further in his writing, Potamializade criticized strongly the "one-sided Turkish

nationalism" of these circles, which understood themselves as "true patriots". He emphasized that a Turkish Cypriot could be "a good patriot" by showing his loyalty to the British, thus reinforcing the "traditional Turkish-British friendship".²⁷ Potamializade's views represented the ruling opinion of the Turkish Cypriot elite.

The formation of a more pro-Turkish national opposition, was the result of a number of external factors. Great Britain for example offered Cyprus to Greece on 18 October 1915, in order to win Greece's support for joining the war against the Central Powers. This offer led to serious uneasiness among the Turkish Cypriots even though Great Britain made it clear that she was going to sign a treaty with Greece for the protection of the Turkish Cypriot minority. The government in Athens, at the time, retained its neutrality in the war and thus rejected the British offer. Two years later, when Greece joined the war, on the side of the allies, the British felt no longer bound to the 1915 offer and thus Cyprus remained under British domination.²⁸ In spite of this "positive turnout," this offer was seen by the Turkish Cypriot elite as a serious threat and might have led part of the upper class to a break up of its unconditional loyalty to the British. Furthermore, a more Turkish, anti British attitude became intense after the victory of the Kemalist troops over the Greek army in the expedition of 1922. The British at that time had supported the Greek attack on Turkey under the excuse of "freeing the suppressed Greeks in Asia Minor".²⁹ Encouraged from this victory, the so called "Kemalian opposition" demanded the following reforms in 1922 from the British colonial administration:

(i) "The restoration of Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire, or, if this is not possible, the return to the status quo prevailing earlier, namely Cyprus being administered by Great Britain while officially remaining part of the Ottoman Empire.

(ii) The establishment of a Moslem Council, or Central Board, which would exercise control over the Sher' (Religious) Courts, Moslem Education, and the Department of Evkaf.

(iii) Opposition to the provision of any extended measures of self-government to the native inhabitants of the island."³⁰

However, according to the assessment of the British High Commissioner at the time, Malcolm Stevenson, these claims were only the "natural reaction" to the international situation and to the wish of the Greek Cypriot upper class for Enosis.³¹ The demand for the establishment of a Central Moslem Board, was the result of the need to create an institutional counterweight to the Greek Cypriot "Political Organisation" established in 1922.³² It also represented an attempt of the Kemalist circles to break up the political power of the Moslem-oriented notabilities.³³

This assessment by the British High Commissioner is evidenced by the conflict between the Mousa Irfan Bey, member of the Executive and Legislative Council and treasurer of the religious foundation Evkaf and Dr. Eyioub at that time, leading member of the Kemalist movement.³⁴ In a writing addressed to the British Minister of Colonies Duke of Devonshire, on 24.12.1922 Stevenson explains:

"The organiser of the petition, Dr Eyioub, who, it is believed, has the covert support of the Cadi of Cyprus and the Mufti, is actuated primarily by local political jealousy of Mousa Irfan Bey (...) whom he regards as too pro-British. Irfan Bey, who is a man of humble origin (...) had never swerved in his loyalty to the Government. Throughout the late war and recent crisis, his influence has sufficed to keep the Moslem population of the island quiet at times of acute national feeling, and has naturally acquired not a few enemies among those Turks of advanced ideas or fanatical tendencies. A movement seems to have been started (...) during the past six months which aims at exploiting the political situation in the Near East thereby discrediting Irfan Bey (...) As regards the several points of the petition, the request for a return to Turkey, or the status ante bellum, they are more of a reply to the reiterated demands of the Greek-Cypriots for Union with Greece than the considered expression of a desire for the discontinuance of the British administration in the Island (...). The proposal for the establishment of a Central Moslem Board is prompted by several considerations. It is to be a counterpoise to the 'National Council' (...) and it is to secure control of the finances of the Evkaf Department, at present time most ably administered by Irfan Bey and his British colleague. It will also strengthen the power of the Sher' (Religious) Courts in relation to the ordinary Civil Courts, and direct Moslem education on more national lines (...)"³⁵

Stevenson and the Colonial Office, saw no serious danger in the national oriented Turkish Cypriot opposition and rather regarded it as the outcome of personal and political rivalries. This assessment, even though in general terms may have been true, refutes the belief that the Turkish Cypriot elite held unconditional loyalty to the British. But to conclude that the political claims of equality by the Kemalist opposition have given rise to a Turkish nationalism, would be equally wrong as these were solely the result of personal rivalries.

The formation of the Kemalist opposition cannot only be explained by external factors and personal differences, but is also linked to measures taken by the British colonial administration, which conflicted with the interests of certain circles within the Turkish Cypriot elite.

The British had restructured the administration after the takeover of the island, so that the functions of the Kadis (the moslem judges), and the mufti, (the religious leader), were gradually taken over by state civil courts.³⁶ An exception was family affairs where, the moslem courts were under the control of the religious foundation (Evkaf).

Since the beginning of the British takeover of the island, the British had substituted the direct nomination of the mufti by the colonial administration for the election of the Mufti. In 1929 they had abolished the post of the Mufti altogether for a period of four years. The British also consolidated their control over the Turkish-Cypriot educational system by issuing law decrees aiming at reforming the educational system.³⁸

The colonial administration did not face any considerable resistance to these measures within the Turkish Cypriot community, as was the case with measures that it took against the Greek-Cypriot community. As it was indicated earlier, the majority

of the Turkish Cypriot community was pro-British and especially after the educational reform it had hoped for financial aid to raise the quality of its educational system and to increase its number of schools.³⁹

In 1928 the religious foundation (Evkaf) went over into the hands of the British on the initiation and expressed wish of its own representatives. In this sense the religious foundation became part of the state administration apparatus. Henceforth, the appointment, dismissal and payment of all Evkaf representatives including its director, were under the competence of the colonial government.⁴⁰ This decision was not approved however, by all Turkish Cypriot notabilities. Indeed, there was a tense and hard political battle concerning the Evkaf administration among the so-called "Kemalists" and "Moslems".

The Evkaf department represented the central institution of the Turkish Cypriots, and was responsible for the economic and social affairs of the community. Its representatives had the greatest political influence over the Turkish Cypriot community due to its members' financial means and social status.

The state takeover of the religious foundation, must be seen in relation to the economically miserable situation of the Turkish Cypriot community.⁴¹ That takeover and the provision of financial aid to the Evkaf was motivated by the wish of the British not to put at stake the loyalty of the Turkish Cypriot community, the "pillar" of the colonial domination apparatus. The need for financial aid was formulated three years earlier by the British High Commissioner Stevenson. In a writing on 6.1.1925 addressed to Amery, the minister of colonies mentions:

"I would observe in the first place that the contention put forward in paragraph 5 of their letter as to the improbable formation of Co-operative Credit Societies among the Moslem community is likely to be born out as a result of the lack of initiative and organizing power which is generally a characteristic of this community in Cyprus. (...) It is true that the strength, both political and financial, of the Moslem minority is slowly dwindling; its members are in many cases in the hand of Greek money lenders, and are powerless to help themselves. The seriousness of their position is in no way exaggerated by the Delegates of Evkaf. (...) The Evkaf Department has its agents in all parts of Cyprus and is exceptionally fitted to take the place which Co-operative Credit Societies play within the Greek-Cypriot Community. It has for many years, as stated by the Delegates, invested its surplus revenues in loans of the nature proposed and has experienced no difficulty in recovering the amounts due (...)"⁴²

Due to the social importance of the Evkaf Department as a central institution of the moslem community, the majority of the Turkish Cypriot farmers hoped that they would receive financial aid from that institution so as to overcome the dependence on Greek Cypriot money lenders. This attitude probably explains the absence of enthusiasm among the Turkish Cypriots concerning Co-operative Credit Societies. Another possible reason for the lack of interest in them is that the delegates of the Evkaf-Department did not want to give up their political and economic influence because by doing so, they would

lose the only socially acceptable institution legitimating their power.

The director of the Evkaf-Department, was at the time, Munir Bey, the most influential personality among the Turkish Cypriot community. Munir Bey was a British citizen and enjoyed the unlimited trust of the colonial administration.⁴³ The British administration itself stated that Sir Munir was endowed with the "mentality of an old Ottoman pasha" with "absolute power" over the Turkish Cypriots.⁴⁴

In 1930 Said Bey, a lawyer supporter of the Kemalist opposition, challenged legally Munir Bey's simultaneous function as director of the Evkaf Department and Delegate of the Legislative Council. His argument was that Munir Bey was a British civil servant (as the Evkaf-Department was under the control of the British administration) and because of constitutional clauses, Munir Bey was legally not allowed to hold an additional post as elected representative of the Turkish-Cypriot community.⁴⁵ Although, Said Bey might not have been completely wrong,⁴⁶ the fact that Sir Munir was 100 percent pro-British and indispensable for the "containment" of the anti-British Kemalist opposition, led to a favorable ruling for him.⁴⁷

In 1931, Munir Bey, was defeated in the elections for the legislative Council by Nejati Bey, the most prominent representative of the Kemalist opposition. This result was a cause of serious uneasiness for the British. The real reason behind the British uneasiness was the rejection of the Cypriot budget for 1931 by the Legislative Council. The rejection was achieved through the pro-Greek vote of Nejati Bey, the new Turkish Cypriot representative. That action practically suffused the voting statement and the colonial proportional representation system.⁴⁸ It made clear that the colonial equilibrium was not only precarious but also that the loyalty of the Turkish Cypriots towards the British colonial administration could not always be taken for granted.

This state of affairs becomes also evident from a statement by Ronald Storr who was very troubled with the breaking of the loyalty of the Turkish Cypriot elite. In a letter addressed to the British Minister of colonies Lord Passfield, Storr writes:

"The attitude of the Greek members, always disagreeable (...), has been ineffective for so long as the Government could rely on loyal Turkish cooperation. This cooperation is no longer available as the Greeks, having taken advantage of personal and party rivalries within the Turkish community, have managed to buy or otherwise persuade a recently elected Turkish non-entity, Nejati Bey, to vote with them, thus effectively blocking the passage of the Customs Bill, a Village Authorities Bill (...) and other measures. There is every reason to suppose that Nejati Bey can be counted upon for full participation in all steps to embarrass the Government.⁴⁹

Nejati Bey, constituted in the 1930's a representative of an anti-British, pro-Turkish, national opposition movement within the Turkish Cypriot elite.

After his defeat, Munir Bey attempted to use the wide network of people who were dependent upon him to eliminate his opponents. Using his relatives who had influential posts within the colonial administration, he attempted to pressure his opponents by spying on them and reporting them to the colonial government. Dr. Eiyoub, who was

highly indebted to the religious foundation and Munir, changed from a former Kemalist to a loyal supporter of Munir Bey. The influence of Munir becomes evident in a letter written by regional judge Raif Effendi, a supporter of Nejati Bey, addressed to the British minister of colonies Lord Passfield.

"I had explained to His Excellency then that Munir Bey and Fuad Bey - a judge and brother of Munir Bey's brother in law - are my only enemies and I told him how they had been trying for years to injure myself. I also explained to His Excellency that Munir Bey was, frankly, the most unpopular man among the Turks and that those who pretended loyalty to him were primarily persons owing money a) to the Evkaf Department, (b) to the Turkish savings bank and (c) the Turkish orphans trust fund. Munir was also supported by those seeking employment and generally all who had personal interests or ulterior motives. (...) I further brought to His Excellency's knowledge that Munir Bey was boasting that he is governing the colony, that he can appoint, dismiss and transfer public officers at will The public has come to believe with terror that he really has the power of omnipotence".⁵⁰

In spite of the growing unpopularity of Munir Bey, the British relied further on the "Ottoman pasha", due to the growth of the Kemalist opposition.

In March 1931, the British Governor Storr ascertained in a writing addressed to the Minister of Colonies Lord Passfield that "(Munir Bey) has become less popular because of his refusal to swim with the Kemalist tide now flowing as result of the work of the late Turkish Consul".⁵¹

The Turkish ambassador Assaf Bey was an influential opponent of Munir and an important representative of the Turkish Cypriot Kemalists. Assaf Bey was interested in the dissemination of Kemalist ideas within the Turkish Cypriot community. In 1930 the British colonial government attempted, in agreement with the colonial office, to bring about the recall of the Turkish consul. But the British Foreign Office was against such an intervention, so as not to unnecessarily burden British-Turkish relations.⁵² Assaf Bey retained his post and did not abate in any way his anti-British agitation.⁵³ The colonial administration further accused him of undermining the "traditional Turkish Cypriot loyalty" towards the British and of wanting to break up through propaganda the unity of the Turkish Cypriot community.⁵⁴ To this matter, British governor Ronald Storr explains in a writing addressed to the British minister of Colonies Passfield on 7-5-1930 the following:

"I have recently summoned the leading Moslems before me and referred to the disunion which is spreading among the Moslem population in the Colony, by those who wish for a Turkish political orientation (...). To my belief the Turkish Consul is largely responsible for anti-British agitation".⁵⁵

During the 1920s and 1930s thousands of Turkish Cypriots, tried illegally and under adventurous circumstances, to go to Turkey in search of a higher living standard and better professional prospects.

The emigration at the time was due to the propaganda of the Turkish Consul,⁵⁶

who had encouraged those who were dissatisfied to settle in the Kemalist "El Dorado."⁵⁷ Eventhough out of a total Turkish Cypriot population of 62.000 only 9.000 persons emigrated during the period between the two World Wars - from whom 5.000 permanently-the British were seriously worried about that emigration.⁵⁸ The colonial government was afraid that through the continuous decimation of the Turkish Cypriot community its political weight and thus the colonial backing of the British in Cyprus could wither away.⁵⁹

In order to contain this danger, the British censored and at times forbid the publication of the Turkish Cypriot newspaper "Soz" - organ of the Kemalists - and the Turkish magazine "Cumhuriyet", which was financed from Turkey through the Turkish Consul.

In spite of these efforts, the British colonial government was not successful in preventing the dissemination of Kemalist ideas. In schools for example, which until the end of the 1920s were religious oriented,⁶⁰ the new ideas of the Kemalist reformers were disseminated.⁶¹ During school celebrations nationalist speeches were given, busts and photographs of Ataturk were seen everywhere and the Turkish national holidays were celebrated.⁶²

The most important forum for the dissemination of Kemalist ideas and anti-British protests was the magazine "Soz", which was issued by Remzi Effendi, a Turkish citizen, and was financially supported by Assaf Bey.⁶³ In the middle of 1930, Assaf Bey tried to eliminate for good his opponent Sir Munir. Munir, who had good relations with political and religious personalities holding high governmental posts in the pre-Kemalist revolution Turkey, was accused of having formed an organization which planned and prepared the fall of the Kemalist regime in Turkey.⁶⁴ Munir Bey was subsequently officially accused by the official Turkish side of being hostile to the new republic.⁶⁵ In a writing on 31.3.1935 addressed to the British colonial administration, Munir Bey complained about these intrigues:

"The Turkish Republic is made to believe by certain persons in Cyprus that my family, my friends and myself are hostile to the Turks and against the Turkish Republic (...) The same people in Cyprus and the Turkish Government also consider that whoever is loyal to the British Government must be necessarily anti-Turkish".⁶⁶

In spite of the growing confrontation between "Kemalists" and "Ottomans" as well as the growing unpopularity of Munir Bey, the British did not let him disappear. For them the prevailing division within the Turkish Cypriot upper class was the outcome of personal rivalries.⁶⁷

The End of the "Munir Bey Era"

Munir Bey embodied in his person the old Ottoman regime and was a decisive opponent of the younger Kemalist generation of no "fez and veil". With the growing dissemination of Kemalist ideas within his community, Munir Bey became more and more unpopular. A younger, more technocratic and Kemalist-oriented generation strived

for higher governmental posts. Concerning this situation, the former governor Palmer expressed his view in a writing addressed to the British ambassador in Ankara, Percy Loraine:

" (...) They (the Turkish Cypriots) have, as you are aware, been traditionally loyal to the British administration for over half a century, but the young generation has been impressed by what they regard as the advance in civilization in Turkey and they have exhibited growing impatience with the shackles imposed by their religion and the control exercised by the Ulema. The Moslems as a whole are conservative in their outlook, but they have supported the Government".⁶⁸

Influenced by developments in Turkey, tensions between representatives of the older, religious dominated Ottoman empire and representatives of the newer, populist Kemalist Turkey arose also within the Turkish Cypriot community. The British acknowledged in the mid 1930s, that they could not rely solely on the moslem oriented notabilities in order to maintain the loyalty of the Turkish Cypriots. This political re-orientation became evident in 1935 when the colonial office criticized the one-sided support of Munir Bey:

"A good deal of the Kemalism among the Cypriot Turks is due to the personal unpopularity of Munir Bey. It is beginning to look doubtful whether the support which past Governments have given to that rather unsound person has been politically worthwhile".⁶⁹

The Kemalist opposition gained particular importance during the 1930s. In view of the repercussions of the world economic crisis, the growing economic superiority of the Greek Cypriot elite and of the growing demand for Enosis, the Kemalist opposition articulated the dissatisfaction of a part of the Turkish Cypriot upper class with the prevailing economic and social conditions. The colonial government assessed this situation as follows:

"Moslems have in fact reached a critical period in their history in the island (...) The traditional discipline of Islam in Cyprus is weak, and the older loyal generation is passing away. The difficulty of the Government to single out this community for the purpose of providing special assistance to it, is intensified by the inherent laziness of the Moslems and by the spirit of hopeless resignation to which economic decline over a long period had reduced an erstwhile governing class".⁷⁰

In October 1937, the British colonial government decided at least verbally, to fight through economic measures, the "despair and resignation" within the Turkish Cypriot community. The British governor Palmer on 17.8.1937 stressed in a writing addressed to the Minister of Colonies Ormsby-Gore the urgency of financial aid:

"I am much impressed by the importance of making the Moslems feel that the Government is taking adequate care of their interests and of inculcating in them a consciousness that under British Administration their community still has every prospect for maintaining a firm place in the economic and social outlook of the Colony. (...) It is my intention to take all

legitimate measures (....), to raise the position of the Moslem section of the Community and to prevent them from becoming (...) a depressed and impoverished minority".⁷¹

The British colonial government in order to prevent the Turkish Cypriot community from becoming a "depressed and impoverished minority" began supporting the Evkaf department with financial grants and with interest-free loans. The Evkaf however fell into serious financial difficulty due to the growing demand for economic and social aid, and thus was unable to fulfill its obligations.⁷²

Moreover, the whole economic development within the Turkish Cypriot Community stagnated. This was primarily the result of the unsatisfactory regulation of cooperative societies and the absence of a merchant class. The Turkish Cypriot farmers remained dependent mainly on Greek Cypriot money lenders and did not possess the necessary means for production raising investments. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot upper class maintained its civil servant function due to the political influence that it carried, so it also remained excluded from the economic prospering sectors, particularly from import and export trade.

The British tried, through the financial support of the Evkaf Department, not only to improve the economic situation of the Turkish Cypriots but also to contain the Kemalist opposition. The religious foundation maintained in all towns and villages in Cyprus cultural organizations, youth clubs and sports clubs, in which active anti-Kemalist and pro-British propaganda was carried out.⁷³ Its representatives through a targeted youth policy,⁷⁴ tried to uphold the position of Evkaf as the leading religious and political institution within the Turkish Cypriot community.

The British Governor Palmer assessed the value that the Evkaf department had for the Turkish Cypriot community in a letter addressed to the British Minister of Colonies Malcolm MacDonald in December 1938:

"Both in the temporal and spiritual spheres, Evkaf is regarded as the leader in the Moslem community. It is the sole institution which creates cohesion amongst the widely scattered Moslem minority (...). Moslems have used the Evkaf Department as a bulwark against the economic attacks of Christian merchants and moneylenders. (...) A strong Evkaf is essential to the well being of the Moslems of Cyprus. (...) The task of Evkaf has in the last decade been rendered more difficult by the growth of Kemalism in Turkey, the spirit of which has been inimical to the Islamic faith which Evkaf maintains. (...) Agitators have endeavored to make the position of Evkaf still weaker by direct Kemalist propaganda (...) and (...) by creating (...) the impression that the undoubted advantages of modernization and scientific education are associated solely with Kemalism."⁷⁵

It must be said however that the representatives of this movement, modified significantly their anti-British orientation in September 1938. On the eve of the Second World War, the relations between Turkey and Great Britain improved significantly in view of the fascist danger. The Turkish foreign minister Aras in a personal talk with the British ambassador in Ankara, Percy Lorraine, expressed the following decisive words about the Cypriot Kemalists:

"Every Kemalist was a friend of England; it was the settled policy of the Turkish Government and the expressed personal wish of Ataturk that he should be so.(....) If there were persons of Turkish race trying to create an atmosphere either of suspicion or hostility between the Government of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic, those were the enemies of the Kemalist Republic (....)."⁷⁶

The Turkish Foreign Minister also stressed that Turkey was interested in having friendly relations with the British colonial government and that there was no reason for interfering in the British-Cyprus affairs, because Kemalist Turkey was aware of the "liberal orientation of the colonial administration."⁷⁷

With the motto "a true Kemalist was, is and will never cease to be anti-British" the anti-British feelings of the Turkish Cypriot Kemalists were bluntly brought to an end by the Turkish government. The reformers stressed their unconditional loyalty towards the British administration, without which they would lose every national, political and cultural backing by Turkey.⁷⁸

The alliance of the Turkish Cypriot elite with the British was in large part, due to the absence of a Turkish Cypriot middle class. The existence of a middle class could have been a source of anti-colonial nationalism, -as was the case in various emancipation movements in numerous colonies. However in the case of Cyprus, the built-up of a Turkish Cypriot middle class was not possible because of the socio-political structure of the Ottoman empire and the influence of British colonialism. Whereas within the Greek Cypriot community a wide business middle class arose as a result of socio-economic changes, the Turkish Cypriot middle class remained limited in numbers and restrained in its civil service function. It was, therefore, entirely dependent on the British Colonial government for promotion opportunities. Because of the economic dominance of the Greek Cypriot elite, on the one hand- which controlled the prosperous trade sector - and the lack of economic mobility within the Turkish Cypriot society on the other, no middle class could evolve and hence no "autonomous" nationalism could develop. The formation of the Kemalist opposition within the Turkish Cypriot elite should be seen within this background. Influenced by political, social and cultural upheavals in Turkey, a tense conflict between representatives of the old, moslem order and representatives of the new Kemalist principles developed in Cyprus.

The Kemalist movement in Cyprus embodied above all the idea of opposing the influence of the ruling notabilities and their British protectors. It was therefore, not an emancipatory movement in the conventional sense. Its objective was not to overcome colonial domination in order to set up an independent national state. Rather, it was simply a movement by part of the Turkish Cypriot elite, to thrust aside the moslem oriented notabilities, and obtain influential posts. Because the Kemalist opposition faced difficulties in its social and political development, due to the close network of cliental dependencies created among the traditional Turkish Cypriot elite, it tried through an ideological binding to the new Turkish national state, to limit the influence and power of the ruling traditionalists.

In the 1930s the character of the Kemalist opposition began to change. The embodiment of the Enosis ideology among wide parts of the Greek Cypriot population helped the formation of a Turkish nationalism. Strengthened by the consolidation of the Turkish national state and by the improved relations between Great Britain and Turkey, the influence of the Turkish Cypriot Kemalists grew. Up to the end of the 1920s the British saw no serious danger arising from Turkish nationalism because, according to their assessment, its anti-colonial and nationalistic orientation was fed by personal rivalries. Because of growing economic difficulties at the beginning of the 1930s and because of the growth of communist as well as unionist, anti-British opposition, the loyalty and the unity of the Turkish Cypriot elite won greater political importance for the maintenance of British rule. The danger of cooperation of parts of the Turkish Cypriot elite with anti-British forces within the Greek-Cypriot community could have posed a serious danger to the colonial government. The rejection of the budget in 1931 through the majority of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot votes had been for the British a first sign of such a dangerous trend.

The threat of a common "national cooperation" of Greek and Turkish Cypriots had to be avoided at all costs, if the "colonial peace" in Cyprus was to be retained. It was this fear, and not the October 1931 tumults - as it is usually held in the literature on Cyprus - that led the British to put aside the constitution and rule the island via emergency laws until the end of their domination. The October tumults were solely the suitable occasion which the British waited for long, in order to abolish the controversial constitution.

The colonial government tried also to strengthen the position of the traditional, moslem part of the Turkish Cypriot elite by providing financial aid to the Evkaf Department. From the point of view of the British, the threat of a joint ethnic anti-colonial front was facilitated also by the tactical political rapprochement between Greece and Turkey in those years, as indicated by the efforts of the Greek prime minister Venizelos and Kemal Ataturk. In a writing on 24 June 1938, addressed to the Minister of Colonies MacDonald, the British Governor Palmer expressed his own view regarding the situation:

"A recent and more serious aspect of the Turkish nationalistic movement has supervened in the form of a tendency for "Enosis" and Kemalism to make a common cause. (...) There is essentially no community of interest or purpose between the Greek and the Turkish speaking elements in Cyprus and, as you are aware, it was for many years only through the support of the Moslem members of the Legislative Council in the days when that body existed - that the Government was enabled to overcome the continuous and solid resistance of the Orthodox opposition. The fundamental difference of outlook and temperament which divides the Moslem and Greek Orthodox Communities is unlikely to lead to a permanent political partnership. But a marriage of expediency, engineered by those whose antagonism to Government is strong enough to overbear any too nice scruples of race and religion might constitute a serious embarrassment."⁷⁹

It is evident from this assessment that the colonial government was afraid of a common Cypriot nationalism. If such a Cypriot nationalism were supported by parts of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot elite, it would have probably found wide support among the Cypriot population, because of the historical and social binding factors created over the years among Moslems and Christians. This danger had to be averted by the British under all circumstances.⁸⁰

The beginning of the 1930s marks the only period in the Cypriot history, where a realistic chance to overcome the artificial division of Cypriot society existed.

But neither the Kemalist opposition, which in 1938 became a loyal object of the British administration, nor the Greek Cypriot communists who failed in their efforts to gain solidarity with the Turkish Cypriots (by exhibiting indifference to the Enosis movement), were successful in overcoming the social gap. To the contrary, because of the social, political and economic developments within Cyprus, the struggle for power between the two ethnic elites was intensified and manifested as a conflict between nationalities. The bloody conflicts between EOKA and TMT on the eve of independence are indicative.

Within both ethnic communities, the elites were successful in preventing the formation of a common Cypriot nationalism by managing to create an ideological binding of their respective communities to the Greek and Turkish national state.

The Restoration of the Turkish Cypriot Loyalty to the British and the Development of a Turkish Nationalism

After the Kemalist circles in 1938 assured the British of their colonial loyalty, the development of a common anti-British struggle, the only possible basis for a united Cypriot nationalism, was successfully prevented.

Subsequently, the cultural, ideological, economic and political efforts of the Turkish Cypriot elite to become a political factor were more or less facilitated by the British, who viewed a strong Turkish Cypriot community as essential for securing the rule of the colonial administration.

In 1943, KATAK (Cyprus Turkish Minority Association), the first large national organisation of the Turkish Cypriot leading class, was created.⁸¹ That was the time when the municipal elections in Nicosia were to be held. Shortly before the election, the representatives of two political groups, joined forces. These were the "Popular Party" whose most prominent members were Dr. Fazil Kucuk, Necmi Avkiran, Hassan Usman and Sukru Veysin and the "Advocate Fadil Party", whose most prominent members were Fadil Korkut, Nekati Ozkan, Dr Pertev Zuhtu and Mehmet Rustem. The two parties together managed to elect four municipal members: F. Kucuk, N. Ozken, S. Veysi and N. Avikan. After their election on 18.4.1943, they formed, in the presence of 76 Turkish Cypriot personalities (including Sir Munir), the KATAK (Kibris Adasi Turk Asinligi Kuruma).⁸² The KATAK was created with the permission of the colonial administration. It became one of the central forces, which demanded the maintenance

of the status quo (i.e., the maintenance of British rule), as an alternative to Enosis.⁸³

A year after its formation, KATAK was split due to personal differences of some of its prominent members. Fazil Kucuk left thereupon the KATAK and formed in 1944 the Turkish Cypriot National Popular Party (KTMHP - Kibris Turk Mili Halk Partisi).⁸⁴ Necati Ozkan and Irfan Husseyin became the new presidents of KATAK.⁸⁵

In 1945, the KATAK tried to bring together different groups of Turkish Cypriots under an umbrella organisation. These groups included, in addition to the KTMHP and KATAK, several workers' associations, as well as farmers', teachers' and sports unions.⁸⁶ On 23.12.1945, all of these political groups with the exception of the teachers' association, formed the Kibris Turk Kurumlari Birligi, the Turkish Cypriot Organization Union.⁸⁷ The organization demanded among other things the free election of the Mufti and of the Evkaf representatives. It also opposed the Enosis Movement. Two years later the union was disbanded due to personal rivalries.⁸⁸

Due to the indifferent attitude of the Greek Cypriot Trade Unions Federation, PEO towards Enosis, the first Turkish Cypriot trade union was founded on 1.8.1945. Beginning October 1947, the first communist and Turkish national oriented magazine "The Way of the Workers Never Makes a Mistake" appeared. The editor was Hasan Casmaz, the only progressive labour leader in the Consultative Assembly.⁸⁹ In the summer of 1948, the Turkish Cypriot trade union movement signed with PEO a treaty of mutual cooperation. In November 1952, PEO reorganized its Turkish Cypriot department. Its new president was now Ahmet Erkurt.⁹⁰ The department had been closed since 1944 when Mustafa Bitirim held the post. In a pamphlet titled "The First Front" Bitirim criticized very sharply the Turkish Cypriot upper class and representatives of KATAK. Bitirim accused them of corruption and nepotism. He also argued that the Turkish Cypriot elite would "preferably waste its money in women and gambling instead of promoting the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community."⁹¹

Another daily newspaper "The Worker"-brought to life on 19.5.1948 during the mine workers' strike - also criticized the conservative political elite and media for refusing to cover the actions of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers.⁹² In its 21.5.1948 edition, "The Worker" condemned the policy of Kucuk and Denktash, who at the time was the Turkish Cypriot representative in the Consultative Assembly. Both, it argued, represented not the interests of the Turkish Cypriot community but their own.⁹³

On 28.11.1948, the first Turkish Cypriot rally in Nicosia was held. Under the slogan "Autonomy Means Enslaving" and "Enosis Means Death" thousands demonstrated for the maintenance of colonial rule. Representatives of political unions demanded that if the British left Cyprus, the island ought to have been given back to Turkey.⁹⁴

In 1949 Necati Ozkan succeeded finally to win the seat of Munir Bey in the Evkaf elections. Ozkan formed a short time afterwards, the strong anticommunist Istiglal Party (Liberation Party). He also edited until 1959 a newspaper with the same name. Ozkan denounced the corruption and personal enrichment of leading conservative politicians, including Denktash and Kucuk.⁹⁵

All these political groupings, whether they were left or conservative, had something in common; they demanded the maintenance of the colonial status for the island. The conservative and progressive forces of the Turkish Cypriot society were linked together, despite their differences, as a result of Turkish nationalism. Even though there were ideological differences involved, the essence of that nationalism was its opposition to the Enosis movement and its effort to upgrade the status of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Towards this end, British governor Lord Winster created in 1948 the "Committee for Turkish Affairs" a body representing all matters of interest to the Turkish Cypriot community vis-a-vis the colonial administration. Members of this committee were notabilities, judges, lawyers and moslem high officials. Rauf Denktash, also belonged to this committee. Zekia Bey, a Turkish Cypriot judge, became president of the committee.

In his new post, the latter denounced the bad educational situation of his community and emphatically requested that the British improve the situation. In his words,

"It is the case that opportunities for Turkish education in Cyprus are limited, not so much by any failure of the Government to allocate a fair share of its funds to the purpose, but because of the comparative poverty of local Turks and their inability to finance higher education. (...) Moreover, the avenues of advancement available locally to Turks, even educated ones, are restricted and it must be added that for a generation, even these avenues have tended to be blocked by the jealousies of Sir Mehmet Munir."⁹⁶

Faced with external and internal pressures, the British found themselves forced to support the Turkish Cypriot community in every area. Thus, more British money flew in the educational system and by 1948 all Turkish Cypriot secondary schools were financed by the British. Turkey was also involved in these measures. With the explicit permission and even encouragement of the British, the money of the Turkish education ministry was not given directly to the schools concerned or to the colonial government, but rather was forwarded through the "Turkish Cypriot Association" in Istanbul to the "Turkish Cultural Association" in Cyprus. The British were rightly concerned, that a too obvious cooperation with official Turkish authorities would release strong protests by the Greek Cypriots.⁹⁷

In the same year, the post of the Mufti which was abolished in 1925 was reintroduced by the British.⁹⁸ With the appointment of the Mufti, who was to be chosen by a Turkish Cypriot representative in the name of the colonial government, the British intended to involve Turkey in the appointment process. Governor Wright received to that purpose, the following directive from London:

"We should be tacitly recognizing the right of the Turkish Government to possess some status in the internal affairs of the Cypriot Turkish community. Even if selection was nominally carried out by our Ambassador in Ankara, it seems unavoidable that the Turkish Government would in practice have the major vote."⁹⁹

It thus becomes evident that the British conceded the right to Turkey, and even encouraged it, to intervene actively in the internal affairs of the island as an advocate of the Turkish Cypriot community. Thus in 1948, the colonial government attempted to anchor the conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriot elites as a regional issue in order to exercise influence on the island following independence. According to the prevailing view, the regional anchor of the conflict was first initiated in 1956, as the British suggested to the Turkish government that it should insist on the TAKSIM demand as was agreed secretly previously.¹⁰⁰ With the inclusion of Turkey in the internal political conflict in Cyprus, the British gained an important ally against the Greek Cypriot elite and the government in Athens, which in the 1950s pursued the "Cypriot case" on a regional and international level.¹⁰¹ They also managed to strengthen the Turkish Cypriot elite in order to face effectively the Greek Cypriot Enosis movement.

In order to strengthen the pro-British element of the Turkish Cypriot nationalism - the leftist Turkish Cypriot groupings were excluded from the TMT during the mid 1950's. The colonial government satisfied finally the repeated demand of the Committee for Turkish Affairs for the free election of the Mufti;¹⁰²

However, the conflicts for the election of the Mufti which arose subsequently, illustrate that the division of the Turkish Cypriot elite in reformers and traditionalists - both now pro-British, -had not yet been overcome. In 1951 the British resorted again to the appointment of the Mufti. More specifically, they appointed the aged Yakup Celal Menzilcioyly in agreement with the Turkish government. They believed to have found in him a person, who would restrict himself solely to religious matters. This was important for the British since they did not want, under any circumstances, to give the impression that they had appointed the Mufti with the intention of creating a political counterweight to the Greek Orthodox ethnic leader.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, as the Mufti issued a Fetwa shortly after his appointment, in which he laid down the introduction of the arabic language by Ezan, he became the centre of strong political conflict between reformers and traditionalists.¹⁰⁴ Due to these events and public pressure, Menzilcioyly resigned from his post a couple of months later.¹⁰⁵ The British also ceased to support him because such support did not please the majority of the Turkish Cypriot elite:

"The (...) Mufti was a very old man brought up under the anachronistic regime of the Sultans and therefore was a fanatic opponent of the revolutions of Kemal which were voluntarily adopted by the Turks of Cyprus.¹⁰⁶

In the election of the Mufti in 1954, the winner was supported by the National Popular Party, because he stood emphatically for the disintegration of the Evkaf Department and for the takeover of its administration by Turkish Cypriot institutions.¹⁰⁷ Because of the election results and as a result of pressure by the KTMHP (which after 1955 renamed itself into "Cyprus is Turkish Party"), the Committee of Turkish Affairs and the Cyprus Turkish Minority Association (KATAK), the British approved in 1955, despite the protest of the conservative Evkaf-representatives, the demand for an independent administration of the religious foundation. The disintegration of the Evkaf-Department

as part of the colonial administration, was carried out in order to obtain the loyalty of the Turkish Cypriot community.¹⁰⁸ For the administration of the religious foundation, a "High Council" was created. The Mufti, an appointed president and 15 elected members could belong to that council.¹⁰⁰ An "Executive Council" was also assigned to this body for the execution and control of its decisions. Dr. Kucuk became the first president of the High Council. Among the members of the Executive Council were F. Kaimak, O. Orek and A. Berberoglou, leading political personalities of the new Turkish national movement.¹¹⁰

In a writing by R. Armitage to the Colonial Office on 31.5.1955 the motives of the colonial government's decision were identified:

"The Evkaf office is now being reorganized and many of the old employees, who are well over age and should have retired long ago, (...) are now being pensioned off. (...) It will be seen that the Government and the Governor are virtually removed from having any control over Evkaf affairs. (...) On the one hand, there is certainly the overwhelming clamor from the politicians and the press that the administration of Evkaf should be handed over unconditionally to the Turkish community. On the other hand, there is undoubted criticism by the politicians of the older and more conservative elements in the community who think that the Governor should continue to exercise some control over the affairs of the Evkaf. (...) I am convinced that to remove the administration of the Evkaf as a bone of contention between the Government and the Turkish community, will fully outweigh the criticism that will probably appear from time to time (...)."

In this way the British had taken a decisive step since the mid-1940s opening up the political and ideological build-up of the Turkish Cypriot elite as an effective force against the Greek-Cypriot Enosis opposition.

Conclusion

Whereas the Greek Cypriot elite succeeded already in the 1930s to anchor its pan-Greek ideology among wide parts of the population due to the cultural and political menace imposed by the colonial government, the ideological turn to Turkey remained to a large extent restricted to the Turkish Cypriot elite within the Turkish Cypriot community. Its national "awakening" occurred not as a reaction to British colonialism, but as an anti-Greek opposition encouraged by the British. Nationalism was first anchored among the Turkish Cypriot community in 1955 as EOKA began its struggle and as Greek nationalism took a more and more anti-Turkish character. The armed conflicts between Greek Cypriots and the colonial government and between the two communities were the peak of the interethnic elite conflict on the eve of independence.

By the order of Selim II the aims of the colonization measures were formulated as follows in September, 1572:

1. In view of the report of the Beylerbey of Cyprus, Sihan, according to which many fertile regions on the island were devastated during the war it seems necessary to colonize the villages and the towns, in order to return to the preceding prosperity of the island. Thanks to the presence of troops, the island enjoys now great security.

2. From all villages and towns residents should be sent to Cyprus in a ratio of one head out of every ten. They should bring with them their tools and farming instruments and they should travel to the island under guard. After their settlement they should be exempted from the tenth and all other taxes.

3. The settlers should be chosen from every municipality according to their social status and their profession. The following kinds of settlers were found as suitable for the colonization: the ones who were not able to look after themselves; those who worked on stony and fruitless ground, those who were robbers or known for their bad behavior; those who had not registered themselves and their sons in the their province; the ones who immigrated from other areas; the ones who did not possess anything and who worked in fields for wages; the ones who had for a long time standing claims on pastureland, vineyards, orchards, and fields; farmers who emigrated to the towns and who left their land; unemployed persons in towns and villages, who had given themselves to vagrancy and finally, craftsmen of all sort, who could exercise their craft in towns or anywhere else (....).

4. After receiving this order the appropriate measures for its execution should be taken. In the first place one family out of ten families should be chosen, with people, who were above described as robbers, dishonest, disposed, profiteers or farmers in a standing legal dispute. In the case that these persons should possess any property, this should be sold and the collected money should be given to them. In the second place one out of ten persons should be selected among the above described craftsmen and workers. They must be in a good physical condition in order to be able to work.

5. The names of the emigrants, their profession and their origin should be held in a register, as well as the tools to be taken with them, and copies of these should be sent to the Gate and to Beylerbey from Cyprus for control purposes (.....).

6. Every attempt to make money or to hinder the resettlement should be heavily punished. The authorities are instructed to encourage with all means the emigration to the island.

1. See H.J. Salih, 1968, p.p. 4-22.
2. U. Heide, 1980, p. 34.
3. Ibidem, p. 33 ff.
4. T. Papadopoulos, : Social and Historical Data on population (1570-1881), Nicosia, 1965, p.19, see also: U. Heide, 1980, p. 33.
5. Ibidem p. 21f and p33f. Also cited in: U. Heide, 1980, p.p.35-37 (see appendix). Papadopoulos (1965) mentions that only around 30% of the reported persons followed the order voluntarily.
6. H.J., Salin, 1968, p.15.
8. Conversion of Christians to Islam at the time can be explained in the first place by various tax easements. See also : D. Jenres, 1962, p.p. 54-118 and C.P. Kyrris, 1977 p. 9ff.
7. T. Papadopoulos, 1965, p. 33f. Also cited in: U. Heide, 1980, p. 37.
9. S. Panteli: The Making of Modern Cyprus, New Barnet 1990, S. 34ff.
10. Kadritake, N.; W., Wahner, 1976, p. 14ff.
11. T. Papadopoulos, 1962, p. 213; Also cited in: U. Heide, 1980, p. 43. Here the earliest census to be used had to be the one from 1832, because immediately after the moslem occupation there were no statistical data. Heide mentions regarding the validity of this statistic, that in travel reports the attention is repeatedly drawn to the demographic mix. It can thus be assumed that during three centuries of continuous moslem rule no major changes had occurred.
See also: C.P. Kyrris, 1977, p. 6f.
12. M., Attalides, Ed.; Cyprus Reviewed, Nicosia 1977, p. 71ff.
13. Beckingham, C.F.; Islam and Turkish Nationalism in Cuprus, In: Die Wel ds Islam, Vol. 5, Leiden 1957, p.72.
14. The sunnits were not disposed, unlike the Schirts, to any organized «priesthood».
15. Beckingham, C.F. 1957, p. 72.
16. Ibidem, p. 72.
17. Ch. Yiallourides, : Minderheitenschut and Vollcsgruppenrecht in Zoten Jhrhundert unter besodererBeruchsichtigims der Verhaltrisse auf Zypern. Bochum 1981, p. 215.
18. J. Choisi, 1987, p. 25ff.
19. U. Heide, 1980, P. 72
20. Ibidem p. 73.
21. M. Attalides, 1979, p. 41.
22. CO67/239/14-143441, Storrs te Passfield, 4.6.1931.

23. C.P. Kyrris, 1977 p. 44f.
24. Ibidem. p. 46.
25. CO 67/194-144902, G. Spicer (FOR) Under secretary of State (CO), 6.6.1919.
26. CO 67196-144902, N. Potamializade to Major Clensen, forwarded to the British King. 26.12.1919.
27. Ibidem.
28. L. Dischler, 1960, p. 15.
29. M. Attalides, 1979 p. 44.
30. CO 67/208-144977; FOR 371/9134 - XL 146076 Stevenson to the Duke of Devonshir, 24.12.1992.
31. Ibidem.
32. See Choisi, J: Wurzedn and Struktues des Zypernkonfliktes 1878bis 1990. Stuttgurt 1993, p.p. 95-100.
33. CO 67/208-144977; FOR 371/9139 - XL 146076, Stevenson to the Duke of Devonshire, from 24.12.1922.
34. Eyioub who was indebted to the religious foundation and thus fell into dependency on Munir Bey, the Evkaf-director, becomes later on a decisive opponent of the kemalists. In a political report of the British colonial administration, CO 67/233/ IN XL 143355 in 1926, p. 4.
35. CO67/208-14977; CO 371/9139-XL 14076, Stevenson to the Duke of Devonshire, 24.12.1922.
36. H.J. Salih, 1968, p. 15 and 26ff.
37. CO 926/118-XL144688, News agency report (MORE HW1728), to the first election of the Mufti since 1929; 13.12.1954 M. Attalides, 1979 p. 42.
38. See C.P. Kyrris,: I Tourkokypriaki Ekpaideusi (1850-1905) me Anafora stin Ekpaideusi tis Ellinikis Koinotitas tis Kyprou. Ed.: Kentron Meleton Ieras Monis Kykkou, Nicosia 1990.
39. M. Attalides, 1979 p. 42ff.
40. CO 67/226/5, Memorandum prepared by the Delegates of Evkaf showing the basis for regulations to be framed under the Cyprus Evkaf, 27.7.1928.
41. CO 67/301/9-144239, Palmer to Malcolm MacDonald, 3.12.1938.
42. CO 67/214-144977, Stevenson to Amerg, 6.1.1925.
43. CO 67/262/2-90571 CO-report, 1.5.1935.
44. CO 67/247/13-143643, 1932.
45. CO 67/235/13-143509, Said Bey to Storr, 21.4.1930.
46. Ibidem.
47. CO 67/235/13-143509, Henniker - Heaton to Passfield, 25.6.1930.
48. Kyrris, C.P. 1977 p. 44f.

49. CO 67/239/14-143441, Storrs to Passfield, 4.6.1931.
50. CO 67/238/11-143509, Raif Effendi to Passfield, 28.2.1931.
51. CO 67/238/11-143509, Storr to Passfield, 12.3.1931.
52. FO 371/14584-XC 146076 CO - Minutes, 11.6.1930.
53. CO 67/262/2-90571 Palmer to Cuncliffe, Lister, 3.5.1935. It is also in testing in this connection the attempt of the Turkish consul - similar to the one of the Greek consul, to move the embassy from Larnaca to Nicosia, in the centre of political activities.
54. FO 371/14584 - XC 146076 Henniker - Heaton to H.R. Cowell (CO), 20.8.1930.
55. FO 371/14584 - XC 146076, Storr to Passfield, 7.5.1930.
56. CO67/274/5 - 144052, Political situation in Cyprus from the 1st July to 31st October 1937; See also: M. Attalides, 1979 p. 44.
57. FO 371/21935-146129, Palmer to Loraine, 30.6.1938.
58. Ibidem; FOR 371/17963 - XL1460676, Palmer to Loraine, 11.4.1934.
59. Ibidem.
60. M. Attalides, 1979, p.42; CO 67/247/6, Annual Report 1932 In 1928 the Latin alphabet was introduced in the Turkish Cypriot schools.
61. CO 67/247/6, Annual Report 1932; CO 67/252/15. 20.12.1934. Teki Effendi requested that the colonial administration reappointment him as director of the Turkish-Cypriot primary schools of Paphos. He was dismissed however by the British because of his Kemalist agitation in the school and his membership in the so called "Turkish National Congress".
62. CO 67/287/9 - 194197 Potamializade to Palmer/ 9.9.1937.
63. CO 67/262/2-14385, Palmer to Cuncliffe - Lister, 10.4.1935. CO 67/278/5 - 144052 Suspension of the Turkish newspaper SOF, 1937. An article from SOF on 17.8.1937 expresses the view that «the Turkish Cypriots are prisoners of the British rule in the Turkish motherland».
64. Ibidem.
65. CO67/262/2-1430851, 1935. Bey Muniz to the colonial Secretary.
66. Ibidem.
67. CO 67/262/2-14385, Palmer to Cuncliffe - Lister, 10.4.1935.
68. FOR 4371/17963 - XL 146076, Palmer to Loraine Writing, 11.4.1934.
69. CO 67/262/2 - 90571, Dawe - report (CO), 1.5.1935.
70. CO 67/274/5 - 144052, Political situation in Cyprus from the 1st July to 31st October 1937.
71. CO 67/281/14 - 144143 Palmer to Ormsby-Gore, 17.8.1937.
72. The Evkaf Department was responsible for:
 - The repair and renovation of schools, mosques, houses of the teachers, cemetery

walls, historical monuments etc.

- The financial support of schools, Only fro the moslem lyceum in Nicosia 900 pounds sterling were spent yearly.

- Extension of the road network and of the water supply.

- Contributions and social support in all areas.

73. CO367/301/9 - 144239, Palmer to McDonald, 3.12.1938.

74. Ibidem.

75. Ibidem.

76. 1908371/21935 - 146129, Loraine to Palmer, 1938.

77. Ibidem.

78. Ibidem.

79. FO371/21935 - 146129, Palmer to MacDonald, 24.6.1938.

80. The danger of a common Cypriot nationalism and of a common anti-British struggle becomes evident in: CO 67 291/3 - 144197, Palmer to MacDonald, 15.3.1940;

FO371/24912-14629, Batterschill to MacDonald, 15.3.1940. To the friendly coexistence of the majority of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot population and their everyday relations see: M. Attalides, 1979 p.p. 80-103; C.P. Kyrris, 1977; C.P. Kyrris, 1976.

81. H. Gurken,: Once Upon a Time: Cyprus, Nicosia 1986, p.128.ff. Cited from Ahmet Cavit, Interview with the author, 15.5.1990. Already on the 1.2.1925 prominent Turkish Cypriot personalities had founded similar grouping under the name "Turkish Cypriot Islamic Community". It supported the colonial government and engaged primarily in cultural and religious affairs. After the British had integrated the greatest part of its members into the civil service of the colonial administration, this grouping was disbanded short after its formation.

82. H. Gurkenl 1986, p. 128ff.

83. FO 371/107501 - 146237, Report of the Colonial Secretary's Office to the British embassy in Ankara, 16.6.1953.

84. A series of articles in the weekly magazine SOZ, in which Kemal Cankert reports in 22 successive parts under the title "Stations in the history of the Opposition of our Working People" these historical events, 8.5.1957-16.10.1957 footnote.

85. Ibidem.

86. Ibidem.

87. Ibidem.

88. Ibidem.

89. Ibidem.

90. Ibidem. Erkurt was threatened with death from TMT - members in 1950.

Regarding the relations between PEO and the Turkish Cypriots see also: Kyrris, C.P., 1977 p.83ff.

The Turkish Cypriot workers' associations were "swallowed" by from PEO, after 1948 as is shown by the following table:

| Year | Members |
|---------|---------|
| 1945 | 843 |
| 1947 | 640 |
| 1948 | 190 |
| 1949 | 160 |
| 1950/51 | 130 |

In 1958 there were around 1500 Turkish Cypriot workers in PEO.

91. Ibidem.

92. Ibidem.

93. Ibidem. In the liberal Turkish-Cypriot newspaper ATCs various articles were published in 1946/47 under the title "Cyprus to the Cypriots". In these articles the author, under pen name "His way is correct", demanded an independent, separate administration of both communities, by securing the rights through the UNO and a common foreign policy along the lines of the UNO. After all, a noteworthy opinion, which was at least 20 years ahead of its time.

94. Ibidem.

95. Ibidem.

96. CO 37/342/1 - 12729, Lord Winster to J. Martin (CO), 22.11.1948.

97. Ibidem.

98. M. Attalides, 1979 p.46; CO/368/1 XL 144484, Colonial minister to Wright 13.4.1950.

99. CO 67/368/1 - XL144484, Colonial minister to Wright, 13.4.1950.

100. J. Choisi, 1987 p.65.

101. Ibidem p.39f.

102. CO 926/118 - XL1444688, A report of the Reuter press agency, 22.7.1955.

103. CO 67/368/2 - XL144484 Note on the activities of the Mufti of Cyprus from September 1951.

104. Ibidem.

105. Ibidem.

106. CO 67/368/2 - XL144484, Committee of Turkish Affairs to Lord Winster, 12.9.1951.

107. CO 926/118 - XL1444688, Report of the Reuter press agency, 22.7.1955; CO 926/428 - 144789, Amery to J. Martin, 31.5.1955.

108. Ibidem.

109. Ibidem.

110. Ibidem. For the history of the Turkish Cypriots up to 1956 see A. Seligman, *The Turkish people of Cyprus*, London 1956.

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THE TURKISH CYPRIOT WORKING CLASS AND THE CYPRUS LABOUR MOVEMENT, 1920-1963

Michalis Michaelides

Abstract

This paper examines the Turkish Cypriot role in the development of the Cyprus labour movement. The opening sections deal with the early labour union history—the early activities of the Cyprus Communist Party (KKK) and of the Limassol and other Labour Centres. It covers several major and minor strikes, the awakening of class consciousness, and the enactment of labour legislation. The paper also examines various World War II activities, the struggle against Britain for independence and the development of PEO (Communist Labour Federation) and AKEL (successor to KKK). The paper concludes by examining the increasing separation of Turkish and Greek Cypriot workers in the early 1960s.

This paper examines the contribution of Turkish Cypriots in the labour movement. Its primary focus is on the 1920-1963 period as this period has received little attention in the literature. The paper consists of three parts. The first one focuses on the formation of the labour movement, the development of class consciousness and the common struggles of Greek and Turkish Cypriots until the late 1940's. The second part examines how the political situation in Cyprus during the 1950's has affected the unity of the labour movement. Finally, the third section examines the post-independence status of the labour movement by analysing the way policy errors have contributed to the break-down of close cooperation among Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot workers.

Common struggles Against Exploitation

Before embarking on an examination of the development of the labour movement and the role that the Turkish Cypriot working class played in it, it is necessary to undertake a brief, selective, historical review of intercommunal relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, noting the class element in particular.

The first Moslem settlers were transported from Turkey during the early years of the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus (1570-1878). It is to be noted that in sharp contrast to the politico-military aristocracy which viewed Cyprus merely as a source of wealth, the newly-arrived population—farm labourers for the most part— was the object of

extensive exploitation.

This was true also of the mass of the local Moslem Cypriot population with the exception of the rich landowners and the higher clergy who also lived off the poor. This social class distinction succeeded in many instances in overcoming the "victor-slave" barrier and religious fanaticism. It often brought people together in a joint-struggle against their exploiters be they Turks, Greek, or British.¹ Until 1920 the labor movement in Cyprus was at its infancy with no clear identity.

The history of the labour movement in Cyprus begins in Limassol in 1919, since Limassol was at the time a significant commercial town (the largest after Nicosia) with a numerous blue-collar population.²

While some class awareness had developed by the end of the 19th century, it was not until April 1919 that the first labour group with clear objectives was founded. This was the Builders' Union.³ It was the first such trade union in Cyprus and the first step by the working class to establish its own separate identity. The class struggle began with the builders organising themselves against their employers in an effort to improve their financial position.

The Builders' Union opened the way for a wide range of other trade associations such as builders' apprentices, tobacco workers, porters, tailors, barbers, carpenters and bakers.⁴ These unions became quite powerful as their membership grew rapidly to a total of 257 members. Most Limassol bakery workers belonged to a union while only a few builders remained outside the Builders' Union or the builders' apprentices union.

The constitution of these associations was usually based on that of Greece's trade unions. Several of these associations, however, such as the unions of builders and tobacco workers had neither proper direction nor a developed awareness of the concept of solidarity. They were characterised primarily by a spirit of charity and kindness. For this reason they soon found themselves under the influence of pseudo-labour elements or well known politicians who approached workers in an underhanded manner to take advantage of them.

A number of Turkish Cypriots workers joined the Builders' Union early on. First-hand accounts illustrate for example that a number Turkish Cypriot workers belonging to the Builders' Apprentices' Union were at the forefront of the strikes and other workers' struggles early in 1930. Turkish workers belonging to the Builders' Union were involved both in restructuring their own trade union and in creating the Limassol Labour Centre which brought all Limassol labour associations under a single constitution in 1924. They were also at the forefront of promoting socialist⁵ ideas and spreading the class struggle and awareness throughout the Limassol district. In 1993, Hasam Hilmi, of Kilani, was charged in a Limassol court with "subversive" actions against the government and with spreading "communist propaganda".⁶

The Limassol Labour Centre constitution was translated into Turkish so that Turkish Cypriot workers could understand its aims and ambitions. Yiannis Lefkis, one of the first founders of the Party of Cyprus (CBC) and a leading participant of the fight for the

dissemination of socialist ideas in Cyprus recalls that the translator of the Limassol Labour Centre's constitution was a progressive Turkish Cypriot named Mustafa, who had a good knowledge of Greek and worked in the Khedivial Mail Line Agency. Following the emergence of Kemal Ataturk, he moved to Turkey where he worked for some years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the inaugural meeting of the Limassol Labour Centre, attended by Turkish as well as Greek Cypriots, the constitution was approved unanimously. Of special significance were the aims of the constitution which focused on the material development and spiritual welfare of its members. Regarding the first aim, increases in the daily wages, better working conditions, an eight-hour working day and the enactment of labour laws were sought. Regarding the second, a library which would provide socialist and labour books as well as speeches aimed at developing class consciousness would be built.

Eventhough by 1924, the Cyprus Communist Party (CPC) had not yet held its inaugural meeting, nonetheless it acted with exemplary zeal regarding the organisation and direction of workers and farm labourers. The CPC was particularly interested in the "Cyprus rural problem". At the beginning of 1924, the first Cypriot communists called a meeting in Nicosia to examine rural problems. Apart from the CPC representatives, rural representatives and two Turkish Cypriot representatives were also present at the meeting. The meeting concluded with a decision to organise a movement by villagers aiming at the deferral of their debts (via a five year moratorium) which had been created during the First World War.

In April 1924, the first Greek and Turkish farm workers conference was organised at Lefkoniko by the lawyer Kyriakos Rossides.⁷

A second meeting was held in Nicosia in July 1925. The meeting decided the establishment of the "Rural Greco-Turkish Party". Aware of the importance of co-operation in the Legislative Assembly, both the Greek and Turkish speakers, prepared a joint memorandum for solving the rural problem of Cyprus.

Regarding the positions taken at the rural conference, Attalides (1988) writes:

"An interesting view put forward by the rural party was that the solution to the rural problem was not guaranteed by establishing a rural bank, as supported by the urban leaders, but by fixing favourable retail prices for agricultural products."

Also interesting is the appeal by the rural associations of Yermaşoyia Kilani and Phini:

"How long are our fields, our vines and our animal going to be at the disposal of the usurers and businessmen so they can throw us into the streets "in the name of the law? For your survival and the survival of all of us slaves of the soil there is only one way we have to organise ourselves.... We have entrusted our fate to the rich for 40 years and the result is the state in which we find ourselves today... Let us organise ourselves in every village so as to be able to kneel beneath a rural flag for common watchwords that concern us all... Villagers of Cyprus, Greeks and Turks! Let us no longer be separated by racial hatred.

Let us no longer be swayed by the words of those who have an interest in seeing us divided and against one another..." "Brother villagers! Turks and Greeks, in whatever village you may be, the time has come for you to awake. There must be no village which does not have its association. Long live the union of all the villagers of Cyprus!"⁸

The CPC clarified the Cypriot peasants' demands as follows:

"A halt should be placed on the obligatory sale of land. A major part of monastery and church land should be consolidated. The "one tenth" tax should be abolished. A law should be enacted concerning income tax, with retrospective effect on the enormous profits made during and after the war by those who grew wealthy through profiteering in the black market. The vassal tax should be abolished, whilst there should be a tax on inherited wealth and luxury goods. Animal husbandry should be protected. The very low tax paid by the mining companies should be raised"...⁹

At the same time, *Neos Anthropos* underlined the social class divisions that prevailed in the country and noted that "people are no longer separated into Greeks and Turks who fight one another... but into poor and wealthy". The following excerpt from the "Programme" (statement of beliefs) of *Neos Anthropos* is indicative:

"... our first concern is to remove every trace of racial hatred that exists amongst the people of our island... and we shall become heralds of love and unity among the poor in order to serve their interests.... We shall oppose every treacherous nationalistic politics and we shall work for the independence of Cyprus under a labour-rural government with full rights to freedom for the people, far from every influence and protection from outside... With great courage we shall attack the indifference which the British conqueror has shown to the economically underprivileged classes on the island and as a first step we shall aim at the establishment, throughout the countryside, of rural and labour "unions" which, united under our Communist Party, will aim at the speedy relief of the farming and labouring population...¹⁰

The Programme, which officially expressed the aims of the CPC, included for the first time, apart from social and economic concerns, clear political positions. One such position was the support of the struggle for the independence of Cyprus, a theme which was in direct contrast to the Enosis theme supported by the middle class and the church. This position attracted the Turkish Cypriot masses into the ranks of the CPC.

In the course of its brief life, *Neos Anthropos* also attracted strong opposition. The opposition began fighting the workers' associations, the communists who by then were well-known, and the "fortress" of the Cyprus Labour Movement, the Limassol Centre. The May Day proclamation by the Limassol Labour Centre stated:

"May Day is a celebration of the poor people of the world. On this day all workers, whatever their race or religion, gather together in brotherhood in order to remember the victims of labour ideology, show their strength, and demand from their rulers their rights in life... No worker, no poor labourer and no conscientious and educated person with sympathies towards the labour movement should be absent. Pressures from the bosses, and our

exploitation by the rich must unite us, Turks and Christians. We are no longer divided by racial hatred and religious fanaticism. These things belong to the past. Today all of us like brothers shall lay claim to the rights that are due to us in this life. We need labour laws which recognise our associations, which will give us an eight hour working day and protect us from misery and from our employers' greed."¹¹

Amid the anti-labour atmosphere cultivated by the colonial government and the Opposition, the Communist Party of Cyprus was formally founded in August 1926.

The CPC views on "the economic and political situation" are typified by the following excerpt:

"The CPC will do everything in its power to secure a united anti-British front which will aim at the liberation of Cyprus from the hands of capitalist and imperialist England. Today, more than ever before, it is clear that no change can be brought about in Cyprus for the benefit of its people as long as a foreign conqueror is treading on this small island of ours. Only when we attain our freedom and we are no longer slaves of British imperialism shall we be able to breathe easily in the economic field too... And it is in this direction that efforts should now be made by all parties... But if they are to bring results these efforts must be united. All anti-British elements, to whichever faction they may belong and whether they are middle or working class, Greeks or Turks, have a duty to co-operate in the struggle against foreign sovereignty".

The CPC saw the question of self-government being settled via accommodation of the following demands: a) the establishment of the right to vote by all men and women over age 18; b) the transformation of the legislative assembly into a real parliament, so that its members would be elected directly by the people in a system of proportional representation, with separate representation of the minorities (Turks, Armenians, Latins, etc) in proportion to their numbers; c) the abolishment of Cyprus' share in the Turkish debt and a proportionate lowering of taxes; d) the return to Cyprus of frozen budget surpluses in England and the allocation of this money for improvements in farming and industry. e) the removal of all military personnel from Cyprus and the delegation of the responsibility for the country's security to a local civil defence guard."¹² Naturally these aims met with resistance from the right which criticised the CPC for taking the line of independence.¹³

By 1928, fifty years after the British rule began, the number of Cyprus's labourers had reached 25,000 from which ten thousand were farm labourers and six to seven (including a good number of Turkish Cypriots) mine workers employed in the Amiandos and Skouriotissa mines. Some of the workers were employed directly by the mining companies and others by sub-contractors. Daily wages in 1928 were still at starvation levels: 3 shillings for men and 1-7 piastres (0.5-3 cents) for women. The asbestos miners lived in poor conditions in hovels and huts. Daily wages dropped steadily from 1928-1932, and eventually reached the levels of 1906, namely 9 piastres (4.5 cents) for men and 6 piastres (3 cents) for women.

Because of the poor working conditions and the persecution of both Greek and Turkish

workers on the basis of their political views, the Limassol Labour Centre sent a memorandum to the colonial government demanding, among other, an eight-hour working day; the provision of compensation to workers and their families (in the case of death) for accidents they had incurred while on duty the provision of compensation to any worker subjected to unfair dismissal; the provision of protection of working women and young children and finally an end to police persecution of workers and farm labourers in towns and villages.

An earlier strike that had taken place at Amiandos, on September 1, 1927, was supported by 1,000 workers and succeeded in cutting the miners working day from 10 to 9 hours.

A second strike was held in July 25, 1929. The strike was also successful since 6,000 miners stopped their work and organised a demonstration to press for their demands. There included a shorter working day, an increase in the wages and the right to buy bread from the place of their own choice. The last point arose because the Amiandos company obliged its workers to buy bread from the company itself. That bread was more expensive and weighed only 250-300 drams. One result of the strike was the improvement in the quality of the bread and the reduction in the price from 60 to 50mils per load (5 cent). The following excerpt is descriptive of the involvement of the CPC in the 1929 strike:

"Through still in its infancy and despite the fact that many of its members were under police observation, the new party was able to organise a significant strike throughout the island in July 1929 when 6,000 mineworkers stopped work. They held a demonstration outside the company offices during which slogans were chanted demanding a shorter working day, better wages and the freedom to buy bread from the store of their choice. The company management asked the workers to return to work and promised to satisfy all their demands but the workers refused to trust the company's promises and continued their strike. Many workers were arrested, tried sentenced and imprisoned, while others were dismissed and several sent into exile."¹⁴

Although the strike did not succeed, it was a turning point for the Cyprus labour movement. Following the October 1931 events, two CPC leaders along with eight right wing leaders and church representatives were exiled. In London the CPC leaders issued the following proclamation:

"The CPC, after a year of healthy work, has been in a position to increase dynamically, organise the working class and cultivate its political influence, its revolutionary class consciousness. It is the only party to support the spontaneously uprising masses. The party has tried to organise and guide the working people, both Greeks and Turks, along the proper revolutionary road away from the British yoke and exploitation, away from local landowners and usurers and towards the foundation of a free Republic of workers and farm labourers. The bloody repression of the uprising, the arrest and imprisonment of many active members of our party and our own exile "for life" from Cyprus will not halt the revolutionary work or the strengthening of the CPC. The CPC will continue to fight

for the immediate fulfilment of the economic demands of the workers and villagers, for the thwarting of the treachery of the "National-Enosis" leaders and their counter-revolutionary slogan of "Union with Greece", for the united front, for a Free Republic of Cyprus of workers and villagers."¹⁵

After the October events, came the dictatorship of the British governor, Sir Richmond Palmer who succeeded Ronald Storrs. Under "Palmerocracy" a good number of labour associations were dissolved and Greek and Turkish Communists as well as leaders of the labour movement were imprisoned or exiled.

On August 15, 1933, the penal code was amended so as to declare the CPC and other parties and organisations illegal. Many laws limited the people's liberty. These measures, the infamous twenty eight "illiberal laws" -passed between 1931 and 1944- failed to dissolve the labour movement in Cyprus.

In 1936 one of the hardest joint strikes by Greek and Turkish mineworkers took place against the American-owned Cyprus Mining Company at Mavrovouni. Three thousand Greek and Turkish miners, in defiance of the police and the army, demanded an increase in wages, better working and living conditions and reduced working hours. On March 6, 1939 the inaugural meeting of the Limassol Porters Union was held and was attended by 176 persons (136 Greeks and 40 Turks).¹⁶ The union's constitution was accepted unanimously and the first provisional committee of four Greek and two Turkish Cypriots was established.¹⁷

The joint class struggles of Greek and Turkish Cypriot builders to obtain an 8-hour working day were also important. This goal became more feasible as a result of the Nicosia builders' strike which resulted in the signing of the first collective agreement on May 14, 1939.

In an attempt to overcome to problem of illegality during the years of World War II and "Palmerocracy", the CPC decided to take part in the political scene under a new name, *The Uplifting Party of the Working People*, known by its Greek acronym AKEL. Forty communists were present at this meeting on April 14, 1941 in an empty house at Skarinou, halfway between Limassol and Nicosia.

An important decision for Greek and Turkish workers was taken at the second Pancyprian Trades Union Congress held on November 16, 1941. At that meeting a provisional organising committee was set up with the aim of establishing the Pancyprian Trade Union Committee (PTC). The duties of the PTC were: 1) to address all labour issues of general interest 2) to represent the unions responsibly at all pancyprian non-union meetings, 3) to submit demands and memoranda to the government, 4) to contribute wherever necessary to the resolution of specific problems in any union and 5) to provide whatever assistance might be required by any union to carry out its duties. The congress chose the 17 members of the Pancyprian Trade Union Committee by a secret ballot.

The 1940s were characterised by intensive strike action and joint action by Greek and Turkish workers under PTC guidance. These efforts, which increased membership

and brought about mass acceptance of the labour movement, were taken amid the most difficult political and economic conditions. The outbreak of the Second World War, Cyprus' contribution to the allied cause, the economic crisis which plagued the country and the fierce opposition of both the colonial government and local anti-strike circles proved to be difficult factors for the development of the labour movement.

The voluntary participation by Greek and Turkish workers in the allied war effort at the outbreak of the Second World War was significant. From the first days of the War, the PTC had a clear-cut anti-fascist position. At the second Pancyprian Congress in November 1941, the PTC was asked to play a decisive role in the antifascist education of both the organised and unorganised workers and to contribute to the "continuous mobilisation of the working class in the anti-fascist struggle".¹⁸ The enlightenment campaign and appeal by the PTC and AKEL led masses of progressive Turkish Cypriots to the front. One fifth of the Cyprus Regiment were Turkish Cypriots.

During of the 1940s, demonstrations and strikes were held in all towns in protest of the increase unemployment. On November 4, 1940, unemployed Greek and Turkish workers gathered outside the Famagusta District Administration Office to protest against the severe unemployment problem. Eleven of them were arrested and brought before the court where they were charged with taking part in an illegal gathering.

Many workers had an acute awareness that the colonial government had purposely created the unemployment problem in 1940/41 to force as many Cypriots as possible to join the Cyprus Regiment. 2 May Day in 1941 was celebrated with mass demonstrations and motions asking for labour laws, repeal of the order for locating the whereabouts of workers and recognition of May 1 as an official workers' holiday. A mass rally was held in Nicosia at the Serayio Square. Six of workers were arrested by the police and taken to court. They were charged with holding an illegal gathering.

July 1941 saw a rail strike. The members of the strike committee of the government railway engineers were sentenced on June 9, 1941 to a year's imprisonment for breach of the Governor's order to declare the railway as an essential public service.

In 1943 the Cypriot National Party (KEK in Greek) was formed, soon followed by the New Unions which joined to form the Confederation of Cypriot Workers (SEK). At about the same time, opposition circles within the Turkish community founded the Turkish Unions. Their objective was to draw away the Turkish workers belonging to the PTC.

On March 21 1943, the first free election for the posts of mayors and town councillors were held. The right wing candidates, in Nicosia, Larnaca and Paphos were returned as mayors while the left wing candidates for mayor were elected in Limassol, and Famagusta.

Turkish Cypriots voted for their own lists of candidates in these elections. The Limassol Municipal Councillors however gave particular importance to collaboration with their Turkish Cypriot colleagues. This was illustrated in many cases. One such case was the council's decision to set up a Municipal Library.

During the period of 1942-44, the focus of the island's organised labour movement

was on the cost of living index. In December 1942, an important strike by government and military labourers took place. Ten thousand workers demanded an increase in their daily wages to offset the lost buying power caused by rising prices. They further demanded the establishment of a correct cost of living index. This strike ended with a significant success, the establishment of a cost of living index committee.

Joint struggles by Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers over the cost of living index continued in August and October 1943. At the unions' general meeting, motions were passed which stressed that the workers would continue to fight for the full implementation of the proposals made by workers' representatives regarding the cost of living index.

On October 30, 1943, eight union officials, including one Turkish Cypriot, were sentenced by the Nicosia Court to six months in prison for taking part in an illegal gathering. The strike reached its peak on March 1, 1944 when a general strike was held.

The PTC, being the main organiser of Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers, succeeded during the strike in having 2,500 shops closed all over Cyprus. Four thousand five hundred demonstrators took to the streets in Nicosia while 1500 participated in Larnaca.

During the 23 days of the strike, demonstrations of unprecedented size took place. On March 19, more than 15,000 people took part in a Nicosia gathering.

The general strike continued until March 23 when the PTC decided to call a "truce". The colonial government had been forced to establish a three member committee to look into daily wage levels and other working conditions. The strike enabled Greek and Turkish workers to obtain family allowances, a paid leave, retirement bonuses, a degree of social security (sick leave up to one month on full pay), and other benefits. A PTC report at the fourth Pancyprian Congress in September 1944 states:

"There can be no question that during the strike of March 1 our organisations brought about the greatest mobilisation ever achieved on the island.... We took on the government in a political fight and we won a great deal. In those 23 days, the people of Cyprus broke the ice of twelve years of Palmer's dictatorship. They learned that by fighting a hard battle it is possible to obtain justice..."²⁰

In August 1944 a strike began at the Kalavassos mine which lasted six months. By February 1945, despite mistakes and certain weaknesses, the Greek and Turkish mineworkers had obtained significant wage increases.

In October 1945, it was the Nicosia builders who paved the way once again, this time for a 44 hour week. A strike was called by 200 builders and construction workers who were employed by fourteen Nicosia contractors. The colonial government reacted against the workers' demand in an official announcement. The PTC called upon all workers to give material and moral support to the striking workers.

On October 24 the strike spread to the furniture makers. On October 26, 1945 the employers finally yielded. A similar struggle was then begun by employees in all trades

to obtain a 44 hour work week. The struggle finally proved to be successful.

The period 1944-1946 was a fertile one for Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers. Because of World War II and a new flexibility in the colonial administration, the organised union movement succeeded in satisfying a whole range of demands in a variety of industries. The most important gains were the following:

a. More than 700 workers in the shoe trade throughout the island obtained a 20% wage increase. More workers were also able to obtain the 44 hour week they sought and all managed to gain six days in annual leave;

b. One thousand construction workers obtained wage increases and acceptance of the 44 hour week;

c. Two hundred factory workers in Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol received pay increases and acceptance of the 44 hour week. The same benefits were obtained by 300 carpenters and 30 painters;

d. Nicosia Printing workers won acceptance of the 44 hour week (39 hours for the night shift), social security benefits and annual leave;

e. Two hundred fifty farm labourers, many of whom were Turkish Cypriots, received pay increases;

f. Hundred and thirty-five Greek and Turkish weavers in Famagusta won wage increases, annual leave and other benefits without resorting to a strike action;

g. Nicosia weavers negotiated a 42 hour week for night work;

h. The 900 Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers at the Larnaca Button Factory were granted wage increases, annual leave and a provident fund following a 29 day strike in March 1945.

The Action Plan of the PEO General Assembly which was presented at the fifth Pancyprrian Congress stated that the hardest battle of 1946 was that of the railway workers. The Nicosia and Famagusta sections worked systematically and actively for the strike's success. A total of 240 people many of whom were Turkish Cypriots were mobilised from Famagusta to Lefka.

The 1946 strike ended however with the railway workers failing to satisfy their demands. This failure was due primarily to the government's efforts to break away the railwaymen. Threatening letters, defence measures and the threat to close down the railway dampened workers' enthusiasm.

By September 1946, the colonial government had hired 48 strikebreakers and at the end, the railway workers gave in. Before the railway closed down on January 1, 1952, PEO had organised the Greek and Turkish workers into a union, but despite the Pancyprrian Railway Workers Congress in Famagusta on August 30, 1951, which was called by PEO to discuss the government's decision to abolish the railway, the government went ahead with its plan.

The most significant element of PEO's fifth Pancyprrian Congress was preparation of a social insurance plan covering illness, old age, protection for mothers and orphans, etc. After a ten year struggle, the Greek and Turkish workers obtained one of the most

important labour demands, the law on social security which came into effect on January 7, 1957. The road to this success was opened by the builders' union. Eleven hundred Greek and Turkish building workers from Nicosia and Limassol began their strike demanding Social Security benefits on June 9, 1947. The strike lasted until August 29. By the end of the strike, employers were obliged to accept workers' demands. They agreed to pay 6 piastres a week for social insurance for every worker while the builders themselves paid the same amount. This accord affected more than 5,000 construction worker's but more importantly, it opened the way for others to obtain the same benefits.

Nineteen forty eight was the year when PEO's medical scheme began. Thousands of Greek and Turkish workers and their dependents received free medical treatment at union centres in all towns.

The class consciousness of Greek and Turkish workers strengthened PEO in its fight for unity among the workers, irrespective of ideology and religious beliefs. Towards this end PEO prepared in 1947 a special co-operation agreement with SEK and the Turkish Federation (KTIBK). Although there was no encouraging response by their leadership, union members were strongly in favor of these efforts.

Thus on January 8, 1948 PEO and KTIBK signed a co-operation agreement stipulating that the two parties would: (1) Demonstrate their genuine desire to create a relationship of close co-operation and mutual assistance in their actions, aimed at economic and social progress for the working class; (2) set up mixed Greek and Turkish committees for those occupations in which both PEO and KTIBK were represented; (3) set up joint Greek-Turkish district union committees which would solve any disputes among Greek and Turkish workers in the interest of the unity of the labour movement; (4) set up a Pancyprrian Greek-Turkish Committee to promote closer relations among the workers of the two communities; (5) condemn propoganda by one side against the other as destructive and against the true interests of the working class; (6) condemn racial hatred and discrimination wherever it may originate; (7) draw up regulations which would deal with the organisation of non-union workers in occupations where both PEO and KTIBK were represented; (8) hold joint general meetings of Greek and Turkish workers in all towns with the aim of stressing the importance of unity and cooperation among the various labour organisations.

The PEO and the KTIBK Central Committee subsequently submitted a number of joint demands to the Cyprus Mining Company management. The company had previously faced labour agitation and a strike at the end of World War II, forced the company to shut down until 1945. At the time more than 2,000 persons worked at CMC, seven hundred of whom were Turkish Cypriots. Half worked at the Mavrovouni mine and the rest in the ore processing plant at Xeros. Almost the entire workforce belonged to a union and the influence of the two unions on the workers as a whole was strong. The most important demands made by the PEO and KTIBK Central Committee were: (1) A reduction in the number of working hours for those who worked underground from 8 1/2 to 8 hours per day and for loading workers from twelve to eight with the necessary

adjustments in wages; (2) reorganisation of various branches; (3) no charge on the value of tools, explosives and acetylene; (4) maintenance of prices paid by the company in January 1947; (5) an increase in the wages of those working on loading in the range of half and one and a half mils per ton; (6) maintenance of the overtime rate on the basis of an eight hour day; (7) compensation for work on Sundays, and other holidays (if more than eight hours) paid as time and a half (up to eight hours) and as double time ; (8) fourteen official days off per annum (three days for Christmas, three days for Easter, six days for the three Bayram holidays, one day for New Year, and one day for May Day) five of which are to be paid by the company.

The company management did not accept the workers' demands. At a meeting of the miners' committee members with PEO and KTIBK representatives at Mavrovouni on January 11, 1948, the Greek and Turkish mineworkers adopted unanimously a motion decision to hold a strike. On January 13, 1948 the miners held mass joint meetings together with their wives. In February 1948, AKEL launched the slogan: "Let us share our bread with the miners." Material support for the CMC strike arrived daily in moving examples of solidarity. Many women gave away their engagement rings, watches, gold bracelets, gold lockets and so on. In parallel with the personal donations an appeal was organised by PEO and KTIBK which raised \$150 in Nicosia, \$100 in Limassol and \$45 in Morphou.

A 24 hour strike held on February 12, 1948 brought Nicosia to a complete standstill. The thousands who gathered outside the Nicosia PEO offices were addressed by Greek and Turkish Cypriot union leaders.

The General Secretary of the Turkish Unions, Aziz Tuncay, speaking in Greek said:

"And the fight will carry on properly and its end will be a good one if we Greek and Turkish workers maintain our unity and co-operation. For Turks and Greeks, the enemy is one: the one who takes our children's bread, the one who is robbing us of our hard work. Today the miners are hungrier than we. Let us take from our own bread and give to them..."²¹

At the February 12 rally in Nicosia, a Turkish demonstrator said the following prophetic words: "Our country will make progress only if you (the Greek Cypriots) and we are always united, together as we are now."²² On March 3, 1948 bloody events took place at Mavrovouni when the police, incapable of restraining the mass of striking workers, fired indiscriminately and injured a good number of them. The day after these bloody events, PEO and KTIBK called out all workers for a 24 hour strike on March 6. On the appointed day, the workers of Cyprus held the one day strike. Meetings of Greek and Turkish workers took place in all towns. The March 6 strike went down in history as one of the fiercest ever seen in Cyprus. On March 16, 1948, a group of women stopped and surrounded the company train between Xeros and Mavrovouni. They beat up five or six strikebreakers who were on the wagons as well as the English train driver. A good number of miners' wives, Greek and Turkish, were arrested during the course of the strike and received stiffines or several months' imprisonment.

Fofa Vassiliou, mother of the last Cypriot President George Vassiliou, lived through the strike and remembers:

"On Monday, March 8, the news from Xeros arrived. More clashes. One almost killed, four injured. More blood shed by the heroic mineworkers. Blood and tears for the ground which has already been saturated with the sweat of thousands of miners. These are the symbols and witnesses of the hardest and most heroic struggle of the working class..."²³

The former Turkish Member of Parliament Eyup Necmettin sent the following message to the people of Cyprus:

I have been watching the Cyprus Mining Company dispute with interest from the outset and have reached the following conclusions:

1. "The dispute began on the day that the company refused to discuss with the Miners' Union the demands for better daily wages, and generally a more humane existence.
2. I have noted that the CMC management has stressed the fact that the workers are acting under the influence of Cypriot political parties and not solely for their interests as workers.
3. Regarding the workers' demands, which are reasonable, and the fact that the Company's Manager has repeatedly refused to discuss them with Miners' Union leaders, I have reached the conclusion that the workers are fighting for their livelihood and interests as miners. Whether the political parties are for or against them is a point which I do not take into consideration.
4. As a person thinking about the interest of every poor Cypriot, I hereby make an appeal to you to give whatever you can to the mineworkers who are fighting for their livelihood, and at the same time I express the wish that the Cyprus government intervene as quickly as possible in order to achieve a settlement to the benefit of the poor miners."²⁴

In April 1948 the American President of the Cyprus Mining Company, Mr Mand, arrived in Cyprus and asked to meet with representatives of the striking workers. May 1, 1948 was celebrated with rallies and with negotiations between the representatives of the striking mineworkers and the CMC management.

However, on May 8 bloody clashes between Greek and Turkish strikers on the one side and strikebreakers on the other, broke out at Xeros. Strikebreakers accompanied by police struck and injured six striking mineworkers.

On May 16, 1948 one of the largest miner meetings was held at the Turkish union headquarters in Lefka and decided that the four month old strike would end. The 1948 strike was the most moving and fiercely fought battle in the joint struggle by Greek and Turkish workers. They managed to break down the walls of religious and nationalist division and reinforce the class war. The strike showed that the class consciousness of Greek and Turkish workers was a unifying factor in the delineation of relations between the two communities overcoming the barriers of religion and nationalism.

Nineteen forty eight saw two more large and destructive strikes by Greek and Turkish

workers. One broke out on August 2, against the Anglo-Danish Amiandos Company. The strike lasted twenty nine days and saw 1000 Greek and Turkish asbestos mineworkers take a stand against their employers, against the colonial government and the strike breakers. The workers managed to have all of their demands (mostly trade union freedoms) met.

The third and final 1948 strike was by 1200 Greek and Turkish building labourers in Nicosia. It lasted 116 days and was a direct continuation of the previous strikes. All Turkish builders who worked for Greek contractors took part.

During the 1948 Pancyprian Congress held while the builders' strike was going on, the significance of the joint action of Greek and Turkish workers was stressed by PEO:

"Dividing the trade union movement on the basis of religious or racial differences, or on the basis of political or party differences, weakens the movement and serves the interests of the employers and, more generally, the enemies of the working class".²⁵

PEO also reiterated its political position that:

"... one cannot reach a solution to the Cyprus Problem if one is not working for a rapprochement between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Any solution will only be stable and permanent if it is based on the friendly relations between the two communities. The existence of hostility, hatred and suspicion between them not only obstructs the search for a solution but will destroy the best solution possible."²⁶

The sixth PEO Congress in 1949 turned its attention to the question of safeguarding and expanding the workers' rights:

"All of us, organised or not, union members or not, must concentrate our attention and unify our forces to protect what the working class has achieved, especially the safeguarding of our country, the social insurance fund, the minimum daily wage and the changes in the government's taxation policy."²⁷

Furthermore, the Sixth Party Congress discussed the means through which the class element could be employed to strengthen the relationship between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Among other things it was suggested that: (a) A person responsible for minorities be appointed; (b) closer ties be developed between Turkish and Greek unions through the set up of mixed committees wherever necessary; (c) leaflets in Turkish be distributed all over Cyprus stating the party's position on the national issue and its views on the economic problems of Greek and Turkish workers; (d) more Turkish workers not belonging to a union be attracted by the Turkish side; (f) assistance be provided to the Turkish trade unions so that they could begin publishing their own newspaper; (e) particular attention be given to the development of class awareness among Turkish Cypriots and the set up of a progressive political Turkish organisation.

The Collapse of Labour Movement Solidarity: Enosis and the Turkish Cypriots

A significant event which affected labour relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots workers was the referendum on Enosis held on January 15, 1950. A total of 215,108 of the 224,757 Greek Cypriots having the right to vote (95.7%), voted for enosis. Eight hundred Turkish Cypriots also voted in favour of union with Greece. However, the majority of Turkish Cypriots reacted strongly against the referendum. On December 11, 1949, the Turkish Cypriots organised a Nicosia rally against the recently-announced referendum. Reaction against the referendum continued in Cyprus and Turkey. In April 1950, a Turkish Cypriot community memorandum was presented to the United Nations expressing opposition to all ideas of union of Cyprus with Greece. Typical of this reaction was a telegram from the leader of the National Turkish Cypriot People's Party, Dr. Fazil Kuchuk which stated that 80,000 Turkish Cypriots opposed Enosis. The Turkish Cypriot reaction was a warning to the Greek Cypriots that an Enosis movement would be opposed by the majority of the Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish government in Ankara.

This position of the Turkish Cypriot leadership was revealed officially in a telegram to the British government:

"Fifteen thousand Turkish Cypriots have decided unanimously to reject the Greek demand for the annexation of Cyprus by Greece and for autonomy. They believe that annexation and autonomy would lead to the annihilation of the Turkish community."²⁸

The Turkish Cypriot leadership attitude and that of Ankara was encouraged by the British government which looked for allies and pretexts to disregard the Greek demand for self-determination.

The Enosis referendum and the political activities of the well organised ruling class of Turkish Cypriots that opposed it had a significant effect on the joint struggles of Greek and Turkish workers. Nonetheless during the first years of the 1950's joint trade union action by Greeks and Turks continued. Of great historical significance was the united action of the Greek and Turkish port workers of Limassol, in the October 8-December 31, 1952 strike. The main reason for the strike was the employers' oppressive tactics which intensified between 1948 and 1952. On October 8, 1952 a joint strike committee was set up by representatives of PEO, SEK and the Turkish Cypriot Unions. As a result of the strike by the 350 Greek and Turkish port workers, a law was enacted which gave port workers considerable benefits and improved employment terms. The law came into force on January 12, 1953. Joint action by Greek and Turkish workers was also taken to strengthen the legal foundation of the Social Insurance funds. Guided by PEO, Greek and Turkish workers held special gatherings in May 1953 at which they demanded: (a) full medical treatment, free medicine and sick benefits; (b) maternity benefits and leave of absence; (c) strike pay; (d) disability benefits; (e) pensions for the aged, widows and orphans.

The Turkish PEO office called a Pancyprian Congress to discuss social insurance.

More than 300 Turkish union representatives took part in the conference which chose a committee to meet with a British social insurance expert and inform him of their positions and views. In 1954, the shoe factory workers' union developed close co-operation between the Nicosia Greek and Turkish workers which eventually led to merging their two unions, under PEO guidance.

At the beginning of September 1954 a delegation of Turkish Cypriots went to Turkey and set out the following views on the Cyprus situation:

1. Total rejection of the Greek Cypriots' demand for Enosis.
2. Opposition to autonomy which was seen as the first step toward Enosis.
3. Inclusion in a new constitution of guarantees to protect Turkish interests.
4. Undertaking by the Turkish minority of more effective control over the management of Turkish charitable institutions and schools.²⁹

On September 18, 1954, a Turkish Cypriot delegation visited Ankara and London. In London it was received by the Junior Minister for the Colonies, Mr Hopkinson, who repeated his position that no change in sovereignty whatsoever was being considered for Cyprus.³⁰

At the beginning of December 1954, a Turkish Cypriot delegation led by Mufti M. Dali was invited to Ankara for talks with the Turkish Foreign Minister. After the talks the delegation left for New York in order to fight the Greek Cypriots' demand for Enosis at the United Nations.

A Turkish Cypriot rally was held in Nicosia on December 12, 1954 at which Turkish trade union leaders from Istanbul and a number of Turkish Cypriots spoke about setting up separate Turkish Cypriot unions. The aim of the rally was to reduce the influence of PEO over the Turkish workers. Not a single Turkish worker spoke during the rally. The speakers criticised Greek Cypriot efforts aimed at self-determination. They also spoke at length against Communism and for the need to separate Turkish trade unions from PEO.

Following the rejection of the Greek Cypriot resolution for the right of self-determination at the United Nations, demonstrations were held which led to disturbances and bloody strife. As a result of the Nicosia and Limassol demonstrations on December 18, 1954, there was heightened tension between Greek and Turkish Cypriots and soon rumours of mutual economic boycotts were being heard.³¹

"There are some rumours going around concerning an "economic war" and a "boycott" against the Turkish Cypriots with a "counter-boycott" against the Greek Cypriots. Indeed it is being said that this economic "war" has been adopted in apparent seriousness by "responsible" circles. We do not know who these "responsible" Greeks and Turks are who have adopted such slogans. It does not matter. What is the rationale of talk of an economic war? Logically, such a war between the Greeks and Turks of Cyprus is utterly stupid. Politically speaking it is verging on madness."³²

The situation that prevailed then illustrates the errors made by the political leaders

of both communities. The attitude of the Greek Cypriot ruling class during the 1930s and 1940s was that the Turkish Cypriots "were making no demands" and that "they had not awoken". This was a conscious oversight of the organised activities of the Turkish working class aimed at political and economic freedom and independence.

Whether or not the Turkish masses were apathetic to the Greek demand for Enosis cannot be said with certainty since the slogan was only officially tested after 1950. Until 1947 -48 the prevailing idea was that of constitutional self-government. What is certain is that the labour movement suffered dearly as a result of the above events. The need for unity in the labour movement was made explicit in a speech by PEO's General Secretary in April 1955:

"The main point is not the racial or religious differences that we have and will continue to have with the Turkish workers. The main point is that the interests of the Greeks and Turks, new and old union members, right and left wing, are the same, and we must not allow the enemies of the working class to exploit these differences. In our work for unity we must never forget that we cannot claim to have succeeded if we do not manage to destroy the barriers of mistrust, prejudice and racial hatred which the enemies of the people have created among Greeks and Turks".³³

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The start of the armed struggle by the EOKA movement on April 1, 1955 proved to be the trump card for the British to bring in Turkey as an interested party and to create a coldness in the relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

With the convening of the 1955 tripartite conference in London, Britain brought a new dimension to the Cyprus problem. Turkey became a directly interested party. The trap set by the British Foreign Office had worked since Greek Prime minister Field-Marshall Papagou did not dare create problems either regarding "traditional friendly ties" with Britain or with NATO. By accepting the tripartite conference, the Papagou government officially recognised Turkey as an interested party in the Cyprus problem.

A propaganda campaign began in the Turkish mainland press which claimed that the Turkish Cypriots were at the mercy of the Greek Cypriots, especially those of EOKA. One day before the start of the tripartite conference on August 28, the Turkish press published a rumour that the Greek Cypriots were planning massacres of Turkish Cypriots. Britain was thus keen to appear at the conference as being ready to intervene in the interests of "rapprochement" between Greeks and Turks.

Although the tripartite conference failed to issue a joint final communique, Britain emerged as a winner because it had not only succeeded in bringing Turkey into the discussions over Cyprus without any reaction from Greece but it had also brought about a worsening of Greco-Turkish relations and sown division between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. One result of British policy was the bloody anti-Greek riots which took place in Constantinople and Smyrna on the night of September 6, 1955.

Thus the only objective aim of the London conference was to bring Turkey and Greece into conflict, in accordance with the British policy of "divide and rule". Moreover,

there was a foreign hand in the Constantinople and Smyrna episodes, just as there was in the Salonica explosion.³⁴

The change in the essence of the Cyprus problem may be seen clearly in the statements made by British Governor Sir John Harding to a delegation of the Turkish-Cypriot party, "Cyprus is Turkish", led by its president, Dr. Fazil Kuchuk. The governor said on January 7, 1956 that there could be no change in the composition of the administration without prior discussion with the Turkish Cypriot community leaders.

While negotiations were going on between Governor Harding and Archbishop Makarios over the question of a new constitution, young Turkish Cypriots used the murder of a Turkish Cypriot police sergeant as a pretext for creating turmoil against Greek Cypriots. Clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots took place in Nicosia at "Tahtakala" and at Vassilia in the Kyrenia district. Nineteen Greeks and five Turks were injured in the clashes.

On March 20, 1956, Turkish Cypriots held noisy demonstrations in Nicosia over the Vassilia events. Near the "Women's Bazaar", they shouted slogans, such as "Long Live Volcan" and "Cyprus is Turkish". They attacked Greek Cypriot shops and caused significant damage.

Following the murder of another Turkish Cypriot policeman by two Greek Cypriots on April 23, 1956 a house curfew was imposed in Nicosia. When Greek and Turkish Cypriot clashes continued, the British decided to draw a dividing line through Nicosia, thereby paralyzing the main commercial network of the capital. The barbed wire went upon May 30, 1956. The dividing line was nicknamed "The Mason-Dixon Line" after the line drawn across the United States during the Civil War to prevent North and South clashes.

The British were continuously inciting and encouraging the Turks against the Greek Cypriots. On May 11, 1956, the *Daily Mail* noted among other things, that "Cyprus is a pistol aimed at the heart of Turkey".

The former Governor of Cyprus, Richmond Palmer, stated in a letter to the *Sunday Times* on April 23, 1956, that the ideal of Enosis could lead to a Greco-Turkish war. That was the time when discussions on the new constitution between Harding and Makarios broke down and the British took the decision to exile Makarios.

The clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots continued throughout 1957 and 1958. Arson, looting and bloody conflict, even murders were daily events in towns and villages. The worst of the intercommunal unrest in 1958, incited again by the British, was the killing and wounding of workers in the village of Kontemenos by Turkish extremists. It was during this time that the Turkish Cypriot terrorist organisation, Volkan, changed its name to "Turkish Cypriot Resistance Organisation", or TMT. According to Rauf Denktash, the decision to establish the TMT was taken on August 1, 1958.

The oath that TMT members swore illustrates that their main enemy was "Greek Cypriots and Communists". TMT was said to be an openly fascist organisation and acted as a counter to EOKA. Using slogans such as "From Turk to Turk" and "Partition

or death" it cultivated chauvinism and murdered progressive Turkish Cypriots.³⁵

On May 22, 1958 TMT made an attempt on the life of Ahmet Sadi, a member of PEO's Executive Committee and Secretary of the Turkish Cypriot Office of the union. On May 24, came the murder of Fazil Ondur Sella, owner of the Turkish Cypriot newspaper *Inkilapci*.

Five days later, Ahmet Yalya, a member of the progressive Turkish youth association, was killed. On July 4 an attempt was made on the life of the trade union leader Arif Hulusi Baruti. TMT assassinations of progressive Turkish Cypriots created a climate of panic and fear amongst the masses of Turkish Cypriots who were obliged to withdraw from the PEO organised union movement and gradually sever Greek Cypriot ties.

During the 1958 May Day parade, Greek and Turkish Cypriot PEO members held Greek and Turkish flags alongside their red banners, while concurrently Dr. Kuchuk was giving a speech inciting groups of fanatical Turkish Cypriots to hold a demonstration against their leftist compatriots. The result was the burning down of the building which housed the progressive Turkish Cypriots' club.

On May 27, 1958 TMT circulated a leaflet which invited left wing Turkish Cypriots to abandon their ideology if they wished to avoid being murdered.

Fifteen hundred Turkish Cypriot workers belonging to PEO were forced to give up their memberships under the threat of being killed by TMT. Some of them joined the Turkish Cypriot Union which numbered 1137 members in 1958 while the others remained outside the framework of any union.

According to foreign press correspondents, between June 7 and August 4, 1958, 148 people were murdered, of whom sixty one were Greek Cypriots and fifty nine Turkish Cypriots. These murders as well as the burning down of Greek Cypriot houses in the Turkish quarters of Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol upset the Cyprus Labour Movement and especially the relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers.

At this difficult time, PEO's Executive Office stressed:

"...We know that calls are being made from many quarters for reprisals, revenge, and an economic war against the Turks. We must avoid reprisals. We must avoid all kinds of revengeful acts which will merely fan the flames of racial hatred."³⁶

Efforts aimed at maintaining unity amongst the Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers included the all-island Trade Union Congress held in Nicosia on August 13, 1958. The congress, which was attended by representatives of PEO, SEK, POAS and the Turkish Federation who in turn represented 60,000 workers, condemned the intercommunal clashes and called upon their members to work for a return to normality in the relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

PEO, which at the beginning of 1958 included 3,692 Turkish workers the majority of whom were terrified and were subsequently obliged to withdraw, noted in its report to the 11th Congress:

PEO has condemned the threats and stated that the Turkish workers should be free to

organize themselves into unions of their own choice. However, given the conditions of terrorism in which the progressive Turkish union leaders are now living, we have advised them to go ahead with their own Turkish unions and within that framework to work on the problems of the Turkish workers and the unity, friendship and co-operation among the Greeks and Turks. Hundreds of Turkish workers have left our unions with great sorrow, but there are still hundreds of others who, despite the terrorism, have stayed with us and simply limited their open union activity."³⁷

While the British government was trying to prove the impossibility of peaceful co-existence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, pointing out the intercommunal strife of 1958, PEO continued to try to solve labour problems for both Greek and Turkish workers. One example was its stand on the unemployment problem. According to PEO figures, 10,000 persons were out of work in January 1959. Joint delegations from PEO, SEK and the Turkish Unions met with the local District Officers in all towns to discuss the problems.

These efforts by PEO and the left wing Turkish Cypriots aimed at mounting a united political and economic struggle were in direct opposition to the policies of EOKA and TMT.

Cyprus Independence and the Labor Movement

The Zurich and London Agreements signed on February 19, 1959 should have heralded a new beginning for the normalization of relations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. However, both Makarios and Grivas viewed independence as a transitional stage on the way to Enosis. This fact alone was enough to bring about new intercommunal strife with unforeseeable consequences.

Union with Greece had been officially excluded as an option with the signing of the Zurich and London agreements. It was the duty of all Greek and Turkish Cypriots to develop as quickly as possible a Cypriot identity, without necessarily losing their national and cultural identity, and to consider Cyprus as their joint homeland. At the same time they were to cast aside the mistrust and prejudice that each side held for the other. Unfortunately the slogans of "Enosis" and "Partition or Death" continued to incite hatred and passion even after the declaration of Cypriot independence.

That independence was seen by Makarios and various other circles of the right wing and the church as a transitional stage towards Enosis is shown in an extract from the Archbishop's edict to the Cypriot people issued on November 17, 1959, only seven days after the initialling of the Constitution which lay the foundation of the new independent Cypriot state:

"...The building has not been finished. The spirit of revolution has not found fulfillment. The contract I drew up with the people of Cyprus during the armed struggle and before has not gone and is not terminated... The march toward higher aspirations which the Cypriot people are cultivating in their very souls must go on unwaveringly... Our island's historic course will not be blocked by any difficulty or obstacle... Through our struggle and faith

we shall now earn prosperity and progress and shall fulfill our ambitions."³⁸

The Turkish Cypriots responded to Makarios's continued cultivation of the "spirit of unfulfilled revolution" in a forceful way:

"We fail to comprehend this idea of "incomplete victory". If they think that by concealing their aims and putting down our community they will achieve Enosis they are mistaken. The Turkish Army is the guardian of the Turkish Cypriots and will always be. No one should forget the fact that the force which will complete any victory is that of the Turkish soldier»."³⁹

This was the spirit which worked ceaselessly as a catalyst against harmonious co-existence and peaceful administration in the new state. Instead of becoming President of all Cypriots, Makarios continued the mistakes of the past by looking for pretexts to change the Zurich-London Agreements. What Makarios should have done is to convince Turkish Cypriots, particularly in the area of economic restructuring, that he truly believed in the Republic of Cyprus and that the Turkish Cypriots were economic and social partners in his efforts, not second-class citizens.

To this end Makarios would have had the full support of the majority of the Cypriot people, Greeks and Turks but especially that of the left wing and its organisations.

It appears, however, that the Enosis elements who were always around Makarios led him to abuse his authority and infringe on the constitution repeatedly. A typical example of Makarios' unwillingness to fight for the survival of the Republic and the unity of the people was his attitude during a dispute which arose in the House of Representatives. The Turkish Cypriot members issued a joint statement by which they refused to pass a bill on the payment of taxes and duties since the 70%-30% civil service ratio was not being adhered to. They asked for a two-month postponement of the vote.

When this deadline had passed and Turkish Cypriot members saw that the Makarios government was not disposed to adopt the ratios laid down in the Zurich Agreement, they voted down the bill, thus bringing about an economic impasse. Instead of trying to normalise the situation, Makarios' response was to state that he would «ignore every constitutional ratio because, if the provisions of the tax bill were not implemented this would prevent the smooth running of the administration». Following Makarios' declaration, the Turkish Cypriot members took the decision to withdraw from the House of Representatives. It was a decision which had been eagerly awaited by Ankara as well as by Greek and Turkish Cypriot extremists.

On January 23, 1962, *Halkin Sesi* made the following blunt warning: «The Greeks cannot come up to us and bite us because their teeth no longer cut. We are in a position to smash the face of anyone who might try to bite us». Similarly, on April 2, 1962, Rauf Denktash told *Hakin Sesi* that «if Makarios continues on this course he will have to expect thousands of graves to be opened».

The prevailing atmosphere was heavy, particularly after the explosions on March

25, 1962 at the Omerie and Bayraktar mosque and the attempts to set fire to the Ayios Kassianos Greek school.

On April 24 TMT terrorists killed progressive lawyers and publishers of the Turkish Cypriot newspaper *Comhuriyet* who had advocated Greco-Turkish friendship and co-operation. Both lawyers were leaders of the Turkish Cypriot People's Party which was in opposition to the majority party.

The murder of the two men was a clear warning to all persons who were still fighting for close collaboration between Greeks and Turks. It also revealed the divisive intentions of reactionary Turks.

In order to effect their divisive policy, the terrorist organisation tried to create a climate of dissension and uncertainty among Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

In the midst of this highly charged and unsuitable atmosphere, Makarios proceeded on November 30, 1963, to submit his «13 points» for modifying the Constitution.⁴⁰ The submission of proposals for constitutional changes led to renewed intercommunal strife.

After Ankara's official rejection of the «13 points», clashes began on December 21, 1963. The following days saw bloody chases. Following the murder of two Turkish Cypriots, the Turkish army and armed groups of Turkish Cypriots occupied strategic areas in Nicosia and on the Kyrenia road, in Famagusta and in those villages where the Turkish Cypriots were in a majority. The intercommunal clashes expanded to Famagusta, Limassol, Paphos, Larnaca, Kyrenia, Lefka, Xeros and elsewhere.

By December 27, fierce battles were raging in the Turkish sector between illegal Greek Cypriot armed bands and Turkish Cypriots. Extreme nationalism and chauvinism were evident in these clashes. Unprotected women, children and old men were killed at Omorphita by Greek Cypriots and at Tochni by Turkish extremists in revenge killings.

On December 30, London and Ankara succeeded in imposing the «Green Line» thus laying down the foundation of partition. Following the clashes and by agreement of the guarantor powers, the British brought under their administration the Cyprus military forces. Once this had been achieved, British General Young took control and divided a map of Nicosia in green ink (thereby the name, «Green Line»). For the first time the warring Greeks and Turks were separated. This also contributed to the cultivation of the idea of the impossibility of peaceful co-existence.

The Turkish Cypriots were either persuaded or forced by the Turkish military or the armed bands of Turkish Cypriots to move behind the Green Line in Nicosia and to confine themselves to the Turkish quarters of Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos. Although General Young had drawn the Green Line with the consent of President Makarios, Vice-President Kuchuk and the Ambassadors of Greece, Turkey and Great Britain, no one foresaw that it would become a «permanent» dividing line. This is because the Green Line agreement contained a clear provision for the return of the populace to their homes (paragraph 3).⁴¹

After the events of December 1963 partition was totally unacceptable for the majority of the Cypriots who wanted to live together in harmony and peace.

If Makarios had acted as President of all Cypriots, it would have been possible to overcome the weaknesses of the Zurich constitution and thereby re-establish the former friendly and peaceful relations between the two communities. Imposed independence could have become true independence.

Makarios had a duty to understand his responsibilities as a non-party, independent leader of all Cypriots, and he should have begun his efforts towards this goal by casting all nationalistic tendencies aside on assuming the presidency.

Conclusion

Today, we need to learn from history because an awareness of history can not only safeguard us from unjust distortions and exaggerations about past events but also assist the county's political leaders in drawing up a correct political strategy. The Greeks and Turks should be able to live united and unhindered, moving towards joint political, economic and ideological visions.

The two communities must begin to learn about each other once more so as to break down the wall of separation. Attempts to remove the inequality of economic development and the difference in living standards between the northern and the southern parts of Cyprus should be points of unity and peaceful co-existence.

An awareness that we are living in a world of rapprochement and peaceful dialogue, a recognition of the new climate of detente in a world which is changing and which imposes the need for new political thinking, must receive a positive response from Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Notes

1. a) In his study «Political Parties in Cyprus 1878-1955» the sociologist Michalis Attalides referred to joint declarations by Cyprus Greeks and Turks. *Philelefttheros* Nicosia (19-25/2/88).

b) For joint action Greek and Turkish Cypriots, see Stavros Pantelis, *A Modern History of Cyprus*, London: East West, 1984pp.45-47.

c) *Alithia* (12/10/1901), p.2 refers to the reception for elected Turkish representatives by Greeks in Nicosia.

d) *Kiryx*, Nicosia 17/11/1917, p.3 refers to the fact that a Greek was best man at a Turkish friends' wedding.

e) The Turkish Cypriots in Limassol held a theatrical evening attended by a large number of Greek Cypriots. *Alithia*, Nicosia 1/11/1920, p.3.

2. For information on the economic and social life of Limassol see

a) Yiannis Lefkis, *Roots*, pp. 33-34

b) Ploutis Servas, *Cyprus Responsibilities*, pp. 65-69.

- c) *Alithia* 29/10/1919, p/2 writes that Limassol Greeks and Turks asked Mayor Spyros Araouzos to fix the price of various foodstuffs following the continual rise in prices.
3. *Kiryx*, Nicosia 3/5/1919 p.3
 4. *Kiryx*, Nicosia 13/9/1919 p.2.
 5. Yiangos Iliades, in a 30/5/1919 supplement to *Alithia* appealed to the «industrious of Cyprus» to subscribe to the socialist Athens newspaper *Society* and the magazines *Pyrros* and *Noumas*.
 6. *Chronos*, Nicosia 4/10/33.
 7. a) *Kiryx*, Nicosia 7/12/23 p.2
 - b) For the progressive rural proposals of Kyriakos Rossides, see *Kiryx* 26/1/24, p.4: «Measures for Rural Economic - Organisation».
 8. *Neos Anthropos*, 1/6/25.
 9. *Ibid.* 18/2/25.
 10. *Ibid.*, 1st issue.
 11. *Ibid.*, 1/5/26.
 12. *Ibid.*, 8/1/27.
 13. An extraordinary CPC meeting was held on August 20-21, 1927 to discuss the creation of a united anti-British front. The Manifesto of the meeting is an important historical document published in *Neos Anthropos* on 31/8/27.
 14. T.G. Adams, *War, Revolution and Peace* (Stanford, CAV Hoover Institution, 1971).
 15. The two CPC leaders were Charalambos Vatiliotis (Vatis) and Costas Skeleas.
 16. *Kiryx* on 13/9/19, p.21, refers to the Limassol Porters' Union. This implies that the union was one of the first ones in the country.
 17. PEO, "40 Years of the Pancyprian Transport, Port and General Workers' Union 1940-1980", Nicosia, 1981, p.72.
 18. Unpublished PEO files.
 19. A. Ziartides, "The Unemployment Problem", *New Democrat*, November 1949, pp. 36-38.
 20. Taken from Unpublished PEO files. 23. Lefkis, op.cit., pp. 35-36.
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. *Democrat*, 14/3/48.
 23. Lefkis, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
 24. PEO, "40 Years of the Pancyprian Transport, Port and General Workers' Union 1940-1980", p. 53.
 24. Unpublished PEO files.

25. *Ibid.*
26. Unpublished PEO files.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Halkin Sesi* Nicosia 14/8/48.
29. For the organised reaction and divisive tendencies among the Turkish Cypriots, see P. Papadimitris, *Historical Encyclopaedia of Cyprus, 1946-1954* op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 314.
30. *Ibid.*, Vol 3, p. 320.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 343.
32. *New Democrat*, 24/12/54.
33. Unpublished PEO files.
34. *Halkin Sesi*, 13/9/55.
35. For the various murders see *Cyprus*, Athens 1985, pp. 18-19.
36. Unpublished PEO files.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Servas, op. cit. Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 270.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
40. For the contents of the 13 Points see P. Papadimitris, *Historical Encyclopaedia of Cyprus, 1960-1973* Nicosia Vol. 1, pp. 71-74.
41. For the crisis of December 1963, see *ibid* pp. 74-80.

FROM TRADITIONALISM TO NATIONALISM AND BEYOND

Niyazi Kizilyurek

Abstract

Living together is one of the major issues in Cyprus today. It is also of utmost importance in any interpretation of the history of Cyprus. This paper examines whether living together is possible and whether there has ever been a period of peaceful coexistence in Cyprus. A variety of answers to these questions enable us to reach a deeper understanding of the politics and history of Cyprus.

The two sides in the Cyprus conflict, the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot, are constantly inventing, reconstructing and using the past to gain ground in their current antagonism.

From the Turkish Cypriot point of view, there has never been a period of peaceful coexistence. For the Greek Cypriots, there have always been good relations between the two communities. Within this contradictory interpretation of the past, lies not only their current antagonism but also their antagonistic claims for the future.

The history of any nation is made up of a series of events. One cannot dispute events that have happened. These are subject to empirical verification. To understand these events, however, it is necessary to interpret values and facts. H. Carr (1961) points out that "somewhere between these two poles - the north pole of valueless facts and the south pole of value judgments still struggling to transform themselves into facts - lies the realm of historical truth."¹

Obsessed with their respective community, the two communities in Cyprus reconstruct and use historical events to justify their present political positions and aims. The very fine link between valueless facts and value judgments is replaced by the reconstructed "rights and wrongs". Y. Papadakis (1993) explains:

"One of the outcomes of the reconstruction of the past is that memories of pain in the hand of past oppressors are diachronically transferred to younger generations while the sufferings or experiences of the other ethnic group are ignored. The subsequent impression is one where it is only us who suffered, a notion which gives rise to notions of historic wrongs and to latent feelings of revenge."²

Traditional Coexistence

It would be an exaggeration to say that Turkish and Greek Cypriots have never lived

peacefully together, as it would be to say that there have never been clashes between the two communities.

Both Greek and Turkish Cypriots agree that for the largest part of the Ottoman rule (1571-1878), the population of the island lived and worked together under similar conditions. This was the period of traditional coexistence in which the Cypriot folk culture developed. In spite of ethnic and religious differences, the vast majority of the population shared the same fate, the same exploitation and extreme poverty. As Chrawshaw (1978) notes:

"...material differences are not marked. Turkish houses tend to be more spacious but barer; the Ottoman system of land tenure and primitive agricultural practices are common to both communities."³

During this period of pre-nationalism, there were several joint uprisings by the Christian and Moslem populations against the ruling elite of Cyprus, which was composed of Ottoman administrators, landlords and the higher Orthodox clergy. During the Ottoman rule, the Orthodox church acquired ethnarchical status and cooperated with the administration. Although the Moslem and Christian peasants were engaged in social interaction out of which the common Cypriot psychological make up was formed, the development of trade and the emergence of a Christian middle class brought turbulence to the relationship amongst various groups of the ruling class.

M. Attalides (1978) explains:

"The two lines of 'stratification' were not aligned with each other. In the economic sphere it seems that the dominant group during the middle of the nineteenth century was the Christian one. There is also evidence that there was on occasion, class solidarity among Christian and Moslem peasants. But the state structure which was based on religious differentiation gave a clear superiority to Moslems"⁴

Although it was in the last decades of the Ottoman period that Greek nationalism in Cyprus began to develop, a real integration of the Cypriot population had not emerged. The Ottoman ruling system based on the Millet, kept the different religious groups administratively apart.

The Age of Nationalism and British Rule

E. Gellner (1983), believes that nations as a natural, God given way of classifying a man are a myth. Nationalism on the other hand, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, is a reality." P. Kitromilides (1990) also argues:

"The generally circumstantial character of the growth of nationalism belies the basic illusion entertained by nationalists as to the immanence of its values in particular cultures. The historical record instead seems to suggest that there is nothing foreordained about the emergence of nationalist movements and the conversion of particular ethnic and cultural groups to a particular set of national values. The adoption of a particular sense of ethnic identity and loyalty are the outcomes of processes of historical change that transform

certain ethnological contexts by politicizing them according to the policies of modern national states."⁶

Thus, the inclusion of all of the Greek speaking, Christian Orthodox part of the Byzantine Empire, became the state doctrine of the Greek nation state which emerged in 1821. In order to implement the political programme of the Great Idea, Greece promoted an intellectual expansionist ideology emanating from the Hellenic Kingdom to the Eastern periphery of Hellenism.⁷ In the case of Cyprus, this was achieved via the Orthodox church -the main agency of Greek nationalism in Cyprus. The Orthodox church had close intellectual links to the Hellenic centre and began to turn the local traditions into dynamic elements of national politics.

Together with the educational and political mobilisation of the majority population of Cyprus for union with Greece, the economic conditions were also encouraging for the unification demand. Dissatisfaction arising from the heavy taxation and exploitation of the peasants by private money lenders, led to anti-British feelings. Many peasants were also manipulated politically by their creditors.

As indicated by a colonial officer in 1929, "the peasant gives his vote in favour of the candidate supported by his creditor. If he did not do so, the creditor would foreclose or obtain judgement against him on his bond and he would be reduced to beggary".⁸

P. Kitromilides (1990) observes that "the growth of a movement of national consciousness-raising and national assertion that culminated in a political vision of national emancipation through union with Greece turned the archaic, distant Greek speaking community of Cyprus into a dynamic, political society, which excluded as heresy and treason the visualization of any other form of collective existence short of union with Greece".⁹

The exploitation of racial differences between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots was the very foundation of the British administration policy in Cyprus. According to the constitution implemented in 1882, the elected Moslem and Christian members were in a permanent majority in the legislative council; however "the practical working of the constitution depended upon the exploitation of the racial cleavage between the Greeks and Turks."¹⁰

This constitutional system was established after Cyprus became a crown colony in 1925. As colonel Wedgwood describes:

"Crown colony rule had to be established somehow under the colour of the free constitution. The simplest way seemed to be the way of "divide and rule-" communal representation was invented ... If there had been at Nicosia a safe official majority, if we had not had to play off Turk against Greek ... the administration would have laid better foundations and taken more pride in its job."¹¹

Towards the end of the 1920's, the Turkish Cypriot nationalists posed a strong challenge to the traditional Ottoman elite which had become part of the British

administration in Cyprus. Under the influence of Kemalism, a new movement emerged among Turkish Cypriots which challenged the traditional elite and demanded the introduction of Kemal's reforms in Cyprus. A confidential report from the government of Cyprus to a colonial officer in 1928 noted the following:

"Neither is it certain that the Government will invariably be able to count upon the votes of all the Turkish members: Signs of a determined movement, supported if not directed by foreign agencies, in favour of introducing in Cyprus the reforms recently carried out in Turkey are now appearing... The cleavage between the old and new Turks is already in process of breaking down the solidarity of the Turkish community. It is not impossible that an adherent of the new school may displace one of the present Turkish members at the next elections, and in that event, he might throw in his lot with the Greek majority whenever his party saw an advantage in such a course."¹²

Indeed in 1930, Kemalist Necati Bey was elected to the legislative council and set an end to the British-Turk Ottoman interplay. From then on, the constitutional system of the British rule was centred around the person of the "worthless Nejati Bey" as Governor Storrs described him.¹³

Nationalism arrived at the Turkish speaking community of Cyprus almost one century after it had arrived at the Greek Cypriot community. Before the emergence of modern Turkey (1923), the Turkish speaking community of Cyprus was ruled by the Ottoman elite, which became part of the British colonial administration. In the 1920's, under the influence of Kemalism, some Turkish Cypriot intellectuals organised themselves and began challenging the Ottoman elite. With the support of the first Turkish consul of Turkey in Cyprus Asaf bey, they organised the first National Congress in Cyprus. Their main objective was the introduction of Kemal's reforms and the democratization of the Turkish Cypriot community, which was under the rule of the religious leader Sir Münür. A colonial official's view of Sir Münür is enlightening:

"Munir bey is the leader of the Turkish population of this colony. He is 100 percent pro-British, has the mentality of the old Turkish pasha and has absorbed into himself every office he could."¹⁴

The function of the traditional elite was to secure support for the British government against the political demands of the Greek Cypriots, and to keep the Turkish Cypriot community apart from the influence of Kemalism. It is important to note that Kemal's anti-British foreign policy in the 1920's was also adopted by Turkish Cypriot nationalists. The raising of national consciousness among Turkish Cypriots in this period seemed to be a challenge both to the traditional elite and to the British rule. When the active Kemalist Necati bey got elected to the legislative council in 1930, he cooperated and voted with the Greek Cypriot members of the council, an act which alarmed the British rulers at the time.

Towards the end of the 1930's, the colonial government was prepared to adapt itself to the new conditions of the Turkish Cypriot community and to harmonize its relations

certain ethnological contexts by politicizing them according to the policies of modern national states."⁶

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th the Turkish Cypriot nationalists. On 19th November 1937, Downing Street sent the colonial government of Cyprus the following message:

"The collapse of the old order in Turkey and the rise of the Kemalist republic has created a new problem to which the British administration in Cyprus must seek to adapt itself. It seems desirable that the Government make an appeal to the younger and more progressive Cypriot Turks."¹⁵

The need for such an endeavour was also facilitated by the desire of the British to elch the Greek nationalist sentiment. As P. Kitromilides (1990) points out, the expansion of Greek nationalism in Cyprus resulted in an oversight, even oblivion of the Turkish Cypriot community. Because Enosis became the national claim of almost every Greek Cypriot after the Second World War, the Turkish Cypriots organize in 1933 their first mass-organization, the KATAK (Association of the Turkish Minority in Cyprus). They also pushed for closer relations with Turkey. The reaction of the Turkish Cypriots to the Enosis movement was encouraged by the colonial government.

In April 1948, the "Special Turkish Committee" was set up by the colonial Government Lord Winster. The objective of the "Special Turkish Committee" was to establish better relations between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community. Teachers and school material from Turkey arrived in Nicosia; the celebration of Turkey's national day were recognized also in Cyprus; Kemal's reforms including family law education were introduced into the Turkish Cypriot community. The educational and political mobilization of 1948-1958, aiming at raising Turkish national consciousness, resulted in the recognition of Turkey as the 'fatherland' of Turkish Cypriots. From then on, Turkey worked hand in hand with the Turkish Cypriot leadership and the UK to oppose the Greek Cypriot demand for Enosis. The policy of the British administration to use Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to counterbalance the Greek Cypriot national demand for Enosis, was a matter of concern even to some colonial officials. In a colonial office document dating back to 1948 one can read the following:

"I am very concerned at the apparent growth of minority consciousness among the Turks in Cyprus during the last year, and I fear that the Cyprus Government may have unwittingly encouraged this through the Committee for Turkish Affairs which Lord Winster has set up. The superficial attractions of a loyal minority community supporting the government of a foreign protective power ought to be too well known by now to fall into this kind of trap. Recent history is littered with examples, from Northern Ireland to the Moslems in India; the only way out is for the minority community to make its peace with the majority without seeking protection elsewhere."¹⁶

However, the politics of divide and rule was expanded into other aspects of the Cypriot society. As Woodhouse, a British official in Cyprus admitted, Harold Mcmillan, Foreign Secretary, urged the Britons in Cyprus to stir up the Turks in order to realize the Greek agitation.¹⁷ When a Turkish Cypriot Auxiliary Police force was created during 1955-59 to fight the Greek Cypriot Enosis fighters, the intercommunal conflict became almost inevitable.

Towards the end of the 1950's, both communities were politically polarized. Their national claims, Enosis and Taksim were beyond compromise. Both ruling elites were ruthless in discrediting as traitors all voices of criticism. P. Kitromilides, (1979) explains:

"Out of the configuration of two opposed conservative and authoritarian nationalisms, symbolically antagonistic and mutually exclusive, developed the dialectics of intolerance that provided the ideological content of ethnic conflict. Precisely on the eve of her independence, Cyprus experienced this dialectic of intolerance that stretched from the ideological to most other levels of public life".¹⁸

Republic of Cyprus and Cypriot Elites

The insistence of Britain to maintain Cyprus as a British colony and the implementation of the politics of divide and rule brought not only the two ethnic communities into conflict but also Turkey and Greece to the brink of war. While Greece insisted on the right of self determination for the majority population of the island, something which would have resulted in the union of Cyprus with Greece, Turkish strategic thinking was directed against such an event. For Turkey, her southern flank would be exposed if Cyprus became a part of Greece. For Britain, Cyprus was strategically too important to be granted independence.

The antagonism between the three NATO members over Cyprus disabled military cooperation within the alliance and alarmed the USA. With the active involvement of the latter, negotiations between Turkey and Greece over the Cyprus issue began. At the beginning of 1959, the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey agreed to organize a prime ministers' summit.

The prime minister of Turkey, Menderes and of Greece, Karamanlis met on 6 February 1959 in Zurich and agreed on a so-called independent state of Cyprus. Among other things, they also signed the following documents:

- a) Fundamental Structure of the Republic of Cyprus,
- b) Guarantor-agreement between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Britain,
- c) Alliance-agreement between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey
- d) Gentlemen's agreement between Greece and Turkey.

On 19 February 1959, the London Conference took place at the 'Luncaster house'. Great Britain, Turkey, Greece and the representatives of the two ethnic communities of Cyprus participated and signed the above agreements. It is important to underline that the representatives of the two Cypriot communities were invited only to sign these agreements and not to participate in the negotiation process. The compromise agreement among the three antagonists over Cyprus, took place during the cold war period, for the 'common good' of the western alliance. For the USA, the Cyprus agreement served as an example of ending colonialism in strategically important areas, without harming western interests.

The agreement gave such rights to three guarantors, that it made it virtually impossible

to talk of an independent state of Cyprus. According to the agreement, Turkey, Greece, and the UK, reserved the right of intervention, in the case that Cypriots would try to change the constitution. A certain number of Greek (950) and Turkish (650) soldiers were stationed on Cypriot soil and two military bases were granted to the UK as sovereign British territory. According to the constitution, "in so far as common or concerted action may not prove possible, each of the three guarantor powers reserves the right to take action with the sole aim of re-establishing the state of affairs created by the present Treaty".

Given that a political community is defined as a group of people living under a common regime and making important decisions for the group as a whole, one can argue that the authorities of the newly-born state of Cyprus did not meet this requirement. Instead, they aimed for separate controversial national policies. Within the Greek Cypriot community, "although practically all social groups had different but definite reasons for not desiring Enosis with Greece, the formula of Enosis remained a ritual confession which outlived its material basis of economic and social interests".¹⁹

For the Turkish Cypriot leadership, partition remained the ultimate aim. The pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures was used selectively. Furthermore, separate educational and communication systems were developed to transform the folk culture of Cypriots into antagonistic national cultures in order to provide a legitimate basis for their national politics. From the Greek Cypriot point of view, the island had always been Greek and should be kept Greek. The Turkish Cypriot leadership saw in ethnic and religious differences, the very ground for partition.

The insistence on separate 'community interests', left no room for the emergence of a Cypriot society. The state of Cyprus was essentially left without citizens. Although Cyprus had the opportunity to overcome national antagonism between 1960-1974, foreign intervention on the one hand and nationalistic desires by the ruling elites on the other, made the events of July 1974 almost inevitable. In addition to the oppressive national ideologies, charismatic leaders in both communities such as Makarios and Denktash, who were seen as possessing extraordinary qualities in defending the needs of their respective communities, disabled any opposition in Cyprus which could challenge the nationalist course of developments.

Beyond Nationalism

After a long antagonism, both nationalisms in Cyprus seem to have been defeated. Enosis has been defeated and Taksim is a long way from being a realistic prospect for the Turkish Cypriot community. Both nationalisms in Cyprus have tried to find political expression and failed. This may be a turning point in the history of Cyprus.

The failure of nationalism may not be all that surprising. Gellner (1983) argues that the number of nationalisms in the world is 800, even though there exist more than 8000 languages and cultures around the globe. This mere fact indicates that most potential nationalisms must either fail or refrain from even trying to find political expression.²⁰

In the case of Cyprus, each culturally distinct group has a legitimate interest in maintaining the integrity of that culture and passing it on intact to the next generation. However, the idea of an organic relationship between the language and the culture on the one hand and the state on the other within an area like Cyprus, will inevitably end up in terror.

Popper (1962) explains:

"The attempt to find some 'natural' boundaries for states, and accordingly, to look upon the state as a 'natural' unit, leads to the principle of the nation state and to the romantic fictions of nationalism, racialism, and tribalism".²¹

It became the ambition of many to have a language and culture coinciding with or determining a unit of rule. However this principle is not 'natural' but invented, and leads necessarily to 'ethnic cleansing'.

There is a desperate need to distinguish between ethnicity and the state. The principle of the nation state should be replaced by a denationalized state, which keeps an equal distance from its ethnic groups.

The new way of living together should be based on the 'unity through difference'. A society must be united on the basis of the needs and interests of the broad majority of the population and different through the recognition of cultural diversity. In such a society, cultural pluralism can help the insecurity and loss of ethnic identity. Furthermore, the equal treatment of different groups can unite culturally diverse communities. Governments should be judged by standards of utility rather than by who is professed to govern. Similarly, the state should be centered around the needs and interests of its citizens. Such a political and cultural reorientation can transcend any idea of nationalism without denying the ethnic origin and cultural uniqueness of each group. However, visible differences are not themselves the problem. The problem is the ideology of racism which misinterprets diversity.²²

The Turkish and Greek Cypriots must realize that coexistence is possible if they acknowledge their differences and tolerate each other. Crick Bernard (1962) reminds us that we are not left with many choices. "A politics of vengeance is not politics. Revenge is a recklessness towards the future in vain attempt to make the present abolish a suffering which is already past."²³

Notes

1. H.E. Carr, 1961
2. Yiannis Papadakis, 1993
3. Nancy Chrawshaw, 1978, p. 122
4. Michael Attalides, 1978, p. 30
5. Gellner, 1983, pp. 48-49
6. Paschalis M. Kitromilides, 1990, p. 13

7. Ibid
8. CO67/22714, 143277
9. Paschalis, Kitromilides, 1990
10. CO67/314/13f. 144343
11. CO67/31413f. 144343
12. CO67/22714f. 143277
13. CO67/239/14f. 143441
14. CO67/247/13f. 14363
15. CO67/281/14f. 144143
16. CO67/342/I. 127219. SS.B
17. Christopher Hitschens, 1984
18. Paschalis Kitromilides, 1979
19. N. Kadritzke and W. Wagner, 1979
20. Ernest Gellner, 1983
21. Karl Popper, 1962, p. 288
22. Race & Class, Winter 1988
23. Bernard Crick, 1964

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12. Popper, Karl. *Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol I, London: (Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1962.

13. Race & Class, Volume xxix. London, Winter 1988.

14. Worsley, P. and P. Kitromilides (eds), *Small States of the Modern World*. Nicosia, 1979.

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