



Cyprus

A Turkish Cypriot Perspective

Background

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean, but arguably its most valued. It has always been a strategic prize for external powers and as such, it has had a rich and varied history. The island lies just 40 miles south of Türkiye's southern coast. Looking further afield, it is 77 miles west of Syria, 120 miles from Lebanon, 260 miles from Israel, 370 miles from Egypt and 600 miles from Greece.



Whilst the earliest settlers were known to be descended from Anatolia (modern day Türkiye) there is no record of a native Cypriot race and, consequently, no Cypriot nation.

As can be seen below, the island has passed through the hands of numerous foreign powers, but the greatest impact on its population has undoubtedly been from the people of modern-day Greece and Türkiye. There were two main waves of Greek migration to the island around 1400 BC and 1100 BC, after which Greek culture was firmly implanted on the island. However, the island did not fall under Greek rule at this time. The next most significant impact came in 1571 when the island fell under Ottoman rule. In line with the practice of the times the Ottomans brought a varied group of peasants and artisans from the Anatolian mainland, estimated at around 20,000 people. In addition, there was the Ottoman soldiery, who were numbered in the thousands, but which fluctuated considerably over time. By 1640, the number of Turkish Cypriots was probably between 120,000-140,000.¹ The descendants of these people are today's Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Two communities who, despite their years in Cyprus, remain deeply attached to their respective motherlands as well as to their island home.

For a short time, the Ottoman Turks came to represent a substantial number, if never the majority, settling everywhere across the island except up in the Troodos mountains². However, following some movement of

¹ The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict

Clement Dodd

² Cyprus. The Need for New Perspectives

Clement Dodd

Turks back to the mainland and an increase in Greeks, thanks in part to the end of serfdom and religious persecution which they had suffered under the Venetians, the Greek Cypriot community grew until they would eventually outnumber their Turkish Cypriot counterparts by around four to one at the time of the island's independence. Although they shared the island, the two communities generally settled in separate villages or into separate quarters of mixed villages. Relations between the two communities tended to be cordial but fell short of total integration, due mainly to the differences in language and religion. For example, while mixed marriages did sometimes occur, they were extremely rare both before and after independence. A notable exception which existed in terms of language was in the 'Dillirga' region in the northwest corner of the island, home to a small group of Turks who often used Greek as a first language, although they too maintained their Turkish identity and Muslim faith.

Britain first reached agreement with the Ottoman Empire in 1878 to administer the island on behalf of the financially broken Ottomans, taking advantage of an empire which had come to be known as the 'Sick Man of Europe'³. The agreement, reached during the Congress of Berlin, allowed Britain to gain a presence on the island in return for offering military support to the Ottomans during the Russo-Turkish war⁴. When the Ottomans reluctantly joined the side of Germany in World War I Britain formally annexed the island, incorporating it into the British Empire in 1914. In their relatively short presence, the British never settled in any significant numbers. For them, Cyprus was strictly a military asset. A useful staging post which would come to be regarded as their 'unsinkable aircraft carrier'⁵.

What follows is a look at the 'Cyprus problem' from a Turkish Cypriot perspective. It concentrates on the Turkish Cypriot experience because it exists as a counter to the Greek Cypriot narrative which, for reasons we will cover below, is not only the dominant view, but very often the only view. We will follow the island's independence in 1960 through to the present time and cover the most important events in the recent history of this troubled island.

Taşkın İsmet – August 2025

Cyprus Timeline

10,000 BC	First known human inhabitants (Eteocypriots, from Anatolia)
1,400 BC	Kingdom of Ugarit
1,400 BC	<i>First wave of Greek migration</i>
1,100 BC	<i>Second wave of Greek migration</i>
721 BC	Assyrian
570 BC	Egyptian
525 BC	Persian
334 BC	Macedonian
312 BC	Diadochi
58 BC	Roman
395	Eastern Roman (upon the division of Eastern and Western Roman Empire)
649	Muawiya
965	Byzantium
1191	Richard the Lionheart
1192	Lusignan
1426	Mamluks
1427	Lusignan
1489	Venetian
1571	Ottoman
1878	British (Administration only)
1914	British
1960	Independence (Bi-Communal: Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot)

³ <https://ww1.habsburger.net/en/chapters/sick-man-europe-major-power-decline>

⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Cyprus_\(1878%E2%80%93present\)#cite_note-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Cyprus_(1878%E2%80%93present)#cite_note-1)

⁵ <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/the-uk-and-its-unsinkable-aircraft-carriers-a-guide/>

Prominent actors in the Cyprus story

Greek Cypriot

Archbishop Makarios	Greek Cypriot clergyman and politician Head of Church of Cyprus President of the Republic of Cyprus President of the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus	1950-1977 1960-1964 1964-1974 1974-1977
Glaftos Clerides	Greek Cypriot barrister and politician President of the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus	1974 (interim) 1993-2003
Tassos Papadopoulos	Greek Cypriot barrister and politician President of the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus	2003-2008
Georgios Grivas	Greek Cypriot officer of the Hellenic Army Commander in Chief of the (Greek) Armed Forces in Cyprus Founder and leader of EOKA Founder and leader of EOKA B	1955-1959 1971-1974
Nikos Sampson	EOKA militant, journalist and politician President of the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus	1974 (8 days)

Turkish Cypriot

Dr Fazil Küçük	Turkish Cypriot Dr and politician Vice-President of the Republic of Cyprus	1960-1973
Rauf Raif Denktaş	Turkish Cypriot barrister, jurist and politician President of the Turkish Communal Chamber Vice-President of the Republic of Cyprus President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	1960-1973 1973-1976 1976-1985 1985-2005

1. Towards British Withdrawal

From the mid-1950's Britain began to look for an exit strategy to end its colonial rule in Cyprus...

By the 1950s, world opinion stood firmly in opposition to colonial rule, and in addition, there were significant costs to the British purse. The situation was further complicated by the onset of a Greek Cypriot terror campaign in April 1950 by *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston* (EOKA), the Greek Cypriot terrorist group who had fought for an end to British rule. The EOKA terror campaign to oust the British led to the deaths of 371 British military personnel and a further 21 British civilian police officers⁶. The combination of these factors made Britain's ongoing presence hard to justify both at home and abroad. However, as Cyprus was inhabited by two distinctly separate peoples (Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots) it was clear that the handover of power would be more complicated than a simple case of British withdrawal followed by local rule. The dilemma which the British faced in the build-up to their handover was the diametrically opposed views of each of the two main communities on the future of the island.

The larger Greek Cypriot community saw Cyprus as a Greek island. For them, Cyprus was an integral part of Greece and *enosis* (the union of the Cyprus with Greece) was the only acceptable solution to follow British withdrawal. The smaller, but still significant Turkish presence on the island was simply not considered by the Greek community. In their eyes, should any Turks wish to stay, it would naturally be as a minority in a Hellenic island. EOKA, championed this same cause. Unlike most groups who fought to oust their colonial masters, EOKA had not taken up arms against the British to fight for independence but, instead, had fought to become part of Greece.

While EOKA led the paramilitary wing, the *enosis* movement in Cyprus was led first and foremost by the all-powerful Greek Orthodox, Church of Cyprus. Having overall leadership of the *enosis* movement, the church's role ensured that it was not only a cultural and nationalist cause for the Greek Cypriot people, but also a deeply religious one. Opposition from any Greek Cypriots would therefore lead to ex-communication as well as charges of treason. Perhaps ironically for the Turkish Cypriots, the church had assumed their insurmountable leadership role thanks to their former Ottoman rulers. Just as in other conquered lands, the Ottomans, for all their faults, were remarkably tolerant of religious diversity. Provided taxes were paid they were happy to allow religious freedom and were often supportive of religious leadership as they saw them as perfectly placed to maintain order, which in turn would ensure acceptance of their presence as colonial power.

Enosis was certainly not an ideal supported by the Turkish Cypriot community. They had not been opposed to British rule, but once it was clear that this would be coming to an end they hoped and expected that this would result in a return to Turkish (previously Ottoman) rule. But when it became clear that this would not be considered they responded to the threat of *enosis* with a counter-call for *Taksim* (the partition of the island). They saw considerable risks for themselves if Cyprus were absorbed into Greece. Stories of the fate of the Turks in Crete – another island with a mixed Greek-Turkish population – were seen a warning from history. There is little dispute that during the Greek War of Independence widespread massacres of Turks occurred across the Ottoman Empire, including in Crete. At its peak in the 1800s, the Ottoman Muslim population in Crete was about 80,000-100,000, but by 1923 they were nearly all gone. They had either been killed, had fled or converted, with the remainder being sent to Türkiye as part of a widescale population transfer between Greece and Türkiye in the aftermath of the Turkish war of independence. The numbers of deaths in Crete vary significantly depending on the source but given the Turkish Cypriots would have relied on Ottoman sources, their alarm at the possibility of *enosis* was understandable.

⁶ <https://www.pariaki.com/2016/08/392-british-killed-in-cyprus-emergency-honoured-at-national-memorial-arboretum-near-lichfield/>

For their part, the British were willing to accept any agreement that could be reached by the two communities and their respective motherlands (Greece and Türkiye), providing they retained full sovereignty over their two military bases at Akrotiri and Dhekelia - both located on the island's southern coast. For them, Cyprus continued to be solely a strategic interest. However, beyond that strategic interest they made a concerted effort to ensure that the handover was fair to both communities.

The British were acutely aware of Greek designs on the island. They had first been approached by Bishop Kyprianos of Kitium immediately after taking over the administration of the island in July 1878. His statement, delivered on behalf of the Greek Cypriot community, advised that "We accept the change of Government inasmuch as we trust that Great Britain will help Cyprus, as it did with the Ionian Islands, to be united with Mother Greece, with which it is naturally connected."⁷ Sir Winston Churchill appeared to fan the flame of enosis when, during his visit to the island in 1907, he stated that the union of Cyprus with Greece would be "*a desirable consummation*" which would "*doubtless be fulfilled in the plenitude of time.*"⁸ However, he went on to warn the Greeks that the situation was perhaps not so straight forward. He clarified those comments with "*I think it is only natural that the Cypriot people of Greek decent should regard their incorporation with their mother country as an ideal to be cherished; but I trust that those who feel so earnestly will not forget that they must show respect for the similar feelings of others.*"⁹

When the Ottoman Empire joined the first World War in 1914 on the side of the Central Powers, thus becoming an enemy of Britain, enosis seemed to be a foregone conclusion. It was shortly after this in 1915 when, in the midst of war, Britain offered Cyprus to Greece. In return, Britain asked that Greece take up arms against Bulgaria. Greece, however, declined. Although they were not aware at the time, their golden opportunity to rule Cyprus was lost.

The church continued to press their claim. They were behind a plebiscite of Greek Cypriots in January 1950 on the question of enosis. Although it was not sanctioned by the British authorities¹⁰, it was staged to sway British opinion in the event of their withdrawal. In a demonstration of the church's hold over their community the result was 95% in favour of enosis. It was in this environment that the Bishop of Kition, Michael Mouskos, would be named as the new Archbishop of Cyprus, effectively becoming the leader of the Greek Cypriot community. He was enthroned on 20th October 1950, taking the clerical name of Archbishop Makarios. As a precursor to how he would conduct himself as Archbishop, he greeted his ascendancy to his leadership role with the words "*I take the holy oath that I shall work for the birth of our national freedom and shall never waiver from our policy of uniting Cyprus with Mother Greece.*"¹¹

The enosis movement was not only being pursued from Cyprus, but from the Greek mainland too. The Greek Government's White Paper of November 1954 confirmed that "*The present Greek state, ever since its foundation, aspired towards the liberation of all islands whose population was wholly or mainly Greek. These islands are the following:*

1. *The Ionian Islands*
2. *Crete*
3. *The Aegean Islands of the Eastern Mediterranean*
4. *The Dodecanese and*
5. *Cyprus*"¹²

⁷ The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict

Clement Dodd

⁸ Cyprus. The Need For New Perspectives

Clement Dodd

⁹ The Cyprus Question

Michael Stephen

¹⁰ Zypern: Anschluss an Griechenland

¹¹ The Cyprus Question

Michael Stephen

¹² The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict

Clement Dodd

However, despite the view of the Greek Cypriots, Britain was now very clear that the island could not simply pass into Greek hands as had been the case with other islands in the Aegean. During preliminary discussions in 1956 the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, promised that *"it will be the purpose of Her Majesty's Government to ensure that any exercise of self-determination should be effected in such a manner that the Turkish Cypriot community, no less than the Greek Cypriot community, shall in the special circumstances of Cyprus be given freedom to decide for themselves their future status."*¹³ The impossibility of accepting Greek claims to the island was put very clearly to the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Karamanlis, when British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, explained on 8th August 1958 that *"Were Cyprus located west of Greece we would have conceded it to you as we did with the Ionian islands. But we have to face reality. The existence of two Governments (Greece and Türkiye) is a fact."*¹⁴

2. Independence

With the parameters of British withdrawal now clear for all concerned, talks on the post-colony status of the island began in earnest...

The talks were led by Britain, Greece and Türkiye, alongside the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, being Archbishop Makarios and Dr Fazil Küçük respectively. Following intense preliminary discussions, a meeting was held in Zurich on 11th February 1959, where the first of the agreements was signed. Eight days later, on the 19th February, the parties met again in Lancaster House, London, to sign the 'Zurich and London Agreements'. These agreements would form the basis of the Cyprus constitution. The final draft was completed and signed alongside two Treaties of Alliance and Guarantee, according to which small Greek and Turkish military contingents were to be stationed on the island. It created a new partnership republic of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, with provisions for two British military bases (of approximately 100 square miles in total) which would remain sovereign British territory or 'British Sovereign Areas' (BSAs).

The agreement was a carefully thought-out balancing act between all sides and great efforts were made to ensure that there were not seen to be any winners and losers. Both enosis (union with Greece) and Taksim (partition) were specifically prohibited, and the entire agreement was protected by the three guarantor nations (Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom). *It was a constitution which required goodwill and honesty to have a chance of success.*

However, pushing that delicately agreed script to one side, Archbishop Makarios made a speech in April 1959, during a ceremony celebrating the anniversary of the start of the EOKA terrorist campaign against British rule, in which he made it clear that British withdrawal from Cyprus was not to be the final act for EOKA. He assured the Greek Cypriots who had gathered that *"The epic grandeur and glory of EOKA's liberation struggle has laid the foundation stone of national freedom. This freedom it is our sacred duty to safeguard and complete. National struggles never come to an end. They merely change their form, preserving deep down the same substance and the same content... The realisation of our hopes and aspirations (enosis) is not complete under the Zurich and London Agreements... The glorious liberation struggle, whose fifth anniversary we celebrate today, has secured for us bastions and impregnable strongholds for our independence. From these bastions we will continue the struggle to complete victory."*¹⁵ He followed that up on 13th December 1959 when, totally

¹³ House of Commons

¹⁴ Cyprus. Reluctant Republic

¹⁵ Excerpta Cypria for Today

Alan Lennox-Boyd

Stephen G Xydis

Andrew Faulds

19 December 1956

ignoring the partnership status of the island, he triumphantly announced, *"For the first time in eight centuries the government of the island passes into Greek hands"*¹⁶.

It was under the shadow of these and many other similar speeches that Cyprus was finally proclaimed an independent state on 16th August 1960. Given the complexity of the problem which the negotiators faced, the final agreement was heralded as a triumph of diplomacy. The United States (US) President, Dwight D. Eisenhower declared it to be *"a victory for common sense", an "imaginative act of statesmanship" and "a splendid achievement."*¹⁷ It was hoped that its influence would go beyond Cyprus and that it could pave the way for a new era of friendship and co-operation between Greece and Türkiye.

To safeguard the agreements and to allay any fears that each side may have held regarding the other, the Treaties of Alliance and Guarantee – which had been signed alongside the Zurich and London Agreements – ensured that both the constitution and the sovereignty of the island would be guaranteed by the three 'interested parties' of Britain, Greece and Türkiye. Under this additional agreement, each held both the collective and unilateral right to intervention, should events necessitate. As a further step designed to ensure that the balance of influence by Greece and Türkiye remained equal, Cyprus was expressly forbidden from joining any union (political, economic, or otherwise) with any state or states, of which both Greece and Türkiye were not already a member. It was a delicate and carefully thought-out balancing act which aimed to both satisfy and reassure all concerned.

Although the Greek Cypriots outnumbered their Turkish Cypriot counterparts the new republic was essentially a partnership state of the two communities with each community therefore regarded as the political equal of the other. However, in view of the population make-up (approximately 75% Greek Cypriots, 20% Turkish Cypriots and 5% Others) the President of the island would be a Greek Cypriot while the Vice-President would be a Turkish Cypriot holding selected veto powers, mainly over foreign policy. The government was formed of two parallel communal chambers split on a ratio of approximately 70:30 and there would be official status for the separate Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot municipalities which already existed to manage the local affairs of the towns and villages.

Upon the birth of the new Republic Archbishop Makarios was elected President, with Dr Fazıl Küçük elected as Vice-President. The Union flag was lowered in Nicosia and the flag of the new Republic of Cyprus rose up in its place. Designed by a Turkish Cypriot, care had been taken to avoid both the blue of Greece and the red of Türkiye. The flag features a copper-coloured outline of the island, sitting above two crossed olive branches. As well as the olive tree being an integral part of the Cypriot landscape, the offering of an olive branch by each community to the other was a symbol of their peaceful union.

Unfortunately, the proclamation of the new Republic was very probably the high point in neighbourly relations. In the days leading up to the handover the soon-to-be President, Archbishop Makarios, made no attempt to disguise his and the Greek Cypriots' real aim. He openly declared in a speech on 28th July 1960 that *"the agreements do not form the goal – they are the present and not the future. The Greek Cypriot people will continue with their national cause (enosis) and shape their future in accordance with their will."*¹⁸ It was not the most auspicious start for this fledgling state and, worryingly, this was not an isolated incident. Statements and speeches such as these were all too commonplace both before and after independence was granted. Turkish Cypriots were advised to ignore them, being told that they were simply rhetoric, intended solely for domestic consumption and to bolster the Archbishop's standing among Greek Cypriots. While this should

¹⁶ Archbishop Makarios 13 December 1959

¹⁷ US Dept. of State Bulletin

¹⁸ Archbishop Makarios 28 July 1960

never be acceptable, it is even less so when you consider that Archbishop Makarios was no longer just the leader of the Greek Cypriot community, but was now the President of all Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish.

Unchecked, the speeches began to take a more troubling turn, reaching a point on 4th September 1962 when, in the village of Panayia, high up in the Paphos mountains, the Archbishop made a chilling statement, announcing *“Until this Turkish community, forming part of the Turkish race which has been the terrible enemy of Hellenism is expelled, the duty of the heroes of EOKA can never be considered as terminated.”*¹⁹ This was not an empty threat. Makarios had in fact been leading a revival of the EOKA terrorist group. His gunmen, fresh from their ‘heroic struggle’ against the British, now turned their eyes and arms on the Turkish Cypriots. As we will see, the violence which followed was not a series of isolated events which the Greek Cypriots would attempt to pass off as ‘inter-communal strife’, but in fact something far more calculated and sinister.

3. The Akritas Plan

Following clandestine meetings led by Makarios, including members of the Church of Cyprus, EOKA and Greek Cypriot members of the new Cyprus Government, it was agreed that the Archbishop’s words were to be put into action with implementation of the notorious Akritas Plan...²⁰

This plan, widely available on the internet, has been confirmed as wholly authentic by, among others, two former Greek Cypriot Presidents, Glafkos Clerides (in the role of Chief of Operations) and Tassos Papadopoulos (Deputy Chief of the Organisation), and by the Minister of Interior, Polykarpos Yorgadjis (Akritas himself). It was a detailed, step by step plan which aimed to convince world opinion of the unworkability of the 1959 agreements in order that they be amenable to changes which were to be proposed by the Greek Cypriots to reduce the role of Turkish Cypriots. If implemented, the changes would effectively kill the partnership agreement and turn Cyprus into a Greek state. By following the plan, world opinion would be fooled into allowing the Greek Cypriots to assume full control of the state apparatus, after which they would call a plebiscite and declare enosis, arguing that it was the will of the people. It explains that *“...it is estimated that we have better chances of succeeding in our efforts to influence international public opinion in our favour if we present our demand, as we did during the struggle [against British rule], as a demand to exercise the right of self-determination, rather than as a demand for union with Greece (enosis).”* The plan showed concern that when the Turkish Cypriots became aware of their intentions, they may be liable to *“react instinctively, creating incidents and clashes or stage, under orders, killings, atrocities or bomb attacks on Turks, in order to create the impression that the Greeks have indeed attacked the Turks”*. They maintain that *“we do not intend, without provocation, to attack or kill Turks”*, however, should they encounter any *“instinctive violent Turkish reactions”* to their plans then *“it is imperative to overcome it by force in the shortest possible time.”* Furthermore *“In the event of the clashes becoming more general we must be ready to proceed with the actions described in (a) to (b) including the immediate declaration of enosis.”* The full plan remains widely available online. To summarise, it is a plan to usurp the seat of the Government in order to cement Greek Cypriot rule with the aim of declaring enosis. And should the Turkish Cypriots object, they would be killed quickly and in large enough numbers that enosis could be declared before the outside world could react. The plan detailed how the speed and overwhelming nature of the attacks would prove decisive in achieving their aims *“since, if we manage to become masters of the situation within a day or two outside intervention would not be possible, probable or justifiable.”*²¹

¹⁹ Archbishop Makarios 4 September 1962

²⁰ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmfaaff/113/113we23.htm>

²¹ The Road to Bellapais Prof. Pierre Oberling

In later years both Clerides and Papadopoulos, along with countless other 'Cyprus Government Ministers', proudly declared themselves to be former active EOKA members. It was, and remains, a badge of honour. The group was intrinsically entwined with both religious and political leaders. Makarios himself was only too happy to be photographed with EOKA fighters, while church leaders would regularly bless arms and munitions to be used against the Turkish Cypriots, the British, and any Greek Cypriot foolish enough to oppose 'the national struggle'. The Greek Cypriot leaders all regularly attended countless EOKA services until their deaths, just as they continue to do today. An example of their standing among Greek Cypriots is seen in the fact that 'Cyprus National Day' is now officially celebrated on 1st April and is more commonly known as 'EOKA Day'. The date itself commemorates the start of the Greek Cypriot insurgency against Britain on 1st April 1955, rather than the birth of the republic on 16th August 1960.

4. Constitutional Crisis & The Outbreak of Violence

The first years of the new republic had not been plain sailing for the two communities, but overall, the transition to independence had been managed. It would not remain this way...

By early 1963 the separate municipalities for each community - a mandatory provision within the constitution which allowed each community to manage their own local affairs - had still not been created due to refusal by the Greek Cypriot MPs. Despite protests from the Turkish Cypriots and threats to block laws on taxation until they were created, the Greek Cypriots refused to budge. The Greek Cypriots claimed that the creation of separate municipalities was a tactic being used to bring about partition. This totally ignored the fact that they had already been in existence since 1958, two years prior to British withdrawal. The Turkish Cypriots suspected that the refusal was the first step to watering down their status. With the two sides unable to break the deadlock, the matter was finally escalated to the Supreme Constitutional Court in February of that year. The Constitutional Court included three judges: a Greek Cypriot judge, a Turkish Cypriot judge and an Independent Neutral President, in this case the German Professor, Ernst Forsthoff. On the point of the separate Municipalities, Makarios declared that, if he were ruled against, he would simply ignore the ruling.²²

Whether the following rebuke was real or perhaps a stage-managed act for the international audience, Greek Foreign Minister Averoff wrote to the Archbishop on 19th April 1963 to warn him that *"It is not permissible for Greece in any circumstances to accept the creation of a precedent by which one of the contracting parties can unilaterally abrogate or ignore provisions that are irksome to it in international acts which this same party has undertaken to respect."*²³ Regardless of its veracity, much like the Constitutional Court finding, it had no effect. Makarios continued to block their creation. On 25th April 1963 the Supreme Constitutional Court ruled in favor of the Turkish Cypriots. The Archbishop, unmoved, simply ignored the decision, causing the Neutral Supreme Court President to resign in protest.

In November 1963, just as the Akritas Plan dictated, the Archbishop then pushed ahead with his attempt at constitutional changes when he presented his '13 Points'. This was a proposal which aimed to amend the constitution, arguing that the current constitution was unworkable. When questioned on the workability of the Cyprus constitution the former President of the Constitutional Court, Professor Ernst Forsthoff, explained that *"Every constitution can have its peculiar problems. There is no constitution in the world which has not got its peculiar difficulties and problems. This is primarily a question of goodwill. If there is goodwill a constitution can be implemented, and this [Cyprus] constitution is capable of being implemented."*²⁴ The Archbishop's proposals were nothing less than a direct attack on the partnership status of the Turkish Cypriot community.

²² Cyprus Mail

12 February 1963

²³ Greece Foreign Minister Averoff

19 April 1963

²⁴ Documents and Comments on the Cyprus Dispute

Rauf R. Denktas

The 13 individual amendments he proposed included the abolition of no less than eight of the basic articles of the Cyprus Constitution. If enacted, they would result in the removal of all provisions and protections for the Turkish Cypriots, effectively leaving them as a minority in a Greek state.

In a letter dated 30th November 1963, the Archbishop argued that *"The three years' experience since the coming into operation of the Constitution, which was based on the Zurich and London Agreements, has made clear the necessity for revision of at least some of those provisions which impede the smooth functioning and development of the State."*²⁵ And despite the content of the changes he was proposing, he argued that *"One of the consequences of the difficulties created by certain constitutional provisions is to prevent the Greeks and Turks of Cyprus from co-operating in a spirit of understanding and friendship, to undermine the relations between them and cause them to draw further apart instead of closer together, to the detriment of the wellbeing of the people of Cyprus as a whole."*²⁶ Clerides would explain later *"If the Turkish community resorted to force to prevent the unilateral amendments, the security forces would, in the first instance, have the task of maintaining law and order. If they proved inadequate for the task, then the paramilitary organization recruited by the Minister of the Interior, Yorgadjis (Akritas), would be called upon to assist them, using such force as was absolutely necessary to put down the 'Turkish uprising'."*²⁷ If we look at these actions in line with the plan we can see how it is almost beyond question that they were taken precisely with the intention to provoke a violent reaction from the Turkish Cypriots. If so, it did not work as the Turkish Cypriot protests remained verbal and non-violent. The consequence was that the Greek Cypriots resolved to try more direct provocation.

The direct link running between the Greek Cypriot request for amendments, the Turkish Cypriot refusal and the subsequent attacks on their community - just as envisaged in the Akritas plan - was confirmed by EOKA Lt. Gen. George Karayiannis in June 1965 when he confirmed that *"When the Turkish Cypriots objected to the amendment of the constitution Makarios put his plan into effect, and the Greek Cypriot attack began in December 1963"*²⁸

On 21st December 1963, two Turkish Cypriots were shot dead in the capital, Nicosia, by unofficial Greek Cypriot 'Special Constables'. This event signaled the start of a campaign which came to be known as 'Bloody Christmas'. The violent stage of the Akritas Plan was now being put into action. Despite the lack of any meaningful reaction from the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Cypriot forces went ahead with deciding to *"overcome it by force"*²⁹. In preparation for the onslaught the Greek Cypriot forces cut telephone and telegraph lines in to the Turkish Quarter.³⁰ On Christmas Eve the first of the organised military operations took place with coordinated attacks against Turkish Cypriots being carried out across the island.

On 23rd December Greek Cypriots irregulars, headed by a young 'journalist' and known EOKA hitman, Nicos Samson, attacked the Turkish Cypriot Quarter of Küçük Kaymaklı/Omorphita, during the frenzied attack they killed men, women and children *"apparently indiscriminately"*³¹, including by machine gun fire from the minaret of a local mosque. Over 6,000 Turkish Cypriots fled when their homes were razed to the ground.

On 28th December the Daily Express carried the following account of one such attack explaining *"We went today into the sealed off Turkish Cypriot Quarter of Nicosia in which 200 to 300 people have been slaughtered in the last 5 days. We were the first Western reporters there and we have seen sights too frightful to be*

²⁵ <https://antifon.blogspot.com/2013/10/president-makarios-explains-why-he.html>

²⁶ <https://antifon.blogspot.com/2013/10/president-makarios-explains-why-he.html>

²⁷ Cyprus. My Deposition Glafkos Clerides

²⁸ Ethnikos Kiryx 15 June 1965

²⁹ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmfaif/113/113we23.htm>

³⁰ Cyprus: A Troubled Island Andrew Borowiec

³¹ Cyprus: A Troubled Island Andrew Borowiec

described in print. Horror so extreme that the people seem stunned beyond tears."³² The violence spread rapidly. A further 6,000 Turkish Cypriots were surrounded in the Turkish Quarter of Limassol. The Greek Cypriot Minister of the Interior, Polykarpos Yorgadjis (Akritas) admitted that he had carried out the attack himself.

There were serious disturbances in Famagusta resulting in fatalities as well as further deadly attacks in the Turkish Cypriot village of Gaziveren/Kazivera.³³ Still following the outline of the Akritas Plan, the Greek Cypriots argued that this was simply inter-communal strife. They reassured the watching world that the forces of law and order were now restoring calm. Of course, those forces of law and order were all Greek Cypriot.

The Guardian reported on 31st December 1963 that *"It is nonsense to claim, as the Greek Cypriots do, that all casualties were caused by fighting between armed men of both sides. On Christmas Eve many Turkish Cypriot people were brutally attacked and murdered in their suburban homes, including the wife and children of a doctor - allegedly by a group of forty men, many in army boots and greatcoats."*³⁴ Reporting on the same gruesome murders Le Figaro wrote *"...I have seen in a bathtub the bodies of a mother and of her three young children, murdered just because their father was a Turkish officer. . . . Archbishop Makarios is too much of an ecclesiastic to express himself so brutally, but it is a fact that he never undertook to condemn openly the horrible excesses committed by his partisans, leaving a delirious press the task of pursuing a campaign against the Turks . . . The Turks at least are logical with themselves. They say, "Life under these conditions is impossible. We are 120,000 menaced, in the full sense of the word, by extermination. There is but one solution: the partition of the island in two, we in the north, the Greeks in the south." The Greeks are less frank. They deny the evidence... According to him (Archbishop Makarios) some changes in the Constitution would be enough. The trouble is that these "amendments" all tend to deprive the Turks of their rights and guarantees which had been accorded to them in 1960. The Turks replied: "This amounts to saying to a drowning man "Take off your life-saver and everything will be all right!..."*³⁵

On 1st January 1964 the Daily Herald reviewed the destruction and reported *"When I came across the Turkish Cypriot homes, they were an appalling sight. Apart from the walls they just did not exist. I doubt if a napalm attack could have created more devastation. Under roofs which had caved in I found a twisted mass of bed springs, children's cots, and grey ashes of what had once been tables, chairs and wardrobes. In the neighboring village of Ayios Vassilios I counted 16 wrecked and burned-out homes. They were all Turkish Cypriot. In neither village did I find a scrap of damage to any Greek Cypriot house."*³⁶

By the end of the assault between 350 and 400 Turkish Cypriots had been killed and hundreds more remained missing, presumed dead. In a vast exodus, over 25,000 people - approximately 25% of the entire population - were displaced, becoming refugees in their own land.

To try to make sense of the situation on the ground UN Secretary General, U Thant, requested a comprehensive report of the damage caused. He tasked the Colombian architect and housing expert, Alvaro Ortega, to take the role of UN Technical Official. He would research village to village and house to house before presenting his findings to Thant. The exercise was scheduled to begin in May of 1964. Meanwhile, the exodus of Turkish Cypriots from towns and villages continued as they gathered by the thousands into guarded enclaves in the hope of saving themselves. In doing so, the entire Turkish community was reduced to living in

³² Daily Express

21 December 1963

³³ The History and Politics of The Cyprus Conflict

Clement Dodd

³⁴ The Guardian

31 December 1963

³⁵ Le Figaro

25-26 January 1964

³⁶ Daily Herald

1 January 1964

just 3% of the island (incidentally, the same proportion of land occupied by the military bases in the British Sovereign Areas).³⁷

As an immediate consequence of the attacks and due to the apparent inability of the 'Cyprus authorities' to contain them – or rather, their outright complicity in perpetrating them – British troops were asked to intervene. They did so on 27th December 1963. Major-General Peter Young of the British Joint Force took out a green marker pen and proceeded to draw a line through the capital, Nicosia, dividing the city along ethnic lines in an effort to minimize the onslaught. The 'Green Line' established a cease-fire line which it was hoped would be temporary, but which would eventually stretch across the entire island. The division of Cyprus was already taking place, not just in the capital. There was concern in Britain that, rather than keep the peace, British soldiers may inadvertently find themselves being used as a shield against Turkish intervention, which they were sure was being provoked. On 2nd January 1964 the Daily Telegraph wrote *"The Greek Cypriot community should not assume that the British military presence can or should secure them against Turkish intervention if they persecute the Turkish Cypriots. We must not be a shelter for double-crossers."*³⁸

When asked about the outbreak of violence in Cyprus, Professor Ernst Forsthoff, told Die Welt on 27th December 1963 that *"Makarios bears on his shoulders the sole responsibility of the recent tragic events. His aim is to deprive the Turkish community of their rights."*³⁹ while he told UPI press agency on 30th December 1963 that *"All this happened because Makarios wanted to remove all constitutional rights from the Turkish Cypriots"*⁴⁰.

The violence continued, with Italian daily, Il Giorno, reporting on 14th January *"Right now we are witnessing the exodus of Turkish Cypriots from the villages. Thousands of people abandoning homes, land, herds. Greek Cypriot terrorism is relentless. This time the rhetoric of the Hellenes and the statues of Plato do not cover up their barbaric and ferocious behavior."*⁴¹ And still there was no let up. In early January 1964 almost the entire Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Türkeli/Ayios Vassilious were found to have been massacred on the 26th December. The Red Cross assisted with the exhumation of their twisted remains from the outskirts of their village and confirmed that many had been buried alive. The Daily Telegraph reported on the same incident, explaining that *"It is thought that a family of seven Turks who disappeared from the village may be buried there. Their house was found burnt, and grenades had been dropped through the roof. Shallow graves had apparently been hurriedly scooped by a bulldozer. The bodies appeared to have been piled in two or three deep. All had been shot. One man had his arms still tied behind his legs in a crouching position and had been shot through the head. A stomach injury indicated that a grenade may have been thrown into his lap."*⁴²

Alarmed by the events, the President of the Turkish Chamber, Rauf Denktaş, travelled to Ankara for consultations. The Greek Cypriot administration moved quickly, announcing that he was prohibited from returning to the island, citing his previous involvement in the creation of the Turkish Cypriot resistance group, Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı (TMT). The TMT had been created in 1958 as a defensive force, to protect the Turkish Cypriot community from EOKA attacks.

On 15th February 1964 the Daily Telegraph reported a new incident, confirming that *"It is a real military operation which the Greek Cypriots launched against the six thousand inhabitants of the Turkish Cypriot Quarter yesterday morning. A spokesman for the Greek Cypriot Government has recognised this officially. It is hard to conceive how Greek and Turkish Cypriots may seriously contemplate working together after all that*

³⁷ <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/the-uk-and-its-unsinkable-aircraft-carriers-a-guide/>

³⁸ Daily Telegraph 2 January 1964

³⁹ Die Welt 27 December 1963

⁴⁰ UPI Press Agency 30 December 1963

⁴¹ Il Giorno 14 January 1965

⁴² Daily Telegraph 14 January 1964

has happened."⁴³ When considering the overall situation, The Washington Post reported that *"Greek Cypriot fanatics appear bent on a policy of genocide."*⁴⁴

These were clearly pre-meditated attacks, and they were being carried out by well-organised and well-armed men, often dressed in official uniforms. Summing up the tragic events, The Guardian reported on 20th February *"Day by day and as murder follows murder detached observers here find it harder and harder to credit the Government of Cyprus with any real determination to stamp out violence. If the President really wants peace on earth and to restore the rule of law he could start by investigating publicly the circumstances surrounding last Thursday's attack on the Turkish inhabitants of Limassol. The known facts are that on the Wednesday the British peace keeping forces were assured by the Greek authorities that no attack would be made on the Turkish community. Accordingly, the British Army did not patrol the town. At 5.30 the following morning Greek Cypriot security forces launched what our special correspondent describes as "a heavy well-organised attack against the Turkish quarter of Limassol." It was carried out by hundreds of steel helmeted men armed with automatic weapons and supported by one tank and two armoured bulldozers. If the Greek Cypriot authorities connived at this formidable attack their behaviour is inexcusable. If they were ignorant of its coming they must forfeit their claim to govern and control their own people, let alone the whole Cypriot community."*⁴⁵

The fact that the attacks were premeditated was confirmed by Angelos Vlachos, a Greek diplomat who served in Cyprus and then later in Athens with responsibility for Cyprus. He notes in his book 'The Cyprus Problem' that *"In January 1963 ... planning exercises were carried out for 3 days at the Presidential Palace in Nicosia, with the objective of neutralizing the Turks. The Archbishop's staff officers envisaged the participation also of the Greek Force in Cyprus of the operations..."*⁴⁶ They had hoped for provocation to justify their actions, but when none materialised the decision was taken to proceed anyway. As the violence escalated Turkish Cypriot casualties began to mount. Despite their best efforts to defend themselves against the numerically larger and better-armed Greek Cypriots they were taking heavy losses.

5. The Greek Cypriot State Emerges

The Greek Cypriots now sought to push ahead with their plan to take full control of the Republic of Cyprus, without Turkish Cypriot participation. At the same time, the Turkish Cypriots were subjected to all-encompassing embargoes...

Moving efficiently on to the next stage of the Akritas Plan, the Greek Cypriots now expelled all Turkish Cypriots from the Cyprus Government by force of arms, later claiming that they had left of their own accord. Turkish Cypriots in lesser state-run positions would follow shortly after, exacerbating the condition of the Turkish Cypriots. The UN Secretary General reported to the Security Council in September 1964 *"In addition to losses incurred in agriculture and in industry during the first part of the year, the Turkish Cypriot community had lost other sources of its income, including the salaries of over 4,000 persons who were employed by the Cyprus Government."*⁴⁷ Alarmed by the turn of events, the British High Commission telegraphed London on 12th Jan 1964 to warn that *"The Greek (Cypriot) police are led by extremists who provoked the fighting and deliberately engaged in atrocities. They have recruited into their ranks as "special constables" gun-happy young thugs. They threaten to try and punish any Turkish Cypriot police who wish to return to Cyprus Government... Makarios*

⁴³ Daily Telegraph

15 February 1964

⁴⁴ Washington Post

17 February 1965

⁴⁵ The Guardian

20 February 1964

⁴⁶ The Cyprus Problem

Angelos Vlachos

⁴⁷ UN doc 5950

September 1965

assured Sir Arthur Clark that there will be no attack. His assurance is as worthless as previous assurances have proved."⁴⁸

The Greek Cypriots now proceeded to change the Cyprus Constitution to make it applicable without the need for any Turkish Cypriot participation, effectively turning Cyprus into a Greek state. Clerides confirmed that *"Makarios, at the head of the bi-communal state of Cyprus, had decided to proceed, stage by stage, to the unilateral abrogation of the rights granted to the Turkish community by the Zurich and London Agreements and to reduce its political status to a minority, using prematurely, the excuse of the unworkability of certain provisions of the constitution"*. He goes on to say that *"An honest evaluation of the situation during the period 1960-63, divorced from propaganda, would lead to the conclusion that there was no need to press for constitutional amendments"*.⁴⁹

Among the constitutional changes implemented by the now all-Greek 'Government of Cyprus' was the enactment of laws which resulted in the total economic and political isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people. Lists were made of banned products and machinery which the Turkish Cypriots would henceforth be unable to access. The list of prohibited items would continue to grow at the whim of the new 'Cyprus Government'. Movement of Turkish Cypriots was also severely restricted, with the community largely being unable to leave their enclaves. If they did dare to venture outside, they faced unofficial blockades, searches and the very real risk of abduction or death. Workers could only continue their employment if their workplace was situated within the enclave and if it had access to the necessary supplies, because they had lost practically all access to ports and markets. Similarly, students could only continue their education if the school or university – and the teachers – were inside the enclave. Food and medicine were all affected and access to hospitals outside of Nicosia was almost completely lost. Just as importantly, the Turkish Cypriot voice was effectively silenced to the outside world.

Rather than ease the burden we will see below how a badly worded UN Resolution on 4th March 1964 (detailed below) led to a version of these embargoes coming into international law at the behest of the 'Cyprus Government'. Incredibly, the Turkish Cypriots continue to be under embargoes to this very day, over 60 years later, fully supported by the international community and enforced by the UN.

Given the lack of reaction to their usurpation of state powers, the 'Government of Cyprus' confidently announced to the world that *"we, the Greek Cypriots, are in full control of the Government. All ministers are Greek. Our government is the only one recognised internationally – why should we have the Turks back in? The Turks today control only 3% of the land. They have no rich resources, and they are now living under difficult times from an economic point of view. They will ultimately have to accept our point of view – or go."*⁵⁰ A situation which continues to accurately describe the situation today.

The US sent Under-Secretary, George Ball, to the island to investigate the situation on the ground. On 13th February 1964 he sent a telegram to the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, advising him that *"The Government of Cyprus is committed to a strategy which, after our discussions of the last two days, I think even they should believe is silly, of trying to neutralize Turkey by a Security Council Resolution condemning aggression and guaranteeing territorial integrity. In this manner, they hope to eliminate the one defence of the Turkish Cypriot population, so that the Government of Cyprus can proceed happily with systematic genocide, without outside interference... We must face the fact that Cyprus is an island infected by a blood lust, and that there is no government that seriously wants to maintain order. Its only desire is to liquidate the Turkish Cypriots"*⁵¹. He

⁴⁸ British High Commission, Nicosia (Telegram 162) 12 January 1964

⁴⁹ Cyprus. My Deposition Glafkos Clerides

⁵⁰ Michael Stephen Written submission to UK Parliament

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmfaaff/113/113we45.htm?_cf_chl_f_tk=oFnZsWsQbCb4OIWwv71axbPZsXBDSdS6WaQQv2qKFO8-1747514219-1.0.1.1-iwNtPpS9Dpcc2LhhcL0LBpXZDMTyEKn5V9zVqQHSNIQ

⁵¹ United States Under-Secretary

George Ball

13 February 1964

followed this up by reflecting in his memoirs that *“Makarios’ central interest was to block off Turkish intervention so that he and his Greek Cypriots could go on happily massacring Turkish Cypriots. Obviously, we would never permit that.”*⁵² But despite Mr Ball’s words, the US and the international community not only permitted it but would go on to reward it. As we will see, they did so by going on to recognise the Greek Cypriot Administration as the Government of Cyprus.

Türkiye, in line with its obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, asked both Great Britain and Greece to assist in restoring the constitution. Both declined. Türkiye was in no position to intervene unilaterally at the time and lacked the necessary international support to do so. She now approached the UN to plead the case of the Turkish Cypriots. However, it was only after agreement from the now all-Greek ‘Government of Cyprus’, that a UN peacekeeping force (United Nations Forces in Cyprus: Unficyp) could be agreed. Fearing the wording of the statement⁵³ which defined the Greek Cypriot Administration as ‘the Cyprus Government’, Türkiye vehemently protested. Denktaş warned the security council that if the resolution referred to ‘the Government of Cyprus’ without any reference to the constitutionally legal government (i.e. one made up of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots), the Greek Cypriots would take advantage. He was assured that the reference automatically meant the constitutional bi-communal government made up of both communities and he was warned *“Don’t waste time – it is Turkish blood which is running in Cyprus”*.⁵⁴ Sir Anthony Kershaw, Chair of the UK House of Commons Select Committee explained in a speech in Cyprus that *“It was decided that the UN troops should be sent there to restore order, but the UN can only send troops if the Government of the country concerned asks for them. The only organisation which could, in 1964, be called the Government of Cyprus was the administration headed by Makarios. The Turkish Cypriots pointed out that this was not the legal Government of Cyprus, but such was the pressure of the times that the UN said: Look, your people are dying – let’s get the troops out right away and the lawyers can sort it out later. So, it was decided, but since that time the UN treated the Greek Cypriots as the only Government of Cyprus, basing this on a treaty and a constitution which had been repudiated and broken by the Greek Cypriot Government itself. I do not deny that the Greek Cypriot Government is the de facto government of the South of Cyprus. It has all the attributes of sovereignty, but so has the government of Northern Cyprus.”*⁵⁵

However, rather than getting the lawyers to ‘sort it out’, UN Resolution 186 effectively stripped the Turkish Cypriots of their equal rights on the island and has served as the basis for every UN Resolution thereafter, ensuring that a single calamitous error is compounded over and over. From that point onwards, in the eyes of the UN and thus the world, the Greek Cypriot Administration had become the ‘Government of Cyprus’ and the Turkish Cypriots were cast adrift, left to survive in a political limbo. It should not be forgotten that UN Resolution 186 was passed ostensibly in order to protect the Turkish Cypriots from the ongoing violent attacks. Instead, it became the greatest tool with which to deprive them of their sovereign rights and to leave them in political isolation. It is no exaggeration to say that it is the crux of the Cyprus problem today. Historian, Salahi R. Sonyel, described the inexplicable situation which the resolution created, explaining *“It is remarkable that the United Nations not only failed to condemn the usurpation of the Constitution by force, but actually rewarded it by, in effect, recognising the Greek Cypriot administration, which had usurped the Constitution, as the ‘Government of the whole island’.”*⁵⁶ The UK House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs reviewed the Cyprus question in 1987 and reported unanimously on 2nd July that, *“Although the Cyprus Government now claims to have been merely seeking to “operate the 1960 Constitution modified to the extent dictated by the necessities of the situation” this claim ignores the fact that both before and after the events of December 1963 the Makarios Government continued to advocate the cause of ENOSIS and actively pursued the amendment of the Constitution and the related treaties to facilitate this ultimate objective”*. They went on to say that *“The effect of the crisis of December 1963 was to deliver control of the formal organs of Government*

⁵² The Past Has Another Pattern

⁵³ UN Resolution 186

⁵⁴ Rauf Denktaş at the UN - Speeches on Cyprus

⁵⁵ Sir Anthony Kershaw (Speech in Cyprus)

⁵⁶ Cyprus: The Destruction of a Republic—British Documents, 1960-1965

George Ball

4 March 1964

Rauf R. Denktaş

23 October 1990

Salahi R. Sonyel

*into the hands of the Greek Cypriots alone. Claiming to be acting in accordance with "the doctrine of necessity" the Greek Cypriot members of the House of Representatives enacted a series of laws which provided for the operation of the various organs of government without Turkish Cypriot participation."*⁵⁷

By now, the Turkish Cypriots were left with one solitary outlet to the sea, in Erenköy/Kokkina. Situated on the east side of the island's northern coast, Erenköy would become perhaps the most important and symbolic area of Turkish Cypriot resistance. Surrounded by Greek Cypriot villages to the south, east and west, its situation didn't seem to lend itself to becoming the bastion of Turkish Cypriot resistance, but it would be impossible to argue otherwise.

It quickly became a key logistical base to receive both arms and volunteers from mainland Türkiye. However, unlike the mainland Greek forces who would soon begin arriving to the island under the nose of the UN, these volunteers would receive only the most basic training before they made their way to Cyprus. They were not professional soldiers from the mainland Turkish army and were not equipped or dressed as such. And rather than numbering in the tens of thousands like their adversaries, Erenköy only received around 500 Turkish and Turkish Cypriot volunteers – mostly university students - who, moved by the plight of their people in Cyprus, cast aside their personal safety. Embarking from mainland Turkish coastal villages like Anamur, the students slipped onto the island, journeying at night to avoid detection from the Greek Cypriot forces. They brought with them small caches of arms of varying degrees of quality, travelling at great personal risk, only to face even greater risk upon arrival.

Originally spread across 5 villages, the inhabitants and defenders would eventually be forced back to their final stand at Erenköy, enduring a siege which would continue until the very end of the Cyprus troubles in 1974. When asked to explain just how they had survived, local villager turned fighter, Fadil Elmasoğlu, explained that *"Had we not done what we did in Erenköy, the Turkish Cypriot nation as we know it would not be in existence... The key to reaching the conclusion that we did was to stop thinking of ourselves and work towards an outcome that was imperative."*⁵⁸

6. The Return of Grivas

The former leader of EOKA, General Georgios Grivas, returned to Cyprus to oversee the new armed insurrection. This time its chief target was the Turkish Cypriot community...

Whether the two issues were related or not, the timing of Grivas return to Cyprus is at least extremely coincidental. With the ongoing terror suffered by the Turkish Cypriots and the apparent acquiescence of the international community who utterly failed to safeguard them, Türkiye announced its intention to land in Cyprus. It quickly began to make the necessary preparations. However, a decision which had been taken to counter the Greek forces instead only lead to emboldening them thanks to the US. President Lyndon Johnson was about to tip the balance further in favour of Greece.

On hearing of Türkiye's preparations Johnson sent an openly threatening letter to his Turkish counterpart, İsmet İnönü. Delivered on 5th June 1964, the now infamous 'Johnson letter' warned that if Türkiye pressed ahead with its plans, NATO would not provide support to Türkiye in the event of any Russian aggression. Furthermore, it warned that US military equipment provided by NATO could not be used for intervention in Cyprus. It was a staggeringly undiplomatic and threatening letter which caused widespread offense in Türkiye. While it served its purpose to ensure that Türkiye shelved its intervention plans, it also prompted the Turkish

⁵⁷ The Cyprus Question

⁵⁸ The Battle of Kokkina (Translated from *Erenköy ve Hayat* by Fadil Elmasoğlu)

Michael Stephen

Nejla Clements

government to change both their military procurement and foreign policies. Türkiye had been humiliatingly treated as a subordinate of the US and was evidently not willing to repeat the experience. İnönü responded pointedly to the Johnson letter by explaining that *"A new world will be established under new circumstances, and Turkey will find its own place in it."*⁵⁹

Just 16 days after the Johnson letter, on 21st June 1964, the Greek Cypriot administration confirmed the return of the infamous EOKA leader, General Georgios Grivas. He returned to the island to retake the reigns of the terror organisation. Grivas, also known by his nom de guerre, 'Digenis', was a Cypriot-born General in the Greek army who specialised in guerilla and asymmetric warfare. He had fought in Greece's ill-fated incursion into Anatolia in the Turkish war of independence and had been sent to Cyprus in 1954 when he took a leading role in EOKA's fight against the British. He was subsequently posted back to Greece in 1959 when the Zurich Agreement had been reached for the creation of the new republic. His return to Cyprus in 1964 was an ominous sign. Rumours of his return had been circulating on the island, but confirmation was finally given when he travelled through Nicosia in a motorcade alongside Makarios, before rousing the Greek Cypriot public with renewed promises of enosis. He cynically gave assurances to the UN Representative in Cyprus that there would be no military action against the Turkish Cypriots *"except in cases of extreme provocation"*. To the Greek Cypriots who had massed in Nicosia to greet him, he promised that *"Our aim is enosis"* and assured them that *"it will not be very long before it's achieved"*⁶⁰. In his speech to the armed forces upon assuming the duties of Supreme Commander of the Greek and Greek Cypriot Forces, he declared *"I come as the apostle of enosis"*⁶¹. As a potential rival to Makarios in the hearts of the Greek Cypriots, it is unlikely that the Archbishop welcomed his return, but in public they portrayed a united front.

On 6th August 1964, Greek Cypriot forces, led by General Grivas, tried to break the resistance in Erenköy/Kokkina. After several days of buildup, they numbered some 2,000 heavily armed men. Supported by mainland Greek military advisors and artillery, and even by Greek gunboats positioned off the coast, they launched a massive, coordinated attack, aiming to bomb and starve the inhabitants into submission. A UN report stated that *"Throughout the entire battle, Unficyp made strenuous attempts to secure a ceasefire but was continually hindered by the government forces,"*⁶². On the 8th August, following two days of intense bombardment, Türkiye responded. Turkish jets bombed the Greek military positions around Erenköy/Kokkina, causing significant damage and alarm to the attackers, who were unaccustomed to facing anything more than token resistance. This was the first military intervention by Türkiye. It brought the defenders much needed respite and boosted the morale of Turkish Cypriots everywhere.

On 9th August a UN-brokered ceasefire was hastily declared, leaving Erenköy/Kokkina in Turkish Cypriot hands, but still isolated and now running out of food as Makarios maintained his stranglehold on supplies. *"The dire appeals from the blockaded Turkish Cypriots in the coastal village of [Erenköy]/Kokkina insisted that they were near starvation. As women and children huddled in caves, gaunt menfolk stood guard in the trenches."*⁶³ Rather than lift the blockade, Makarios now offered the embattled people food packages, sending a much-publicised fleet of trucks with food. *"Instead of cheering, the Turkish Cypriots cursed. One shouted, "We are Turks, and we will die before we accept food from Makarios!" Another grumbled that the food was probably poisoned."*⁶⁴ With his attempt to turn benevolent provider having failed, Makarios relented and allowed a shipment of food from the Turkish Red Crescent. Without a hint of shame, he proudly declared that he would not charge excise duties. He then petulantly ordered that his own aid packages be left on the roadside. They

⁵⁹ Time Magazine

16 April 1964

⁶⁰ <https://cyprus-mail.com/divided-island/the-players/general-george-grivas>

⁶¹ Excerpta Cypria for today

Andrew Faulds MP

⁶² <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/What+happened+at+Tylliria+in+August+1964.-a0510694680>

⁶³ Time Magazine

Cyprus: Greeks bearing gifts

25 September 1964

⁶⁴ Time Magazine

Cyprus: Greeks bearing gifts

25 September 1964

remained untouched, with one crate scrawled with a message for the ungodly priest. It read *"Don't play politics with our stomachs"*.⁶⁵

On 12th August 1964 a clearly perturbed UK Representative to the UN wrote to London to ask *"What is our policy and true feelings about the future of Cyprus and about Makarios? Judging from the English newspapers and many others, the feeling is very strong indeed against Makarios and his so-called government and nothing would please the British people more than to see him toppled and the Cyprus problem solved by the direct dealings between the Turks and the Greeks. We are of course supporting the latter course, but I have never seen any expression of the official disapproval in public against Makarios and his evil doings. Is there an official view about this, and what do we think we should do in the long run? Sometimes it seems that the obsession of some people with 'the Commonwealth' blinds us to everything else and it would be high treason to take a more active line against Makarios and his henchmen. At other times the dominant feature seems to be concern lest active opposition against Makarios should lead to direct conflict with the Cypriots and end up with our losing our bases.*

*I ask these questions, partly for background and partly because it really would be useful to know how far you feel we really are inhibited from taking up a more actively hostile attitude to the Greek Cypriots. Their representative here is, as you know, a horror, and even the communists are thoroughly fed up with him, and it is therefore really not necessary for us to do anything more to weaken his position. But it is curious and sometimes very frustrating to sit in the Security Council and walk around the UN and have to listen to all the stuff about the wickedness of the Turks and their threats of invasion, when I and all my staff know very well what the real state of affairs is and how much Makarios and co. are to blame. One can say what one thinks of course to a few people, but one cannot produce the evidence or argue the case fully with the vast majority of my UN colleagues so long as the official public attitude seems to be not to say anything rude about Makarios and his gang."*⁶⁶

While Grivas slowly took control of both official (Cyprus National Guard) and unofficial (EOKA) military matters, the list of embargoed goods and materials continued to grow as the 'Cyprus Government' turned the screw on the Turkish Cypriots. Such was the predicament of the Turkish Cypriots that in September 1964 the UN Secretary General reported *"The economic restrictions being imposed against the Turkish Cypriot communities, which in some instances has been so severe as to amount to a veritable siege, indicated that the 'Government of Cyprus' seeks to force a solution by economic pressure."*⁶⁷ Their reports show that the UN were clearly aware of the predicament in which the Turkish Cypriots found themselves. Recently released US and British government documents show that both countries also had an intimate knowledge of what was happening on the island. But rather than attempt to stop the Greek Cypriots or help the Turkish Cypriots, they were instead actively involved in pressuring Türkiye against any form of intervention.

Looking back on the events of 1963-64, Professor Pierre Oberling observed that *"The 1963-64 crisis was a most unusual phenomenon: it was not a revolution of a downtrodden minority against an arrogant, oppressive majority, but a revolution by an arrogant, oppressive majority against a downtrodden minority."*⁶⁸

There then followed a lull in armed attacks, but the economic pressure against the Turkish Cypriots continued unabated. Still confined to just 3% of the island, they continued to live in small, defended enclaves, with some reduced to living in caves and tents. With no freedom of movement and no means of communication, they were effectively cut off from the outside world and left to await their fate. Conversely, with their own position strengthened and gaining legitimacy, the Greek Cypriots grew ever more confident that they would soon

⁶⁵ Time Magazine Cyprus: Greeks bearing gifts

25 September 1964

⁶⁶ UK Representative to the UN

12 August 1964

⁶⁷ UN doc S/5950

⁶⁸ The Road to Bellapais

Prof. Pierre Oberling

achieve their aim of enosis. Türkiye was being held in check by the rest of the world - particularly by the US and Britain - and meanwhile the acceptance of the Greek Cypriot Administration as the sole legitimate 'Government of Cyprus' was being cemented on the world stage. In February 1966 Archbishop Makarios spoke out again and declared that the 1960 Agreements were "*dead and buried*"⁶⁹. The same message was repeated constantly. In Athens, on the anniversary of the 1955 plebiscite, he declared "*They (the London and Zurich agreements) today stand abrogated and buried. Neither Turkey nor any other power can revive or breathe life into them again.*"⁷⁰

The Cyprus story was fast becoming accepted as one of a legitimate Government trying to restore order among a restive, problematic group. In a bid to shed light on the truth, the Turkish Cypriot government members made a request through the UN Secretary General's Representative in Cyprus to attend the House of Representatives, requesting that the UN provide them with an escort. The President of the House, Clerides, told them that there was no objection to them attending, provided they accepted three conditions:

- 1) That they henceforth attend all meetings
- 2) That they accept all legislation and apply it to areas under their control
- 3) That they accept that their attendance implies recognition of the present government⁷¹.

The UN were left in no doubt that the Turkish Cypriots had no place in the new all-Greek Cyprus Government as effective representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community and that the changes made in their absence would not be reversed. They reported that "*Mr Clerides also stated that the constitutional provisions concerning promulgation of the laws by the President and the Vice-President were no longer applicable. He subsequently stated that in his opinion the Turkish Cypriot members had no legal standing any more in the House.*"⁷² The UK House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs reviewed the situation in 1987 and found that "*When in July 1965 the Turkish Cypriot members of the House of Representatives had sought to resume their seats they were told that they could do so only if they accepted the legislative changes to the operation of the Constitution enacted in their absence*".⁷³ Changes which effectively left them as a minority in a Greek Cypriot state. On 24th July 1965, the UK Government formally protested the action taken by the Greek Cypriots but nevertheless continued to deal with them as the sole legitimate Government of Cyprus, just as the UK still does today. Former British Foreign Secretary and Primer Minister, James Callaghan, wrote in his memoirs "*there is no question that the Turkish Cypriots had for many years been denied their political rights under the 1960 Constitution, and their basic human rights*".⁷⁴

As explained above, following the initial outbreak of violence in December 1963, UN Secretary General, U Thant, sent architect and UN Technical Official, Alvaro Ortega, to carry out an extensive survey of the destruction. Ortega conducted his survey between May and August 1964, before providing his conclusions to the Secretary General. His report, since known as the 'Ortega Report' ran to 500 pages, including photos and detailed maps, some of which are shown below. The United Nations (UN) confirmed that a total of 109 Turkish Cypriot villages were totally or partially destroyed⁷⁵ and 270 mosques, shrines and places of worship were desecrated. The destruction included 8,150 homes, directly impacting 18,677 inhabitants, while several thousand others fled from towns and villages which were only partially evacuated.⁷⁶ Many Turkish Cypriot families perished inside their homes. Of those who fled, it was found that once they left their properties

⁶⁹ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmfaaff/113/113we23.htm>

⁷⁰ Archbishop Makarios (Speech in Athens) 1 February 1966

⁷¹ The History and Politics of The Cyprus Conflict Clement Dodd

⁷² UN Report S/6569 29 July 1965

⁷³ UK House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs – Inquiry on Cyprus

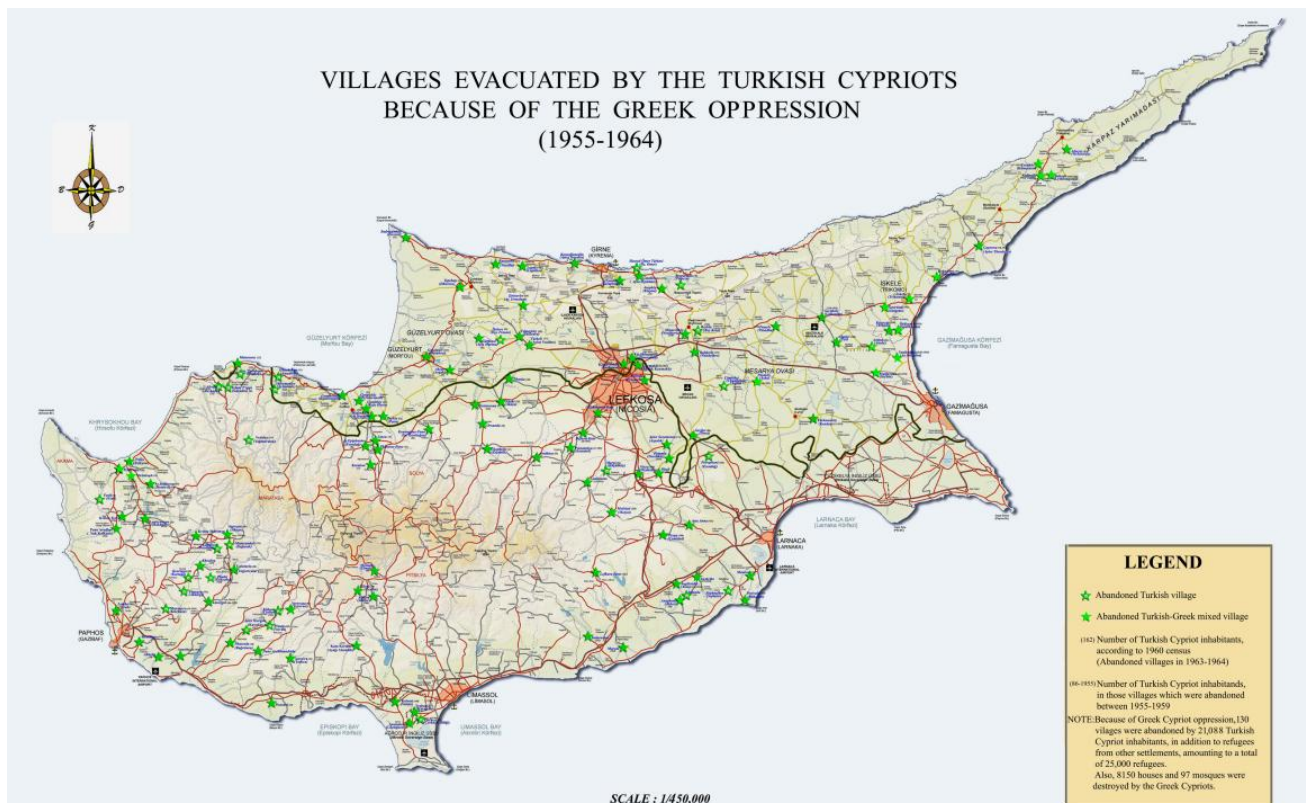
⁷⁴ Time and Chance James Callaghan

⁷⁵ UN doc.S/5950

⁷⁶ The Road to Bellapais Prof. Pierre Oberling

they were quickly seized upon by Greek Cypriot forces and were burned or demolished,⁷⁷ causing the displacement of 25,000 Turkish Cypriots.

The Greek Cypriots had initially supported the investigation, expecting it would enable them to support their claims of a Turkish rebellion or at least that of inter-communal violence, which their 'Government Forces' would have been compelled to bring under control. It failed to do either. Instead, it gave clear evidence of the mass destruction of Turkish Cypriot property and the mass displacement of the Turkish Cypriot people. The nature of the findings was so damning that the notoriously strong Greece lobby, now supported by the Republic of Cyprus, quickly moved to block its release. The report was quietly dropped with Secretary General, U Thant, choosing not to share it with the Security Council.



Evacuated Turkish Cypriot towns and villages

⁷⁷ UN report S/5950 & Appendix: UN 'Ortega Report'



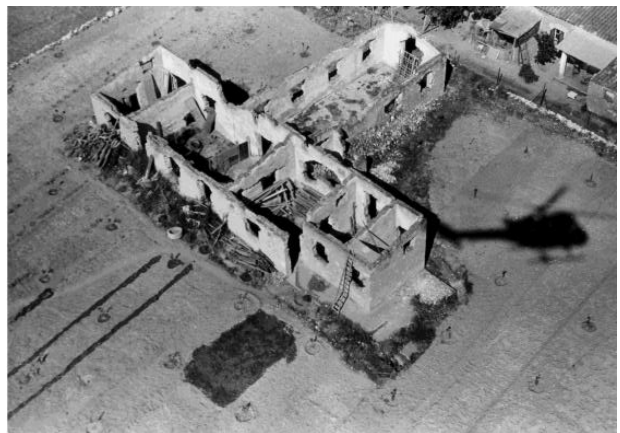
Nicosia Dist.
AYIOS EPIPHANIOS
R 6057



Nicosia Dist.
PANO KOUTRAPHA
R6861



Nicosia District
KATO LAKATAMIA
R 9982



Nicosia Dist.
MOREPHOU
R7072

Greek Cypriot properties (Top) Turkish Cypriot (bottom)



Paphos Dist.
KTIKIA - PELLAS OGILOS ST.
S1889



Kyrenia Dist.
TRAPESA
S1383



Nicosia Dist.
AYIOS KONSTANTINOS
C 2187

7. Silent Invasion

Greece began to infiltrate troops and arms into Cyprus in attempt to ready themselves for a complete takeover and a declaration of enosis...

In what appeared to be preparation for a final assault, Greece and the Greek Cypriots now began large scale shipping of arms to the island and oversaw the infiltration of mainland Greek officers directly in front of UN observers. Whether coincidence or not, Makarios travelled to Cairo in September 1964 to meet with Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasser had previously overseen arms shipments to EOKA in the 1950s during their insurgency against the British. It is highly likely that the Archbishop's visit concerned further shipments, directly or indirectly, to support EOKA's new fight.

By October 1964, the mainland Greek contingent on the island was reported to number 20,000 heavily armed men⁷⁸. Newsweek reported the open secret on 27th July 1964 writing *"Before dawn each day the great iron doors of the port of Limassol are slammed shut . . . UN troops are barred. A few hours later the doors swing open and covered lorries, weaving on overloaded springs, roar out of the port and head toward the Troodos mountains."*⁷⁹ Former Greek President, Andreas Papandreou validated the practice in his book, *Democracy at Gunpoint*, when he confessed that *"A clandestine operation began on a huge scale; of nightly shipments of arms and "volunteers" who arrive in Cyprus in civilian clothes and then join their Greek Cypriot units."*⁸⁰ The external forces soon amounted to the equivalent of around 20% of the entire Turkish Cypriot population. They joined the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the paramilitary groups led by Yorgadjis and Grivas, who were busy organising new military attacks. In addition, there was the discovery of a shipment of Czech arms to the Greek forces, overseen by Clerides. With such a buildup, all the signs were that the Greek Cypriots were preparing for further attacks, likely to be on a much larger scale.

On 16th March 1965, the US Embassy in Athens reported on the issue, explaining that *"In recent days things had taken serious turn for worse."* They went on to detail particular concern about the *"introduction of Soviet heavy equipment including surface-to-air missiles into island, manned by Greeks trained in UAR [United Arab Republic]"*.⁸¹ Remarkably, the UN's knowledge of the situation was not considered enough of a risk to maintain their force numbers on the island. Despite accepting that the relative calm was most likely temporary and tenuous, it was deemed sufficient to reduce their presence. From December 1965, the Unficyp military personnel and police were reduced from 6,275 to 5,764.⁸²

Ever since their deployment in Cyprus, the Unficyp had expressed concerns about the influx of arms onto the island. In December 1966 it became known that the Greek Cypriots were continuing to import large quantities of soviet arms, apparently intended for the (Greek Cypriot) Cyprus Police. Despite that knowledge, Unficyp saw fit to undertake a further troop reduction, dropping down to 4,610 military personnel and police by the end of 1966. When pressed on the matter of arms imports by the UN Secretary General, Greek Cypriot authorities confirmed on 12th January 1967 that the arms would not be distributed and gave assurances that the UN would be advised if their distribution became necessary.⁸³ Subsequent events would appear to confirm that the arms were in fact distributed and were used. Given the Turkish Cypriots remained isolated in their

⁷⁸ Cyprus: The Destruction of a Republic and its Aftermath

Salahi Sonyel

⁷⁹ Newsweek

27 July 1964

⁸⁰ Democracy at Gunpoint

Andreas Papandreou

⁸¹ [https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-](https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d180#:~:text=In%20recent%20days%20things%20had,or%20neutralize%20arms%20already%20delivered.)

[68v16/d180#:~:text=In%20recent%20days%20things%20had,or%20neutralize%20arms%20already%20delivered.](https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d180#:~:text=In%20recent%20days%20things%20had,or%20neutralize%20arms%20already%20delivered.)

⁸² [https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-](https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.)

[crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.](https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.)

⁸³ [https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-](https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.)

[crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.](https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.)

enclaves, the only possible 'necessity' is that the arms were needed to facilitate renewed attacks on the Turkish Cypriots.

On 27th March 1967, Greek mainland and Greek Cypriot forces shelled the Turkish Cypriot village of Tatlisu/Mari for over four hours. The assault finally ended thanks only to intense diplomatic pressure. At the same time, serious questions were now asked of the Unficyp role. They had clearly failed to offer even the slightest protection to the Turkish Cypriots and resembled note-takers rather than defenders; seemingly more content to file reports of the atrocities rather than attempt to prevent them. British Foreign Secretary, George Brown, confirmed to the Prime Minister that this was not solely the perception of the Turks, although he added some dubious mitigation explaining that *"It is true that Unficyp was unable to prevent the outbreak of heavy fighting at Ayios Theodoros on 15 November. But it is not within the existing terms of reference of the Force to oppose a deliberate and large-scale assault by one side against the other, as happened there."*⁸⁴

In June 1967 the Greek Cypriot legislature unanimously passed a resolution in favour of enosis. Greece had recently come under the power of a military junta by a regime known as 'The Colonels'. It's likely that the Greek Cypriot leadership sought to corner the new government, thinking they would feel obliged to support the declaration. However, although the junta was ideologically pro-enosis there were several factors which they felt prevented them from supporting the declaration. Incredibly, the Colonels felt that Makarios was too *"soft on Turkish Cypriots"*⁸⁵. They preferred the more direct (and violent) approach of General Grivas, which they felt would bring about a 'purer' form of enosis. One which would be totally subservient to Athens. To ensure that outcome, they were determined to bring about enosis themselves using their own men. Namely, Grivas and the Greek mainland forces on the island.

While a declaration of enosis would wait, the pressure on the Turkish Cypriots continued unabated. In November 1967 it was the turn of the inhabitants of Geçitkale/Kophinou and Bogaziçi/Ayios Theodoros. They were attacked by 2,000 heavily armed men formed of Greek Cypriot National Guard forces, supported by Greek mainland troops, resulting in 22 deaths⁸⁶. The Unficyp - with a mandate only to observe or to fire in self-defence - could only watch as men, women and children were burned alive in their homes. This time, the attacks prompted a brief reaction from Türkiye.⁸⁷ The following day 30 jets flew low over Greek Cypriot towns and villages in the North-East, followed by 64 over the island's Northwest on the 9th. The sorties were meant as a final warning to the Greek Cypriots, showing how quickly and easily Turkish jets could reach Cyprus. However, the shock to the Greek Cypriot leader would bring only a temporary respite.

Alarmed by the escalation and the prospect of a Turkish-Greek war within NATO, the UK suggested that the issue could be resolved with negotiations, but the Turkish military were now past talking. The Turkish General Staff informed NATO *"We do not wish to ask your advice. We are the most honoured defendants of peace. But we cannot tolerate cruelty against humankind. What we want from you is that you hinder those who burn and burden our people and destroy their homes, and prevent the cruelty of Greeks and Greek Cypriots who are seeking possession of international waters and airspace... It must be clearly understood that, unless the Greek division and Greek Cypriots soldiers equipped with Greek arms are withdrawn from the island, we will have to use our right of intervention granted to us through the agreements with the purpose of safeguarding humankind..."*⁸⁸

⁸⁴ British Foreign Secretary George Brown report to Prime Minister DEFE 11/53930 November 1967

⁸⁵ Chaos Behind The Green Line

Aysel K. Başçı

⁸⁶ The Cyprus Crisis of 1967 and The British-Turkish Policies

Yaşın Coskun

⁸⁷ [https://www.pressreader.com/cyprus/cyprus-](https://www.pressreader.com/cyprus/cyprus-today/20210717/281861531517780?srsId=AfmBOohzE8LsKctpvQ2yzfP57gqc_Y0LA2Efiyy9oMXuQwVaQpIYkx)

[today/20210717/281861531517780?srsId=AfmBOohzE8LsKctpvQ2yzfP57gqc_Y0LA2Efiyy9oMXuQwVaQpIYkx](https://www.pressreader.com/cyprus/cyprus-today/20210717/281861531517780?srsId=AfmBOohzE8LsKctpvQ2yzfP57gqc_Y0LA2Efiyy9oMXuQwVaQpIYkx)

⁸⁸ United Kingdom

DEFE 11/539

24 November 1967

Intense US and British diplomacy followed as they battled to protect NATO's southern frontier. Demands were made that Greece must remove its troops from Cyprus. The Greek leaders, however, were found to be surprisingly calm, clearly believing that the Turks would not dare move, perhaps confident that the US would hold them in check again. When it was explained to them that this time would likely be different, Greece finally backed down. The threat of full-scale Greek-Turkish war was now hanging in the air. Greece tried to lower tensions by recalling Grivas to Greece in November 1967 and by signaling agreement for the proposed reduction in troops. Consequently, there was a partial normalisation of the situation. The changes also allowed Rauf Denktaş to finally return to the island, having been exiled since Jan 1964. British diplomats confirmed the climbdown explaining *"one result of the crisis of last November, when war between Turkey and Greece was narrowly averted, has been the evacuation of the "illegal" Greek troops who were in Cyprus and a sharp reduction in Greek involvement in the problem"*⁸⁹ However, the climbdown would prove to be only partial because *"although Greece accepted the majority of the Turkish demands, this did not mark a complete victory for the Turks, since Makarios later refused to dismantle the National Guard"*⁹⁰

It would prove to be only a temporary pause and minor respite. Despite a short period of relative calm for the Turkish Cypriots there was no change in their day-to-day struggle to survive under embargoes and restrictions on movement. Once again, the UN took the opportunity to reduce their forces further. Between April and December 1968 they numbered only 3,708 personnel.⁹¹

The 60s had begun as a decade of hope in Cyprus, but it had very quickly turned into something of a nightmare for the Turkish Cypriots. Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon explained in a seminar in London on 16th February 2001 *"No-one who lived as I did in Cyprus in the 1960s will forget what was happening then. To my mind it was an attempt at the systematic elimination of one part of the community. It was ethnic cleansing before that phrase came into vogue in the media."*⁹²

The overall situation changed little up to 1971. Turkish Cypriots remained holed-up in guarded enclaves, unable or unwilling to risk travel across the island. They were forced to survive on the little that was deemed acceptable by the Greek Cypriot 'government'.

The Athens junta grew increasingly frustrated with Makarios. They remained concerned that Makarios was too independent – and that perhaps he enjoyed being centre stage in Cyprus. Following his refusal to follow certain directives the junta leader, Dimitrios Ionnides, complained that he *"did not tolerate Makarios' 'disobedience'"*⁹³ The right-wing nationalist colonels also openly questioned Makarios' alignment with communists and the Left,⁹⁴ being particularly concerned about the significant backing he received from the AKEL (the Greek Cypriot communist party)⁹⁵, the secret arms delivery from Soviet Czechoslovakia, and the fact that he had steered Cyprus away from the West and toward the Russian-influenced Non-aligned Movement. With support for the colonels now beginning to wane in Athens, they felt that a quick and decisive victory in Cyprus would benefit their position. They decided to act, using their man of choice, General Georgios Grivas.

⁸⁹ United Kingdom

FCO 9/73

20 March 1968

⁹⁰ Turkish Foreign Policy 1943–1945. Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics Edward Weisband

⁹¹ [https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-](https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.)

[crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.](https://unficyp.unmissions.org/1967-crisis#:~:text=The%20issue%20came%20to%20a,Commander%20could%20make%20periodic%20inspections.)

⁹² Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon (Seminar in London)

16 February 2001

⁹³ <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/11/944>

⁹⁴ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makarios_III

⁹⁵ <https://cyprus-mail.com/divided-island/the-players/archbishop-makarios-iii>

8. Preparing for Enosis

General Grivas returned to Cyprus again. His aim was to prepare the ground for an immediate declaration of enosis, with or without Archbishop Makarios...

Grivas returned to the island on 31st August 1971. However, to avoid international pressure on Greece, the colonels claimed he had retired, disingenuously adding that, as such, he was free to travel abroad if he so wished. Grivas' objective was simple: to accelerate the process with or without the Archbishop, and to crush anyone who stood against him. It was under these conditions that he now announced the establishment of 'EOKA-B'. Any Greeks who stood in the way of 'self-determination' (i.e. the freedom to declare enosis) were deemed now fair targets. With the British effectively sidelined, the principal enemy was now the Turkish Cypriot community, followed by any Greek Cypriots who opposed Grivas in favour of Makarios.

In a speech shortly after his arrival Grivas announced *"The Greek Forces have come to Cyprus in order to impose the will of the Greek Cypriots upon the Turks. We want enosis, but they are against it. We shall impose our will. We are strong and we shall do so."*⁹⁶ His presence in Cyprus as both a rival and now a direct threat to Makarios, would be a major factor in the ensuing inter-Greek violence which was to come. In 1973, Grivas tried to apply pressure to Makarios when he unsuccessfully called for a referendum on enosis. Makarios recognised the risk and began organising and arming a 'Tactical Police Reserve' who would be loyal to him.

Grivas had returned to the island with a new plan of genocide, 'The Iphestos (Volcano) Plan'⁹⁷. The new plan spoke of the need to *"psychologically prepare"* the Greek Cypriots to assist the paramilitary forces in carrying out large-scale murder as it sought to swiftly attack Turkish Cypriot towns and villages and to complete the killing before Türkiye could intervene. Harry Scott-Gibbons covered the gruesome plan in his book, *The Genocide Files*, explaining that *"Greek Cypriot National Guard documents captured in July 1974 reveal a hair-raising plan to wipe out the entire Turkish Cypriot population of the island. I have before me as I write copies of some of the captured documents... Every detail of the extermination plans is revealed – the villages to be wiped out with their inhabitants – the units assigned to specific areas, and even where to bury the Turkish corpses – it is all there. Perhaps the most frightening thing of all is the revelation that the Greek Cypriot population was to be organised and brainwashed into joining the slaughter"*.⁹⁸

Makarios attempted to present himself as a moderate force – especially in comparison to his openly bloodthirsty rival, Grivas. But occasionally the mask would slip. When asked about the enosis struggle in an interview with the German weekly, *Bunte Illustrierte*, he responded quite matter of factly that *"The union of Cyprus with Greece required the extermination of the Turkish Cypriot community"*⁹⁹.

In the end, Grivas would see none of this come to pass. He died suddenly of heart failure in January 1974, while hiding out in a house in Limassol. His funeral was a massive demonstration of his hero status and of the support that EOKA still had among the Greek Cypriot public.

On 15th July 1974, Athens finally moved to overthrow Makarios in a Greece-led *coup d'état*. It had been inspired by Greek junta leader, Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis, who had ordered that it be carried out by Greek National Guard officers. He was of the view that Makarios had moved from being an inspiration for enosis, to

⁹⁶ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmfaaff/113/113we45.htm#n149>

⁹⁷ Do You Remember The Iphestos Files?

Korkmaz Haktanir

⁹⁸ The Genocide Files

Harry Scott-Gibbons

⁹⁹ Bunte Illustrierte (Interview with Karin Kaemmereit)

1972

an obstacle.¹⁰⁰ On the morning of the 15th, the Greek Cypriot National Guard, supported by Grivas' EOKA B paramilitaries, launched an assault on the Presidential Palace. However, despite initial reports confirming his death, the Archbishop had managed to escape through an unguarded passage and was spirited away to Kykkos Monastery, located in the mountainous region of Marathasa Valley, before eventually reaching Paphos.

Believing that Makarios was dead and struggling to find anyone to accept the Presidency in the chaos which followed, the junta named a celebrated EOKA hitman as the new President, Nicos Sampson. Sampson had first come to attention as a journalist who had the happy knack of being first at the scene in a number of EOKA-linked murders during the insurgency against the British. It didn't take long for the British to work out that rather than being lucky, he was directly or indirectly involved. He had formed part of an EOKA execution team, being held responsible for a minimum of 15 murders from that time alone. A protégé of Grivas, Sampson was linked to numerous other attacks on British forces and Turkish Cypriots and was known locally by the Turkish Cypriots as 'The Butcher of Omorphita', after playing a leading role in the deadly attack on that town. The attack took place on 23rd December 1963, at the start of the 'Bloody Christmas' campaign and involved Sampson entering the town holding a Turkish flag, under the pretense that his group were bringing aid. When the villagers emerged from their homes his men opened fire. He boasted that he had killed as many Turks as his age. He later moved into politics, but had evidently lost none of his violent outlook, being elected to the Greek Cypriot House of Representatives under the slogan "*Death to the Turks!*"¹⁰¹. Diplomatic reports from July 1974 following his sudden and unexpected rise to power described him as a "*maniacal psycho killer*"¹⁰², "*professional villain*"¹⁰³ and an "*irrational, psychopathic and dangerous opportunist*".¹⁰⁴

Suddenly, from a safehouse in Paphos, Makarios addressed the Greek Cypriot public by radio, declaring "*Greek Cypriot people! The voice you hear is familiar. You know who's talking to you. I'm Makarios. I am the one you have elected to be your leader. I'm not dead. I am alive. And I am with you, a fellow fighter and flag-bearer in the struggle. The Junta's coup has failed. I was the target and I, as long as I live, will not allow the Junta to Cyprus. The Junta decided to destroy Cyprus. To divide it. But it will not succeed*". He went on to urge his people to resist the coup and not to obey the orders of the coupists, saying "*Cyprus has always resisted the Junta. Do not be afraid. Join everyone in the legitimate powers of the State. The Junta must not pass and will not pass. Now, let's all join the fight!*"¹⁰⁵ On the 16th July, British forces evacuated Makarios to RAF Akrotiri before flying him to Malta and then on to London.

With the coup underway the next step was to crush all those who opposed it. Their attentions momentarily diverted from the Turkish Cypriots, Greek now began fighting Greek. The Greek Cypriot MP, Rina Kastellis, recalled in her diary:

"16th July 1974. Is Makarios alive? Is he dead? The Makarios supporters arrested, the EOKA-B supporters freed. I did not shed a tear. Why should I? Did the stupidity and fanaticism deserve a tear? There are some who beg Turkey to intervene."

*"18th July 1974. Oh my God!... Everyone is frozen with fear... The old man who asked for the body of his son was shot on the spot... The tortures and executions at the prison... Everyone is frozen with horror. Nothing is sacred to these people, and they call themselves Greeks!... we must not keep that name any longer."*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ The Cyprus Crisis and The Cold War

Makarios Drousiotis

¹⁰¹ Prof. Pierre Oberling - US Senate

28 February 1984

¹⁰² FCO 9/2537 National Archives UK

¹⁰³ FCO 9/2537 National Archives UK

¹⁰⁴ Nicosia 0413 AAD, NARA

¹⁰⁵ <https://greekreporter.com/2025/07/15/cyprus-coup-instigates-turkish-invasion/#:~:text=Greek%20Cypriot%20people!,let's%20all%20join%20the%20fight!>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus- historical-overview .en.mfa>

By 19th July Makarios had made his way to New York, where he addressed the United Nations Security Council. He denounced the Athens-orchestrated coup as an “*invasion*”, using the word no less than 19 times during his speech, and called upon the UN Security Council to take immediate action to restore constitutional order and protect the democratic rights of all Cypriots. It was an ironic call from a man who had spent the previous 14 years working tirelessly and duplicitously to end constitutional order and to deny the rights of one part of the population. Makarios told the UN “*I do not know as yet all the details of the Cyprus crisis caused by the Greek military regime. I am afraid that large is the number of casualties and heavy is the material destruction. ... Without a blush, the Greek junta is making efforts to simplify the situation, claiming that it is not involved in the armed attack and that the developments of the last few days are an internal matter of the Greek Cypriotes.*”

*“I do not believe that there are people who accept the allegations of the Greek military regime. The coup did not come about under such circumstances as to be considered an internal matter of the Greek Cypriotes. It is clearly an invasion from outside, in flagrant violation of the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. The so-called coup was the work of the Greek officers staffing and commanding the national guard”*¹⁰⁷

On 22nd July 1974, The Washington Post reported “*Bodies litter the streets and there were mass burials... People who were told by Makarios to put down their guns were shot by the National Guard.*”¹⁰⁸ Father Papatsestos, a local priest in charge of one of the cemeteries in Nicosia would later recall the grizzly instructions he received from a Greek officer: “*I want you in half an hour to prepare graves for 75 bodies....*” Four trucks full of corpses came to the cemetery. I told the officer to bury them in equal numbers in each grave we opened. “*You dirty priest, these are communist dogs, the soldiers will be buried with full honours here. Put the Makarios supporters elsewhere far away.*”¹⁰⁹

All these events would later be erased from Greek Cypriot memory. The victims of the Greek coup were conveniently added to those who perished during the Turkish intervention and all blame was laid at the feet of ‘the barbaric Turks’. Those Greeks who were unceremoniously buried without the knowledge or presence of loved ones were added to the list of ‘The Missing’. Despite some brave people having stepped forward to confirm the truth of the situation, the search for missing Greek Cypriots would continue for years. Mothers, widows and entire families were paraded each year with photos and mementoes in hand, as part of the relentless propaganda drive which has come to underpin the Greek Cypriot cause. On the other side of the divide, the many Turkish Cypriot missing were quickly declared ‘missing, presumed dead’. A difficult message for the families to hear, but an altogether kinder one. The US’ Special Cyprus Coordinator, Nelson Ledsky, testified before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, confirming that “*Most of the missing persons disappeared in the first days of July 1974, before the Turkish intervention on the 20th. Many killed on the Greek side were killed by Greek Cypriots in fighting between supporters of Makarios and Sampson.*”¹¹⁰ In his book, Cyprus, A Troubled Island, Andrew Borowiec explained that “*In the four days that followed the coup, an estimated 2,000 people, known to be ardent supporters of Makarios were killed. Their names were later added to those killed during the subsequent Turkish invasion.*”¹¹¹

Eventually, as more and more people came forward to reveal the truth, the Government of President Glafkos Clerides was forced to admit in 1996 that they were fully aware that there were people buried in the Greek Cypriot cemetery in Nicosia who were still included on the list of ‘The Missing’. The (Greek Cypriot) Cyprus Mail wrote on 3rd March 1996 that “*(Greek) Cypriot governments have found it convenient to conceal the scale of atrocities during the 15th July coup in an attempt to downplay its contribution to the tragedy of the summer of 1974 and instead blame the Turkish invasion for all casualties. There can be no justification for any government that failed to investigate this sensitive humanitarian issue. The shocking admission by the Clerides*

¹⁰⁷ New York Times

20 July 1974

¹⁰⁸ The Washington Post

22 July 1974

¹⁰⁹ [TESTIMONIES FROM THE DAYS OF THE FASCIST COUP IN CYPRUS | Parikiaki Cyprus and Cypriot News](#)

¹¹⁰ Nelson Ledsky (Testimony to US Senate Foreign Relations Committee)

¹¹¹ Cyprus, A Troubled Island

Andrew Borowiec

government that there are people buried in Nicosia cemetery who are still included in the list of the "missing" is the last episode of a human drama which has been turned into a propaganda tool."¹¹² The Cyprus Mail would report on 9th June 2001 "Slowly but surely the casualties of war whom the Greek Cypriot Administration claims to have been missing since 1974 are turning up. The latest batch of 36 whose identities have now been confirmed, bring the total identified by DNA testing to 108. The fact is that the 1,600 on the list are not "missing". They are not being held in Turkish jails or any other place from where "sightings" have been reported over the decades. They are – very sadly for their families – dead".¹¹³ Finally, George Lionitis, was moved to write "I was serving with the Foreign Information Service of the Republic of Cyprus in London... I deeply apologise to all those I told that there are 1.619 missing persons. I misled them. I was made a liar, deliberately, by the Government of Cyprus... today it seems that the credibility of Cyprus is nil."¹¹⁴

9. Turkish Intervention

Following a Greece-led coup d'état to oust Archbishop Makarios, the Greek forces in Cyprus were attempting to round up his supporters before they made their declaration of enosis. Türkiye tried and failed to bring a joint intervention to restore the partnerships state. Consequently, Türkiye took the decision to press ahead with unilateral action...

With the situation in 1974 now on a knife-edge Türkiye's President, Bülent Ecevit, travelled to London on 17th and 18th July, principally to ask the United Kingdom to join Türkiye in restoring the 1960 conditions after his invitation to Greece to join him in London was rebuffed. He had meetings with Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, the Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan and Defence Secretary, Roy Mason. It was suggested that he meet Makarios, who was also in London. Ecevit agreed, but Makarios refused, explaining that there were so many Cypriots in the UK, he had no time to speak with anyone else¹¹⁵. Ecevit was keen to exhaust all possibilities as he could see the danger to Türkiye's standing if seen as too keen to act alone, but the British refused to act. He then suggested that Britain allow the Turkish forces to disembark in the British Sovereign Areas to minimise bloodshed, but was again refused, with Callaghan replying that the bases were not meant for that purpose. With Turkish intervention now almost certain, the US began to apply pressure. Ecevit laid out his demands to avoid military action. They were:

- (1) the immediate replacement of Sampson and the withdrawal of Greek officers from Cyprus
- (2) the admission of Turkish troops, which the security of Turkish Cypriots demands
- (3) the equality of rights of the two communities
- (4) an outlet to the sea [the north coast] for the Turkish Cypriots.¹¹⁶

Perhaps still convinced that Türkiye would be held back, Athens refused. Türkiye was now aware that it had no other option and no further time to waste. It was faced with an existential threat to the Turkish Cypriot population and the likelihood of an imminent declaration of enosis - with its likely acceptance by the world community.

Military intervention took place on the morning of the 20th July 1974, with Turkish troops landing by sea and air. Following an initial two-day operation in which a small bridgehead was secured between Kyrenia and the suburbs of Nicosia, a ceasefire was called. Greece, Türkiye and Britain would soon begin talks in Geneva.

¹¹² Cyprus Mail

3 March 1996

¹¹³ Cyprus Mail

9 June 2001

¹¹⁴ Georgios Lanitis

19 October 1996

¹¹⁵ Cyprus at War: Diplomacy and Conflict during the 1974 Crisis

Jan Asmussen

¹¹⁶ Bolükbaşı – Turkish-American Relations and Cyprus

Mehmet Ali Birand

Meanwhile, the Greek forces in Cyprus, united again in the face of the common enemy, now turned their attentions back to the Turkish Cypriots with some of their most brutal attacks.

On 22nd July Turkish President, Bulent Ecevit, implored the UN to *"stop the genocide of Turkish-Cypriots"* but warned that *"Turkey has accepted a cease-fire, but will not allow Turkish-Cypriots to be massacred."*¹¹⁷ On 24th July 1974 the French newspaper, France Soir, reported *"The Greeks burned down mosques and set fire to Turkish homes in the villages around Famagusta. Defenceless Turkish villagers live in an atmosphere of terror, and they evacuate their homes and go and live in tents in forests. The Greeks' actions are a shame to humanity."*¹¹⁸

On the 23rd July the military junta in Athens met and agreed on the need for a return to civilian rule. The junta had fallen, and was replaced by the last democratically elected leader, Constantine Karamanlis, who was flown back from exile in Paris. The Sampson regime in Nicosia fell on the same day, with Clerides now taking the reins, being named as 'interim President'. Sampson was later referred to the Cyprus Criminal Court in August 1976 for his part in the coup. Given the risk of what may have come out in a trial, a deal was struck. He received a 25-year sentence which he did not appeal owing to a prior agreement that he would be pardoned within 2 years. In 1979, Sampson was granted permission to go to Paris for 'medical tests'. He did not return to Cyprus until 1990 after which he was, unsurprisingly, pardoned.

The Geneva conference began on 25th July, with the three guarantor powers, Britain, Greece and Türkiye, tasked with restoring peace and to restore constitutional government in Cyprus. The talks stumbled on until 30th July with little gained. With the ceasefire barely holding, they agreed to meet again. The Second Geneva Conference began a week later on 8th August, this time attended by representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, Clerides (standing in for Makarios, who was still in London) and Denktaş. During much back and forth, the Turkish side proposed a geographical solution of two separate zones or a series of cantons, with the Turkish Cypriot areas guarded by Turkish troops. The Greek side insisted that, at most, they could accept groupings of villages to be part of 'Communal Administrations'. In other words, Turkish Cypriot villages would remain scattered, isolated, and at risk. With talks dragging on, Greece asked for 36 hours to consult. Ecevit replied that he could accept 36 hours or even 36 days, if the Greek side accepted his proposal for some sort of geographical separation which the Turkish troops could guarantee. Callaghan, on behalf of Britain, supported Ecevit's proposal, but the Greek side remained unwilling to commit.

By now Türkiye was convinced that, rather than coming to negotiate, Greece was employing delaying tactics. Turkish troops found themselves in an increasingly untenable position inside their small bridgehead, with the area around them now being heavily mined. In addition to the risk to its troops, armed attacks on Turkish Cypriot villages were continuing. Türkiye's aim had been to stop the coup and to protect the Turkish Cypriots from harm. While the former had been achieved, the latter was clearly an even bigger risk than when they had initially landed on the island. Outside of the talks they were aware that, while the world had understood their need to intervene, the narrative was being controlled by the Greek-Greek Cypriot duo who were painting Türkiye as the aggressor.

On the 14th August, the signal was given for the second phase of the intervention to take place. On that very same day every Turkish Cypriot male between the ages of 13 and 74 from the village of Taşkent/Tokhni were rounded up by Greek forces. 84 were forcibly taken away, while 18 people managed to escape. Those taken were all shot, their bodies thrown into a mass grave, many still alive, with their hands bound behind their backs.

¹¹⁷ <https://web.itu.edu.tr/~altilar/tobi/e-library/TheCyprusQuestion01/thecyprusquestion01.html>

¹¹⁸ France Soir

24 July 1974

By the 16th August the second phase of the intervention came to a close, marking the end of Türkiye's military campaign. Having solidified previous gains Turkish forces established a ceasefire line which remains in force today.

On 19th August a mass grave containing 37 bodies – mostly women, children and the elderly - were exhumed in Atlılar/Aloda, followed by a further 84 in Sandallar/Santalaris on 29th August. The latter included the children from the local school. Present at the exhumation was their teacher, Hasan Nihat Mustafa, who could only lament *"I was the village teacher. But now there is no need for a school in the village, because there are no children there anymore, they are all gone"*. On the 30th August 1974 the German newspaper, Die Zeit, wrote *"the massacre of Turkish Cypriots in Paphos and Famagusta is proof just how justified the Turks were to undertake their (second) intervention."*¹¹⁹

The existence of two more mass graves in South Cyprus, containing the male populations of Tatlısu/Mari and Terazi/Zyvi was confirmed by Unficyp, but permission to exhume them was refused by the 'Government of Cyprus'. Confirmation that these attacks were not coincidence and that a similar fate awaited the remaining Turkish Cypriots was given by the then 'President', Nicos Sampson, when he boasted in an interview with the Greek newspaper, Eleftherotypia, in February 1981 *"Had Turkey not intervened I would not only have declared enosis – I would have annihilated the Turks in Cyprus."*¹²⁰

On Britain's refusal to intervene, the UK House of Commons Select Committee met to review the Cyprus question in 1976 and concluded that *"Britain had a legal right to intervene, she had a moral obligation to intervene. She did not intervene for reasons which the Government refuses to give."*¹²¹ Even Greece herself, when reviewing the intervention on 21st March 1979 in the Athens Court of Appeal, was in agreement with an earlier report from the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and found that *"The Turkish military intervention in Cyprus which was carried out in accordance with the Zurich and London Agreements was legal. Turkey, as one of the Guarantor powers, had the right to fulfil her obligations. The real culprits... are the Greek officers who engineered and staged the coup and prepared the conditions for this intervention."*¹²² Regarding the silencing of the Turkish Cypriots, the UK House of Commons Committee went on to say that *"Equally damaging from the Turkish Cypriot point of view was what they considered to be their effective exclusion from representation at, and participation in, the international fora where their case could have been deployed..."*. *"An official Turkish Cypriot presence in the international political scene virtually disappeared overnight."*¹²³

Following that second operation the two communities retreated to either side of the 'Green Line', which now became a hard border stretching right across the island. A formal, but voluntary, population exchange took place and two separate *de facto* states emerged from the ashes of the short-lived conflict. Turkish Cypriot President, Rauf Denktaş, looked back on the scene in an interview on 4th July 1989 and lamented *"The Akritas Plan destroyed the only compromise ever reached between Greece and Turkey and between Greek and Turkish Cypriots about Cyprus. It revived bloodshed and hatred. It thrust Cyprus and its peoples back to the extremes of enosis and partition."*¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Die Zeit

30 August 1974

¹²⁰ Eleftherotypia

26 February 1981

¹²¹ <https://johnhugheswilson.co.uk/2019/09/29/august-1974-hubris-nemesis-and-lies/>

¹²² [https://johnhugheswilson.co.uk/2022/06/01/peace-in-](https://johnhugheswilson.co.uk/2022/06/01/peace-in-cyprus/#:~:text=On%2021%20March%201979%20none,of%20the%20Treaty%20of%20Guarantee.%E2%80%9D)

[cyprus/#:~:text=On%2021%20March%201979%20none,of%20the%20Treaty%20of%20Guarantee.%E2%80%9D](https://johnhugheswilson.co.uk/2022/06/01/peace-in-cyprus/#:~:text=On%2021%20March%201979%20none,of%20the%20Treaty%20of%20Guarantee.%E2%80%9D)

¹²³ UK Commons Committee (Paragraph 29)

¹²⁴

<https://web.itu.edu.tr/~altilar/tobi/Kibris/TheCyprusQuestion.html#:~:text=It%20thrust%20Cyprus%20and%20its%20peoples%20back%20into%20the%20extremes%20of%20ENOSIS%20and%20partition.&text=Cypriot%20people%2C%20n o%20less%20than%20its%20Greek%20Cypriot%20people%2C%20became>

10. Post-Intervention Talks

Following a cease-fire and the end of hostilities in Cyprus, the Greek and Turkish communities began talks to find a new reunification plan for the island...

Talks had been continuing on and off ever since 1963 but seemed to mostly be an exercise in confirming that no amount of compromise was enough for the Greek Cypriots to accept. In 1970, Clerides, negotiating on behalf of Makarios, explained the failure of one potential agreement. *"The reason for this was, again, our antipathy to the partnership concept, and our intention to reduce the Turkish community to a minority in a Greek Cypriot state."*¹²⁵ The situation was soon repeated with Clerides lamenting *"The most important meeting I had with Makarios occurred in December 1972. Because had I succeeded in convincing Makarios to accept my point of view, events in Cyprus would have taken an entirely different course. ... It is a fact of history, which cannot be denied, that the uncompromising attitude of Makarios on the issue of local government prevented a solution of the Cyprus problem in December 1972."*¹²⁶

With Makarios effectively in exile after 1974, Clerides and Denktas attempted to push forward with negotiations. Feeling that they were close to a mutually acceptable solution, but conscious of the shadow of Makarios which loomed over Clerides, the two *"acknowledged mutual interest in keeping Makarios off the island."*¹²⁷ When Makarios heard of an imminent peace proposal he quickly launched a campaign to undermine Clerides and began stirring up the Greek Cypriot opinion to the extent that further Greek-on-Greek clashes seemed a real possibility. On 3rd October Clerides, unwilling to take the risk of further violence among his community, resigned. The statement read *"Mr Clerides has decided to resign this coming Thursday, October 3 because he cannot take responsibility for a repeat civil war in Cyprus between supporters of Archbishop Makarios and his opponents. In a situation of the utmost gravity, the Archbishop will bear the responsibility, not only to Cyprus, but to the whole nation, if he does not avert the threatened tragic development."*¹²⁸ Makarios eventually returned to Cyprus on 7th December, arriving via the British base in Akrotiri, just as he had left. His position on the status of the island had not softened. Unlike Clerides, he was not open to compromise and had seemed to have learned nothing from the chaos and bloodshed which his actions had led to until now. On the tacit agreement between Clerides and Denktas, he said *"If I have to choose between the 40 per cent held by the Turks and the 28 per cent that we shall probably end up with, I prefer they keep the 40 per cent even against our will, rather than that they hold 28 per cent with our consent."*¹²⁹

In 1975, with talks still concentrating on a federal solution for the island, the Turkish Cypriots, still internationally isolated, announced the creation of the 'Turkish Federated State of Cyprus'. They were careful to name it as such to ensure that it was clear that it was a precursor to a new Cyprus Federation and not a push for independence. They felt that while it allowed them to manage their affairs, they could also make clear their separate political identity from the Greek Cypriots who, despite everything, still held the title of 'Government of Cyprus'. The UN, however, preferred to keep the status quo.

On 12th March 1975 the UN passed a resolution advising that they regretted the decision, because they considered that it would negatively affect *"the continuation of negotiations..."*¹³⁰ The only positive for the Turkish Cypriots is that part of the resolution stated that talks would be held *"on an equal footing"*. It was the first time since independence that the UN had formally recognised the political equality of the Turkish Cypriots.

¹²⁵ Clerides - Volume 3

¹²⁶ Clerides - Volume 3

¹²⁷ Telegraphic letter from Dr Kissinger to Mr Callaghan 27 November 1974

¹²⁸ Karamanlis – Volume 8

¹²⁹ The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War Makarios Drousiotis

¹³⁰ UN Resolution 367 12 March 1975

But that only made their refusal to recognise the new federal state even more frustrating as the Turkish Cypriots were forced to continue to live in isolation. A situation which, rather than encourage compromise (which they had clearly shown throughout the talks), left them open to a form of blackmail: submit to Greek rule or be punished.

Talks stumbled on between 1975 and 1979, when there was a breakthrough of sorts. After initial agreements between Denktaş and Makarios in 1977, there followed top-level agreements between Denktaş and the new Greek Cypriot leader, Spiros Kyprianou. On 19th May 1979, the '10 point Agreement'¹³¹ was announced, which aimed to resume intercommunal talks which would work toward a bi-communal, bi-zonal federal republic, with respect for human rights and the resettlement of Maraş/Varosha by Greek Cypriots. Despite much fanfare at the time, that agreement too soon fell apart, with the Greek Cypriot leadership being finally unwilling to make the last step. By 1983, the Greek Cypriots tried a new tactic and now cut off all political dialogue with the Turkish Cypriots. Having now been left in political limbo for 20 years, with no internationally recognised authority to speak on their own behalf, the Turkish Cypriots finally lost patience. They responded by formally declaring their independence from the Greek controlled 'Republic of Cyprus'. Following a unanimous vote in the Turkish Cypriot parliament on 15th November 1983, they proclaimed their own independent state, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The Turkish Cypriot President, Rauf Denktaş, had warned that his people were running out of options, arguing that *"We are being pushed into full independence by the attitude of the Greek Cypriot side."* He urged the Greek Cypriot leadership to *"abandon at once its claims to be the government of Cyprus and return to the conference table under conditions of equality so that the course of proclaiming separate independence can be avoided."*¹³² His pleas fell on deaf ears.

11. Denial of Turkish Cypriot Statehood

Following the failure of all efforts at reunification and in a bid to reassert their equal sovereignty on the island, the Turkish Cypriots had declared independence. At the behest of the Greek lobby, recognition of the state was prohibited by the UN. The success of denying Turkish Cypriot sovereignty at the UN now emboldened the Greek Cypriots to block all representation of the Turkish Cypriots in the public arena...

Türkiye immediately recognised the new state, quickly followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh, with other states seemingly likely to follow suit. But the UN, following on from the erroneous Resolution 186 in 1964¹³³ and under pressure from the powerful Greek lobby in the US and Britain, quickly moved to block further recognition. They passed a new resolution (541)¹³⁴ which made recognition of the Turkish Cypriot state unlawful, with the new state deemed to be *"legally invalid"*. Following direct pressure, Pakistan and Bangladesh quietly withdrew their recognition. The political victory of the Greek Cypriots was now complete and as a result the position of each community in Cyprus became more entrenched than ever. Unrecognised by the world and continuing to live under crippling embargoes, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was now labelled a 'breakaway' or 'pseudo' state. It remains so today and continues to be recognised only by Ankara.

The erroneous UN Resolutions have ensured that ignoring the existence of the Turkish Cypriots and accepting the absurdity of one partner assuming total power at the expense of the other, is not a choice given to individual nations, but an obligation which is imposed and policed by the UN. Any hint that a country may

¹³¹ <https://www.gov.cy/pio/en/documents/agreements/agreements-the-10-point-agreement-of-19-may-1979/>

¹³² The Cyprus Crisis & The Cold War

Makarios Drousiotis

¹³³ UN Resolution 186

4 March 1964

¹³⁴ <https://unscr.com/en/resolutions/541>

wish to open direct trade or travel routes with the Turkish Cypriots is quickly jumped upon. Even the acknowledgement of the existence of Turkish Cypriots has become something akin to a crime. Any image containing their flag or any discussion where they are mentioned as a separate or equal entity is quickly jumped upon by the Greek Cypriot propaganda machine. They are utterly silenced and for all intents and purposes, have become non-people. The process is so complete that, today, many people are simply not aware of the existence of a Turkish Cypriot community. The words Greek and Cypriot have now become interchangeable. An enosis of sorts.

However, contrary to the position taken by the UN, the legal opinion of Professor E. Lauterpacht CBE QC has shown that the situation is not so clear cut. He explains *"The fact that states have been prepared to recognise and to accord a place in the United Nations to the constitutionally unlawful Greek Cypriot regime is comparable to recognition, many times repeated in the history of international relations, of de facto governments that have assumed power after a successful insurrection and repudiation of constitutional forms. But that de facto acceptance by the international community could not, and did not, in any way expunge the international illegality or, even more to the point, deprive the Turkish Cypriot community of its entitlement, possessed in common with the Greek Cypriot community, to the enjoyment of its right to self-determination."*¹³⁵

*The subsequent condemnation in Security Council Resolution 541 (1983) of the exercise of this right by the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a statal entity in Northern Cyprus responding to the factual division of the country and parallel to the one existing in Southern Cyprus is legally bewildering."*¹³⁵

The UN would perhaps do well to look at its own UN Charter which is unequivocal on the subject:

Article 1 (2) establishes that one of the main purposes of the United Nations, and thus the Security Council, is to develop friendly international relations based on respect for the *"principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples"*.¹³⁶

In addition, they could refer to the UN Declaration of Human Rights which states:

*Article 2 Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty."*¹³⁷

The unprecedented decision by the UN to demand that states do not recognise the Turkish Cypriots state was just the latest step taken by the international community to silence their voice. There are innumerable examples of the lengths to which the Greek Cypriots will go to, to hide the existence of the TRNC.

Starting as far back as September 1977, after the creation of the Turkish Federated State, a Greek Cypriot delegation attended the Universal Postal Union Congress to demand that the validity of Turkish Cypriot postal stamps be denied. Being unable to use the Greek Cypriot postal system the Turkish Cypriot post, just like the trade routes and telephony system, tried to manage their own affairs, but were forced to operate via Türkiye. These actions did nothing to foster any desire for reunification. They forced the Turkish Cypriots closer to

¹³⁵ Professor E. Lauterpacht CBE QC

9 March 1990

¹³⁶ [https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/purposes-and-principles-un-chapter-i-un-charter#:~:text=A.-,Article%201%20\(2\)%20%2D%20Equal%20rights%20and%20self%2Ddetermination,self%2Ddetermination%20of%20peoples%E2%80%9D.](https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/purposes-and-principles-un-chapter-i-un-charter#:~:text=A.-,Article%201%20(2)%20%2D%20Equal%20rights%20and%20self%2Ddetermination,self%2Ddetermination%20of%20peoples%E2%80%9D.)

¹³⁷ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

Türkiye and further away from the idea of any sort of united Cyprus. Time has evidently done nothing to dampen their desire to shut down all signs of Turkish Cypriot recognition.

In recent years, a Google UK television advertisement which aired in 2020, was found to contain a split-second image of a Turkish Cypriot flag. It appeared totally by chance, on the wall of London mechanic as part of a montage. It was spotted and quickly reported to the company demanding its immediate withdrawal. The ad was duly removed and then subsequently re-released a few days later with a white square covering the offending image.

In 2021 there was an incident in London, home to approximately 300,000 Turkish Cypriots. Waltham Forest Council had been celebrating the diversity of their community by flying the flag of each community on the council grounds for a few days each month. A formal application was made – and was accepted – to fly the Turkish Cypriot flag on a given day as representation of the Turkish Cypriot community in that area.¹³⁸ Despite this formal agreement, within minutes of it being raised the Greek Cypriot embassy was informed and swung into action. Moving outside of its strict remit of not interfering in the internal affairs of its host nation, calls were made to the Council Leader, and the flag was unceremoniously removed and tossed on the floor of a storeroom. It's important to consider that the council had previously flown the flag of Tibet (also, not recognised internationally) as well as the flags other groups, such as the LGBTQ rainbow. In those cases, there was no question that the council were simply celebrating the diversity of their residents and were not somehow conferring international recognition on them. To add insult to injury, Turkish Cypriot requests for an explanation and an apology were ignored. Meanwhile, a secret meeting took place behind closed doors between the Council Leader and the National Federation of Cypriots UK (NFCUK), resulting in an apology from the Council - not to the Turkish Cypriot community for having treated them with such disdain, but to the 'Cypriot community' for having flown the Turkish Cypriot flag. Clearly, by taking this stance the council were conflating 'Greek Cypriot' with 'Cypriot'. And they did so after having taken advice from an organisation [NFCUK] who, despite claiming to represent the Cypriot diaspora in the UK, are in fact exclusively Greek Cypriot and rabidly anti-Turkish. A cursory look at their website and social media output will confirm that they not only do not represent the Turkish Cypriot diaspora but actively work against them.

In March 2022, Formula 1 driver, Sebastian Vettel, was baffled to find himself among the battle to suppress recognition of Turkish Cyprus. He was reported to the governing body of motor sport, the FIA, when it was discovered that the Turkish Cypriot flag had been inadvertently printed on to his helmet. Vettel had commissioned a special 'No War' helmet, meant as an anti-war peace protest following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Unbeknownst to him, the design - a series of 250 miniscule flags, forming a thin border around the helmet - happened to include the Turkish Cypriot flag. Vettel was forced to abandon it. A statement from the Greek Cypriot authorities gives a hint to how much the Turkish Cypriot nation needs to be suppressed. It read *"The Cyprus Automobile Association, sole representative of the International Automobile Federation throughout Cyprus, informs that it has filed a complaint against the driver of Formula 1, Sebastian Vettel, the legal department of the FIA, for its unacceptable action to appear in its competition salute the flag of pseudo state. The Cyprus Automobile Association demands the immediate withdrawal of the pseudo state flag from the driver's helmet, and to impose a fine on both him and his team."*¹³⁹

A recent move by the Organization of Turkic States in November 2022 to award Observer Status to the TRNC was quickly attacked by the Greek Cypriot Administration and subsequently by both the US and European Union (EU). While condemning the decision to provide tacit recognition to the Turkish Cypriot state they took the opportunity to reiterate their continued support for a bi-communal or bi-zonal federation. However, in lieu of that bi-communal or bi-zonal state being created, they see no contradiction in continuing to recognise the Greek Cypriot administration as the sole legitimate government of the entire island. The absurdity of

¹³⁸ <https://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/19777621.protest-waltham-forest-takes-turkish-cypriot-flag/>

¹³⁹ <https://formularapida.net/en/vettel-forced-to-remove-flag-from-no-war-helmet-after-protest-from-cyprus/#:~:text=The%20Turkish%20Dadopted%20flag%20was,from%20using%20a%20stock%20image.>

rejecting Turkish Cypriot claims to represent solely themselves, while simultaneously accepting one half of a partnership state to speak in the name of both partners is seemingly lost on them. The choice given to the Turkish Cypriots remains the same now as it was when they were ousted from the Cyprus Government in 1964. They can continue to demand recognition as political equals in Cyprus and be punished for it, or they can submit to Greek Cypriot rule.

The 2024 Olympics in Paris highlighted the absurdity of the isolation that Turkish Cypriots face both inside and outside of Cyprus. The final of the Women's High Jump featured two athletes residing in Cyprus. One, Buse Savaşkan, was representing Türkiye. The other, Elena Kulichenko, represented Cyprus.

Buse Savaşkan was born in Cyprus, to a Turkish Cypriot mother and a (mainland) Turkish father. Although she had no intention to do so, had she wanted to represent Cyprus in the Olympics, she could not. For being the descendant of a mainland Turkish father she is considered by the Greek Cypriot Administration to be a 'settler'. Consequently, she would be automatically disqualified by the Republic of Cyprus administration. Having one mainland Turkish parent means she cannot ever be considered as Cypriot. The same will apply to any children she may bear. She is not only unable to represent Cyprus in sport but is also ineligible for a Cyprus passport. And this decision is taken by the same administration which claims to be the government of the whole island and of all Cypriots.

Elena Kulichenko was born in Russia, to two Russian-born parents who are both Russian citizens. She grew up in Russia and had represented the country internationally, becoming the 2017 Russian U-18 Outdoor Champion. She later became a neutral athlete in 2018 following a ban on Russian athletes. Despite having none of the Cypriotness of Buse, when she moved to Cyprus with her parents, there was no obstacle to her quickly receiving a Republic of Cyprus passport and representing 'Cyprus' at the Olympics.

The example of Savaşkan and Kulichenko is sadly not an isolated case. When viewing the double-standards on display it is impossible to conclude that the policies employed by the Republic of Cyprus are anything less than anti-Turkish and racist.

The above are just a few drops in a vast ocean of actions taken by Greek Cypriot authorities and lobby groups. It shows a vindictiveness which is hard to explain, and which does nothing to create an environment likely to promote reconciliation between the two communities. Instead, it breeds bitterness. This attitude stands in direct contrast to the nostalgic stories of pre-1974 which the Greek Cypriots often like to share for the benefit of the media. They speak of a time when *"There weren't any problems. We lived together peacefully and in harmony. We were like brothers and sisters."*¹⁴⁰ This idyllic situation is said to have continued until the sudden 'unlawful invasion and occupation of Cyprus' by Türkiye. An event, often referred to as 'the rape of Cyprus'¹⁴¹, which apparently came out of the blue, as unexpected as it was unwarranted. There is no mention of the killings, the displacements, the 11-year-long siege or the denial of constitutional rights. For them, the Cyprus problem begins precisely on the morning of 20th July 1974 with the Turkish 'invasion'. And proof of their righteousness is evidenced by the fact that the world recognises them as the only legitimate government for the whole island, while it castigates the Turkish Cypriots. How could they fail to believe that they are in the right, and that they – not the Turkish Cypriots – are the side who have been wronged?

However, the distinguished American international lawyer, Monroe Leigh, provided his opinion in July 1990 when he wrote *"the mere fact of international recognition, no matter how widespread, cannot excuse or confer*

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.talesofcyprus.com/uncategorized/home-truths-1-christians-and-muslims-in-cyprus-once-coexisted-in-harmony/>

¹⁴¹ [Attilas '74 \(1975\) - IMDb](#)

[The Rape of Cyprus](#)

legitimacy upon the violations of both constitutional law and international treaty law through which the Greek Cypriot regime usurped the name as well as government of the Republic of Cyprus”¹⁴².

It is a consequence of their need to keep hiding the truth that they are forced to shut down anything which challenges it. And remarkably, their strategy appears to have worked. As other countries have constructed ties with the Greek Cypriot Government it has become difficult – if not impossible - for them to now consider another side to the story. Because to do so would require them to admit that they have been duped or, more likely, that they have willingly accepted the lie because it suits their national interests.

Stavros Angelides partly explained the Greek Cypriot mindset when he wrote in the newspaper, *Fileleftheros* on 16th September 1990 “With the passage of time we the Greek Cypriots forget, or we willfully disregard, the events which led to the present situation in Cyprus. We forget our faults and we ask all the more emphatically everybody else to deliver to us justice as we understand it. We talk in generalities and in vague terms about UN Resolutions, and actually mean only those which favour us. The others, such as Resolution 649 are not fair – we do not want them – let them go to hell.”¹⁴³ And the actions of the UN and the world confirm that they are not alone in this denial. But why is Resolution 649 such an issue? Because it speaks very clearly about a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation and it confirms the equality of the two communities, thus calling into question the status quo. The summary of the resolution “*Calls upon the leaders of the two communities to pursue their efforts to reach freely a mutually acceptable solution providing for the establishment of a federation that will be bi-communal as regards the constitutional aspects and bi-zonal as regards the territorial aspects and to cooperate, on an equal footing, with the Secretary-General in completing an outline of an overall agreement, as agreed in June 1989; requests the Secretary-General to pursue his mission of good offices in order to achieve the earliest possible progress and, toward this end, to assist the two communities by making suggestions to facilitate the discussions; calls on the parties concerned to refrain from any action that could aggravate the situation.*”¹⁴⁴ That evidently doesn’t fit with the Greek Cypriot objectives. And so must be ignored and, as far as possible, buried.

12. The Legality of the Turkish Intervention

Such is the success of Greek Cypriot propaganda that public opinion is almost unanimous in believing that Türkiye invaded Cyprus in July 1974, and that she continues to occupy its northern third...

However, the Turkish intervention on 20th July was deemed as legal by the UN, Britain and even by Greece itself. The questionable part has been around the need for the second operation and the continued presence of Turkish troops today. Sir Anthony Kershaw explained that “*In order to protect the Turkish Cypriots, Turkey intervened in exercise of her rights under Article 4 of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. No-one has ever suggested that this was illegal, but they have gone on to say that the continuing presence of troops; not to restore the constitution, but to enforce partition, was illegal. But does this not ignore the reality of the situation? In law it is said that the Turks were invoking the Guarantee; but to say that they were obliged to work for no result except the restoration of the 1960 Constitution is absurd. That Constitution had ceased to exist. The reconciliation of the law with the actual political situation, or indeed with ordinary common sense, was becoming more difficult. The Turks came to protect the lives of the Turkish Cypriots, and they had good reason*

¹⁴² The Cyprus Question

Michael Stephen

¹⁴³ *Phileleftheros*

16 September 1990

¹⁴⁴ UN Resolution 649 (1990)

to know that the restoration of the 1960 Constitution was not the way to do that. The only way to do that was troops on the ground."¹⁴⁵

Or to put it more succinctly, as Lord Willis stated in The House of Lords *"Turkey intervened to protect the lives and property of the Turkish Cypriots, and to its credit it has done just that. In the past 12 years there have been no killings and no massacres"*¹⁴⁶, British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, found that *"Turkey has been provoked beyond endurance"*¹⁴⁷ and explained that *"I was convinced that if Archbishop Makarios could not bring himself to treat the Turkish Cypriots as human beings he was inviting the invasion and partition of the island."*¹⁴⁸ A US diplomatic cable quoted Douglas-Home being far less diplomatic when he referred to Makarios as a *"stinker of the highest order"*, while a US state department official described him as a *"wolf in priest's clothing"*.¹⁴⁹

The truth of how and why we ended up here was confirmed by no less than Archbishop Makarios himself when he declared on 12th March 1977 that *"It is in the name of enosis that Cyprus has been destroyed."*¹⁵⁰ Former Greek Prime Minister, Constantinos Mitsotakis, agreed when he said *"The attempt by Makarios to abrogate the very agreements he had signed was a mistake that constituted a crime. Because from that point on the situation dragged Cyprus into bloody events and led to crimes committed by the Greek Cypriot side against the Turkish Cypriot side which we cannot deny."*¹⁵¹ Astonishingly, some quarters of the press have even questioned Makarios' sincerity in trying to attain enosis and have sought to defend him as a victim, rather than a leader, of the movement. However, rather than being any sort of defence of the disgraced Archbishop, it would surely raise more, not less, questions about his morality as a leader. If he was not seeking enosis, why did he talk of it and promote it so incessantly? And more pertinently, why did he drive people to kill for it?

13. The European Union & The Annan Plan

Believing that the prospect of EU accession would be the carrot to bring the two communities together, the UN presented a comprehensive plan of reunification which world leaders were convinced would bring an end to the now 40-year dispute. It was agreed that the plan would be supported by the leader (President) of each community and then put to a joint referendum of the two communities...

By 1990, the dream of enosis had not died but had effectively become obsolete. Greece and (Greek) Cyprus had come to realise that by having political control of two states, they had inadvertently ended up with two Greek votes in the international arena instead of one. An incredibly powerful tool. They now sought to consolidate this fact – and to apply additional pressure on Türkiye. They began working together to push for Cyprus' accession to the EU to strengthen their voice in Europe, as well as in the UN.

The bloc had initially remained steadfast on refusing to contemplate Cyprus' accession prior to a political settlement on the island. The member states did not want to absorb the 'Cyprus problem' into the bloc. After a decade of pushback from the EU, the Greek/Greek Cypriot duo decided to play hardball. To overcome the situation Greece, an EU member herself, began to use her veto to block all new accession to the EU, resulting in a bottleneck of prospective new members. It made it very clear that either (Greek) Cyprus joins, or no-one joins. In addition to blocking new members, Greece also warned that it would veto a proposed Türkiye-EU

¹⁴⁵ Sir Anthony Kershaw (Speech in Cyprus)

23 October 1990

¹⁴⁶ Lord Willis (Speech in House of Lords)

17 December 1985

¹⁴⁷ The Road to Bellapais

Prof. Pierre Oberling

¹⁴⁸ The Way The Wind Blows

Sir Alec Douglas-Home

¹⁴⁹ <https://cyprus-mail.com/divided-island/the-players/archbishop-makarios-iii>

¹⁵⁰ Archbishop Makarios

12 March 1977

¹⁵¹ <https://www.sam.gov.tr/media/perceptions/archive/vol4/19990900/ErgunOlgun1.pdf>

Customs Agreement. Susana Baier-Allen argued that *"The conditionality of the Commission's Opinion was seriously eroded ... Greece succeeded primarily because it had threatened to block the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden"*¹⁵².

Outside of the EU, the UN had been continuing with the endless cycle of reunification talks. In 1992 the UN presented a 'Set of Ideas' by UN Secretary General, Boutros-Boutros Ghali. While they once again failed to push the two sides closer to a solution, the talks culminated in acceptance by all parties that sovereignty of the island *"emanates equally from both (the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot) communities. One cannot claim sovereignty over the other."*¹⁵³ Like UN Resolution 649 shown above, it only reiterated the conditions that the constitution had created in 1960. But it was an important win for the Turkish Cypriots as it they now had clear acceptance that Cyprus was not a Greek state, but a partnership of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. That they, as much as the Greek Cypriots had sovereignty. This fact should have called into question the legitimacy of the existing (all Greek) Republic of Cyprus Government or the decision to deny the reality of two separate states. Unfortunately, it changed neither. Once again, the UN preferred to ignore the contradictions in their Cyprus policy rather than face up to and resolve their mistake.

The Greek Cypriots and Greece pressed on with EU accession. While the process had initially been blocked on the basis that Cyprus must resolve its internal problems first, there was another important reason why accession could not proceed. As noted above, the Cyprus constitution expressly forbids Cyprus to enter into any union (political, economic or otherwise) with any state or states, of which both Greece and Türkiye were not already a member. This meant that their potential accession was not only unwise but was in fact also illegal according to the Cyprus Constitution. But incredibly, the EU buckled, preferring to push ahead with a wave on new countries into the bloc and to kick the Cyprus problem down the road. Once again, personal gains were put ahead of legality.

Following elections in the TRNC, a new pro-unification Turkish Cypriot President came to power in the North, elected in part on his apparent ability and willingness to agree a solution. The UN and the UE, long since convinced that Denktaş had been the cause of the stalemate in Cyprus, believed that their stars had aligned. They were convinced that a pro-settlement Turkish Cypriot President who was open to yet more concessions was enough to close the gap between the two communities.

Now would have been the time to show some goodwill and to begin to implement confidence-building measures between the two communities. Instead, the EU gave a clear signal of how they would continue to benefit the Greek Cypriots at the direct cost of the Turkish Cypriots. Until now, despite the trade embargo, the EU accepted a very small number of exports by Turkish Cypriot producers. On 5th July 1994 the European Court of Justice accepted a Greek Cypriot-inspired law which required those few exports to first be certified by the Greek Cypriot authorities. The argument put forward by the Greek Cypriots was the tried and tested formula of recognition versus non-recognition. They argued that to legally export any product from Cyprus (whether from the North or the South), it should require certification by the legal government of the island i.e. the Greek Cypriot Administration. The EU agreed. The Greek Cypriots now used excessive red tape to kill all Turkish Cypriot exports overnight.

In parallel to EU accession process there had been further UN-sponsored talks. The 'Annan Plan', taking its name from UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, had been years in the making, with extensive cross-border meetings and consultations with Greece, Türkiye, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Being unable to reach anywhere near full agreement, the UN decided to take advantage of the EU accession process by taking the

¹⁵² Exploring The Linkage Between EU Accession and Conflict Resolution: The Cyprus Case

¹⁵³ UN S/24472 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/149409?v=pdf>

Susana Baier-Allen
21 August 1992

elements of agreement between the two communities, after which they would “fill in the blanks”¹⁵⁴ and then present a comprehensive new plan of re-unification.

The plan envisaged a federal republic of two states which would come into being as a ‘virgin birth’ to signify a break with either of the two existing states. The Turkish Cypriots would cede approximately 7.5% of territory, dropping from around 36% to roughly 28.5%. In turn, the Greek Cypriot area to grow from approximately 63% to around 71.5%. In addition, there would be a significant reduction in the number of mainly Turkish - but also Greek - mainland forces, and it allowed for the opening of the Maraş/Varosha region of (North) Cyprus to be inhabited by Greek Cypriots.

The plan was to be presented to the two communities in a simultaneous referendum on the eve of Cyprus’ accession to the bloc in the hope that they could take full advantage of the moment. The UN and EU were hopeful that they would be aided by the euphoria of the Greek Cypriots and the desperation of the Turkish Cypriots not to be left behind. As well as strong support from the international community, from Greece and Türkiye, it was to be officially supported by both Cypriot Leaders, North and South of the border, in the run up to the referendum. Hopes were high. The rules of this high-stakes game, however, were starkly different for each side. It was anything but a level playing field for the two communities. The Risk/Reward for each community could hardly have been more different.

For the Greek Cypriot side, it was a clear win-win. No matter which way they voted and no matter what the outcome, they would enter the EU in a recognised state. For the Turkish Cypriots it was very different. To end their isolation, they had to vote Yes – and then hope that the Greek Cypriots followed suit. Anything less than a Double-Yes left them in the same position, or arguably worse.

The following is a summary of the 4 potential outcomes which each community had to consider before placing their vote:

1. Greek Cypriots - Yes / Turkish Cypriots - Yes

- Both communities would join the EU in a new federal state

2. Greek Cypriots - No / Turkish Cypriots -No

- Greek Cypriots would join the EU as the Republic of Cyprus (representing the whole island)
- Turkish Cypriots would not join the EU, they would remain unrecognised as an independent state and they would remain under political, social, cultural, trade and sporting embargoes

3. Greek Cypriots - Yes / Turkish Cypriots - No

- Greek Cypriots would join the EU as the Republic of Cyprus (representing the whole island)
- Turkish Cypriots would not join the EU, they would remain unrecognised as an independent state and they would remain under political, social, cultural, trade and sporting embargoes

4. Greek Cypriots - No / Turkish Cypriots - Yes*

- Greek Cypriots would join the EU as the Republic of Cyprus (representing the whole island)
- Turkish Cypriots would not join the EU, they would remain unrecognised as an independent state and they would remain under political, social, cultural, trade and sporting embargoes

¹⁵⁴ [UN Plan Fails in Cyprus: Implications for Turkey, the European Union, and the United States | The Washington Institute](#)

*In this last scenario (4) it was intimated that although the international community would not go as far as recognising two separate states, the Turkish Cypriots “*would not be left out in the cold*”¹⁵⁵. These assurances were given as a means of recognising Turkish Cypriot willingness to compromise, while warning Greek Cypriots that a No from them would not be without consequences. Unfortunately, those assurances were verbal and, therefore, non-binding. What was perhaps most curious, and certainly legally questionable, was the fact that the Turkish Cypriots were deemed sovereign enough and equal enough to vote in a referendum with the Greek Cypriots – and were sovereign enough and equal enough to go on to become a federal state if both communities voted Yes. Yet, if the Greek Cypriot side said No, the Turkish Cypriots would revert to being unequal and without sovereignty.

Unsurprisingly, the result of the referendum was a resounding No (76%) from the Greek Cypriots and a majority Yes (65%) from the Turkish Cypriots.

For the Turkish Cypriots, their majority acceptance was a necessary risk which they felt compelled to take to end their isolation. Anything less than a Yes from them would mean continuation of their isolation. And as became evident, even a Yes offered no guarantees. In reality, theirs was not a decision taken by free people, but as prisoners of the (Greek Cypriot controlled) ‘Republic of Cyprus’. The dice was heavily loaded against them and any chance at breaking their isolation was fully conditional on the Greek Cypriot vote and on the reliability of the international community’s promises. When offered conditional freedom by the South African apartheid government, Nelson Mandela famously said “*Only free men can negotiate. A prisoner cannot enter into contracts*”¹⁵⁶.

For the Greek Cypriots, their overwhelming rejection reflected a people faced with nothing to lose in terms of international recognition. Perhaps the biggest risk for them was that a Double-Yes would result in them losing their title of the sole legitimate Government of Cyprus, which would put a certain end to their cherished dream to rule Cyprus as a Greek island. It proved to be too much for the Greek Cypriot electorate.

The Greek Cypriot vote was further influenced by a tearful television address by their President, Tassos Papadopoulos, who despite previously agreeing to support the plan, appeared on television on the eve of the vote and begged his people to reject the deal. With tears trickling down his face, he implored the Greek Cypriots to “*send a resounding no*”¹⁵⁷ to the Annan Plan, explaining that “*I received a state, I will not deliver a community*,”¹⁵⁸ Such was the turnaround in his attitude that the EU Enlargement officer, Gunter Verhuegen, blasted the Greek Cypriot Administration for cheating its way into the Union. It was a rare and surprisingly strong departure from the usually tame nature of diplomatic language. Given his prior agreement to fully support the plan alongside both the Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister and the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, he considered the about-turn by Papadopoulos to have been a personal betrayal. He told the press “*I personally feel that I have been cheated by the government of the Republic of Cyprus*”.¹⁵⁹ Of course, when you consider that Papadopoulos had been an active member of EOKA and had personally been involved in the implementation of the Akritas Plan, his apparent 180° turn should not have come as a surprise to anyone. The only real surprise was that anyone believed he would do anything other than oppose the deal. He was a former EOKA member and a signatory to the Akritas Plan who the US Ambassador, William Crawford, had once described as “*rabidly nationalistic and negative in his approach to the Turks*.”¹⁶⁰

The situation went far beyond Papadopoulos. Any student of the Cyprus Problem would be aware that this was always the most likely outcome. Since the first talks which took place in preparation for the end of British

¹⁵⁵ Wall Street Journal

26 April 2004

¹⁵⁶ <https://time.com/archive/6706068/south-africa-mandela-declines-offer-of-freedom/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://press.un.org/en/2004/sc8074.doc.htm>

28 April 2004

¹⁵⁸ [ON THIS DAY: The Annan Plan referendum in Cyprus \(2004\) - Signalive English](#)

¹⁵⁹ EU Enlargement Office Gunter Verhuegen

21 April 2004

<https://euobserver.com/eu-political/ar0807b0ae>

¹⁶⁰ Clerides Resignation: Assessment and Consequences

9 April 1976

colonial rule in 1955,¹⁶¹ and right up to the Annan Plan in 2004 (49 years), the Greek Cypriots had rejected 53 different peace proposals, ranging from confidence building measures, to the activation of peacekeeping forces, to full settlement plans¹⁶². These are not the actions of an administration which seeks a just solution. It is the result of a group holding out for the outright victory of Cyprus becoming a Hellenic state. Perhaps most damning for the future hopes of reunification came with the detail of the vote. Ann-Sofi Jakobsson Hatay reported *“these polls have indicated that the rejection of the reunification proposal was particularly strong among the younger generation in the Greek Cypriot community”*.¹⁶³ If anything, future referendums would likely show the two communities further apart.

On 26th April 2004 Verhuegen continued to rail against the Greek Cypriots and promised recompense to the Turkish Cypriots for their positive vote. He complained that *“A unique opportunity to bring about a solution to the long-lasting Cyprus issue has been missed... There is a shadow now over the accession of Cyprus. ...What we will seriously consider now is finding a way to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.”*¹⁶⁴ In the days and weeks after Cyprus’ accession, there was a flurry of promises to lift the embargoes, with assurances that we would see the opening of the air and seaports, the start of direct trade for Turkish Cypriots and that there would be agreement on a substantial aid package which would give tacit recognition of the existence of Turkish Cyprus.

The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, promised that *“We must now act to end the isolation of northern Cyprus... It means lifting sanctions on trade and travel. It also means ensuring that EU funds currently available for dispersal are actually dispersed.”*¹⁶⁵ The President of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and the Foreign Minister of Netherlands, Bernard Bot, declared *“We will now need to look for ways and means to make sure that the Turkish Cypriots do not remain isolated and avoid that they suffer unduly from the rejection of the UN Plan which they supported by a large majority.”*¹⁶⁶ The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, addressed the disappointment of the outcome and declared that *“[The Turkish Cypriot] vote has undone whatever rationale might have existed for pressuring and isolating them. ... I would hope [the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all states to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council [non-recognition] resolutions.”*¹⁶⁷

Unsurprisingly, all such moves have since been blocked by EU Members, Greece and ‘Cyprus’ via use of their veto. Outside of the EU, the UN have also forgotten their promises. The Secretary General’s request “to all states to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers” has been quietly shelved. Rather than pushing for that change, the UN have reverted back to repeating the need for a comprehensive solution while stubbornly ignoring the plight of Turkish Cypriots. And rather than easing their isolation, they use that isolation to seek yet more concessions.

And so it is that the much trumpeted ‘catalyst for reunification’ that was EU accession for Cyprus has become yet another tool of the Greek Cypriot Administration. As well as blocking any move to aid the Turkish Cypriots, Türkiye’s own accession to the EU now requires her to formally recognise the all-Greek ‘Republic of Cyprus’ as the legitimate government of the whole island. Her refusal to do so means that the accession of Türkiye came to a grinding halt. EU accession would always have been a long road for Türkiye, but it was a process which would have served to bring Türkiye closer to the West and to anchor it to democratic ideals at a critical point

¹⁶¹ Harding Proposals (Constitution)

1955-56

¹⁶² Cyprus Profile; Better Planet

Mustafa Niyazi

24 April 2025

¹⁶³ “Oxi” and “Evet”: the People Deliver Their Verdict on the Annan Plan for a reunited Cyprus

[Analysis of the Cyprus referendum on the Annan plan](#)

Ann-Sofi Jakobsson Hatay

¹⁶⁴ EU Enlargement Office Gunter Verheugen

ARD Television

25 April 2004

¹⁶⁵ Tony Blair

17 May 2004

¹⁶⁶ European Council Parliamentary Assembly meeting

28 April 2004

¹⁶⁷ UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan

28 May 2004

in its history. Instead, the broken promises have begun to push it further away and, instead of bringing the Turkish Cypriots closer to Greek Cypriots, they have, by necessity as well as kinship, become far closer to Türkiye. Today, the integration of Turkish Cyprus into Türkiye appears a more likely outcome than reunification with Greek Cypriots.

14. After the Annan Plan

The failure of the Annan Plan, despite the positive vote by the Turkish Cypriots, should have brought fresh thinking on the status of the island. Instead, promises were quickly forgotten and there was an almost immediate return to pressuring Turkish Cypriots for further concessions...

Prior to the referendum taking place numerous warnings were given that rejection by either side would effectively kill the plan. Furthermore, given the effort that had gone into its creation, both communities were warned that non-acceptance would also kill the possibility of any new negotiations. This was to be the final endgame for Cyprus re-unification. There would be no prize for any side giving a tactical 'No' to get further concessions in any next round. US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said as much when he stated on 26th April 2004 *"There's not a new negotiation plan, there's not a renegotiation plan. This is the deal..."*¹⁶⁸ Papadopoulos was unmoved, confidently responding *"From my experience, such proposals or plans do not disappear, they are revived and reproduced."*¹⁶⁹ He was not wrong, because despite these warnings the UN and EU were soon pushing for new talks to begin on the island, with the Annan Plan as a basis.

The fact that the lack of a settlement is driven by the attitude of the Greek Cypriot side was confirmed by former Greek Cypriot Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nicos Rolandis, on 8th January 2008 when he lamented the attitude of their leadership, explaining that there were *"15 opportunities for a solution which were presented to us since 1948 (Consultative Assembly). We rejected them all."*¹⁷⁰

Given the Turkish Cypriot Yes and the Greek Cypriot No, it's clear that any new plan would ask for yet more concessions from the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriot intransigence would only grow. And so, it proved. New talks at Crans-Montana in 2017 also collapsed, with reports suggesting that the problem centred around the insistence of the Turkish Cypriots on recognising their political equality and of maintenance of the guarantor status of Greece and Türkiye. European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker was clear in his own assessment of the failure of the talks when he stated that *"I think the main problem was not Erdoğan [Recep Tayyip, Turkish president] and it was not Akıncı [Mustafa, former Turkish Cypriot leader], but the main problem was the south of the island, because they were not really prepared to jump."*¹⁷¹ The Turkish Cypriots could only lament that, to reach an agreement *"Greek Cypriots must set aside maximalist policies, focus on peace"*.¹⁷²

It is now clearer than ever that no number of concessions are likely to satisfy the Greek Cypriots. As stated earlier, the vast majority of Greek Cypriots did (and evidently still do) see Cyprus as Greek island. Consequently, they refuse to accept the Turkish Cypriots as their partners or equals. Indeed, their vision of a solution to the 'Cyprus problem' today is 'Liberation of the North!', which they consider to be under occupation by Türkiye. This one-sided stance was evident prior to the Zurich Agreements in 1959.

¹⁶⁸ US Secretary of State Colin Powell

26 April 2004

¹⁶⁹ The Guardian

23 April 2004

¹⁷⁰ <https://archive.cyprus-mail.com/2009/01/11/after-so-many-nos-shall-we-whisper-yes-we-can/>

¹⁷¹ Cyprus Mail

30 May 2024

¹⁷² <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/eu-affairs/greek-cypriots-must-set-aside-maximalist-policies-focus-on-peace>

It had not changed in 1989 when the Greek Cypriot 'Cyprus President', Glafkos Clerides, wrote *"Just as the Greek Cypriot preoccupation was that Cyprus should be a Greek Cypriot state, with a protected Turkish Cypriot minority, the Turkish Cypriot preoccupation was to defeat any such effort and to maintain the partnership concept, which in their opinion the Zurich Agreement created between the two communities. The conflict, therefore, was a conflict of principle and for that principle both sides were prepared to go on arguing even, if need be, to fight, rather than compromise. That same principle is still in conflict, even today..."*¹⁷³. Clerides also confesses that the Greek coup, the Turkish intervention, and the countless deaths and displacements which occurred, could have all been avoided had the Greek Cypriot side been willing to compromise on the belief that Cyprus is 'theirs'. He writes *"In 1972 we could have had a solution of our problem based on a much-improved constitution than the Zürich one, and on a unitary state. We rejected it because it did not give us the maximum of our aims, i.e. a Greek Cypriot island ruled by the Greek Cypriots."*¹⁷⁴

The same attitude was still on show in 1999 when, at a memorial of the celebrated EOKA member, Evagoras Pallikarides, Greek Cypriot President, Glafkos Clerides, stated that *"Our aim is not to find any solution, but to guarantee Cyprus' Hellenism."*¹⁷⁵ The times and the names may change, but the ambition of Greek Cypriot leaders remains the same.

In his book, *The Road to Bellapais*, Professor Pierre Oberling concluded that *"The failure of the Greek Cypriots in the Cypriot tragedy has not only been political but also moral. As long as the Greek Cypriots refuse even to recognise that during the 1963-64 and 1967 periods they carried out large-scale attacks upon their Turkish Cypriot neighbours, they will never understand the Turkish Cypriots' profound concern for their own safety and their distrust of Greek Cypriot leadership. Consequently, they will never negotiate on a realistic basis and the Cyprus problem will never be solved."*¹⁷⁶

While the same noises about reunification are still heard from the UN, the EU and the US, the situation now is that there is even an inability or unwillingness to agree on preliminary talks. The once hopeful Turkish Cypriot vote which briefly emerged to agree to the Annan Plan has now largely evaporated because of the debacle of that exercise. What remains of the pro-federation vote among the Turkish Cypriots appears to be propped up by dubious means. Between 2006 and 2023 the EU has provided €688M in funding to 'Prepare the Turkish Cypriots for EU membership'. The opaque nature of the funding – which totally bypasses the Turkish Cypriot authorities, and which fails to name the recipients - has led many to believe that it is nothing more than the EU buying political influence and thus meddling in the democratic process of the north of the island. When one looks at the Greek Cypriot reluctance vis-à-vis federation, perhaps the money would be better spent in the south of the island.

In addition to that funding, the EU pushed ahead with their flagship confidence-building measure which would now allow the Turkish Cypriots to join Greek Cypriots in exporting the famous Cypriot cheese, Hellim/Halloumi. The only barrier was that all products must pass through an EU/Republic of Cyprus approved inspection point before crossing the 'Green Line'. However, despite huge investment, to date no such facility exists, because the 'Republic of Cyprus' Government refuses to approve it. The benefit of blocking this trade route is clear. Between 2004 and 2025 over a billion Euros worth of the cheese has been sold to the EU and UK from Cypriot producers. The total sold by Turkish Cypriot producers in the 19 years since enactment of that law is zero!¹⁷⁷ Although the EU continue to put on a brave face in public, insisting that the massive delays will be overcome, behind closed doors EU officials accept that their flagship confidence-building measure has fallen foul of Greek Cypriot intransigence as they continued to use their 'legitimacy' to isolate Turkish Cypriots and cripple trade.

¹⁷³ Cyprus: My Deposition

Glafkos Clerides

¹⁷⁴ Cyprus: My Deposition

Glafkos Clerides

¹⁷⁵ Glafkos Clerides

15 March 1999

¹⁷⁶ *The Road to Bellapais*

Prof. Pierre Oberling

¹⁷⁷ Cyprus Mail

29 September 2024

The total inability of the EU to force even the most minor concession to the Turkish Cypriots is laid clear for all to see, including to the Turkish Cypriot electorate.

When considering the cumulative effect of the above, it should come as no surprise that the biggest loss of all is that of trust. Unsurprisingly, the Turkish Cypriots have lost all trust in the UN and the EU and have no faith in the impartiality of the international community. Included in that loss of trust is the Unficyp. Their ‘watch and take notes’ approach between 1964 and 1974 had already left them with few supporters among Turkish Cypriots, but a recent report by Fahri Zihni in the Cyprus Mail has revealed information which completely discredits all pretense of their ability to remain impartial. It was found that *“the Unficyp approved budget for the period 2023-2024 stands at US\$56M, of which \$24M is paid for by Cyprus and Greece. This amount matches the cost of the military and police personnel, and it is paid directly into the Unficyp mission’s budget, not the central UN budget. The amount paid into the UN’s central budget is only \$1M”*¹⁷⁸ So, incredibly, the Unficyp military and police are in the full and direct pay of Greece and Cyprus. It is difficult to imagine a bigger conflict of interest. Furthermore, the Unficyp do not even bother themselves to ask if they required or even wanted by the Turkish Cypriots. They appear to be more than comfortable with the current arrangements, which seem to involve more shopping than peacekeeping. Former Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister, Professor Dr. Hakkı Atun, summed up the feelings of many Turkish Cypriots when he described their presence on the island as them having *“been spending paid holidays on our island for 61 years, travelling like tourists, and filling our beaches in the summer months. They have never intervened in a conflict, turned a blind eye to the deaths of Turkish Cypriots who suffered genocide between 1963 and 1974, and provided no support to Turkish Cypriots who left their homes and villages...”*¹⁷⁹

Most importantly for the Turkish Cypriots, the total failure to dismantle any of the embargoes – and instead to give minimal ‘funding’ which is only necessary *because* of the embargoes - has not only discredited the UN and EU as trustworthy or impartial mediators but has forced the Turkish Cypriot electorate to push for international recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a totally separate state. It will likely be a long and difficult road to attain recognition as a separate state. Perhaps even an impossible one. But the feeling among many Turkish Cypriots is that there is little alternative left for them. With countless proposals rejected and talks explored and exhausted, they ask that formal discussions now take place for a two-state solution. One which has existed since the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in 1983, regardless of whether that has not been recognised by the world community. Most critically, they demand an end to the embargoes which isolate and impoverish them.

It seems entirely reasonable to conclude that the embargoes which the Turkish Cypriot people are subjected to are not only unfair, but that they constitute an abuse of their human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The UDHR declares that *“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty”*.¹⁸⁰ But clearly, we see human rights being impacted by the refusal to acknowledge that very sovereignty. The embargoes can also clearly be viewed as collective punishment of the entire population. The denial of travel from their airports and seaports is a restriction against freedom of movement. The community suffers economic deprivation because of their isolation, and they are unable to participate in cultural life. In addition, the carrot which is held in front of them to remove the embargoes, is that they must agree to concessions which amount to acceptance that the theft of their sovereignty in 1963 was in fact justified. In other words,

¹⁷⁸ Cyprus Mail 2 June 2024

¹⁷⁹ <https://ataatun.org/2025/02/03/zoraki-misafir/>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/1948/en/11563>

the democratic process is impacted by political interference. Political interference which aims to push the Turkish Cypriots into accepting that Cyprus is a Greek state rather than their shared home.

In truth, little has changed since the talks which led to the 1959 Cyprus accords and the *“reluctant partnership”*¹⁸¹ which they created. No Cypriot consciousness emerged and, if anything, the two sides are now further apart and more entrenched than ever. While the respective cultures, food and music often overlap we need only look and listen to see the reality. On both sides of the divide, you will see the respective Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot flags flanked by those of Greece and Türkiye. Seldom will you see solely the Cypriot version of either. In his book, *Cyprus, War & Adaption*, Vamik Volkan explains *“During the last four hundred years two ethnic groups have lived side by side on the island, the majority being Greeks and the minority, Turks. The establishment by law of the Republic of Cyprus did not, however, bring them together. No Cypriot nation resulted because each group adhered to an allegiance to its mother country on the mainland.”*¹⁸² For evidence, we need only listen to their respective national anthems. In 1966, having expelled the Turkish Cypriots from the Government, the Greek Cypriot administration in the South passed a unilateral and unanimous decision to adopt the Greek National Anthem as that of ‘Cyprus’, thus emphasizing their bond with ‘Mother Greece’. Similarly, in 1983 the newly proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus chose to adopt the Turkish National Anthem as their own. If there are any doubts about how each community sees themselves, you need look – or listen - no further. Furthermore, it has now been over 50 years since the two communities lived together. The last generation to experience a bi-communal Cyprus is elderly. Many have passed. The generations who have followed have no experience of living together. Unification would no longer be a return to a previous time, but a leap into the unknown.

Added into the mix, is the change in the makeup of the population on each side of the Green Line. Greek Cypriots constantly speak of the issue of mainland ‘Turkish settlers’, claiming that they number 150,000-160,000 and that, in the event of a settlement, many or all should leave. Included in this number, however, are the Cyprus-born descendants (children and now grandchildren) of at least one mainland Turkish parent. People like the Turkish Cypriot Olympian, Buse Savaşkan. While a large number of mainland Turks certainly did move to the island after 1974 in search of work and to aid reconstruction, they included a large number of Turkish Cypriots who returned from Türkiye and the UK. There had been an exodus of around 9,000 Turkish Cypriots between 1950 and 1958, and there followed the vast number of Turkish Cypriot students and workers who left Cyprus during the years of oppression from 1963-1974 to study or work in Türkiye, only to find themselves suddenly unable to return. Speaking to the Crown Council in Greece, back in February 1967, Makarios explained that this practice occurred as a means of breaking Turkish Cypriot morale. *“When they go to Turkey, we do not accept them back. So far, we have not allowed Turkish students to come back with the pretext that they were in Turkey and were undergoing military training.”*¹⁸³ United Nations Secretary general, U Thant confirmed the practice in his 1967 Report explaining *“Any young Turkish Cypriots who go to Turkey must therefore resign themselves to an indefinite period of separation from their homeland,”*¹⁸⁴.

Of course, to properly judge the issue, it’s necessary to compare to the situation in the South. However, there is no similar calculation of mainland Greek ‘settlers’. We do know that there are an estimated 50,000 Russian citizens, at least 15,000 Israelis and some 4,000 Armenians. However, unlike the Turkish settlers, these numbers do not consider their Cyprus-born descendants. For them, unlike their neighbors in the North, cease to be foreigners when they are born in Cyprus. Instead, they come to be regarded as Cypriots, greatly diminishing their numbers in comparison. Looking more broadly at the situation in the south of the island, according to publicly available figures, one in five people (21.7%. Three times higher than the EU average¹⁸⁵) residing in the South do not hold Cypriot citizenship and approximately one in four (22.7%. Double the EU

¹⁸¹ [Kornioti - Final Thesis - Master Copy.pdf / Reluctant Partners - MERIP](#)

¹⁸² Cyprus – War & Adaption (A Psychoanalytical History of Two Ethnic Groups in Conflict)

¹⁸³ The Cyprus Problem 1960-1974

¹⁸⁴ Report of the UN Secretary General S/7969

¹⁸⁵ Eurostat – Population by citizenship and country of birth

Vamik Volkan

Giannos Kranidiotis

13 June 1967

average)¹⁸⁶ were born abroad¹⁸⁷. Taken together, it is a curious position from which to question the population makeup of the North. The reality is that both communities have changed drastically since the birth of the republic – and particularly since 1974. Attempting to undo that as part of a future solution seems to be adding one more impossible demand to an already intractable problem.

15. The Future

With all hopes of arriving at a mutually acceptable solution now seemingly gone, we must ask: What next?...

It should not require saying, but no plan of re-unification should be forced upon the people of Cyprus. Those who so fervently wish to see a united Cyprus would need to present a model that is somehow acceptable to both communities. It seems doubtful that one exists. To achieve this requires a situation where each community has the mutual desire to be reunited and truly sees a benefit in reunification. Yet, surely, for that to happen, the logical starting point is to treat both communities as equals – and for each to see the other community as their equal. And critically, each side would need to approach a solution with a willingness to negotiate for the greater good. In other words, goodwill. But this is where the greatest difficulty lies. Just as it did when the republic was proclaimed in 1960.

For the Turkish Cypriots, they had already accepted to concede 7.5% of their land. A move which would have caused the displacement of 25% of their population - following previous large-scale displacements in both 1963 and 1974. And in doing so, they would have allowed the return of 54% of Greek Cypriots to their former homes in the North. Conversely, no Turkish Cypriots would have been able to return to former homes or lands in the South. The apparent necessity to cede land due to the greater number of Greek Cypriots is itself a curious argument. It's difficult to think of any territory which was 'cut to size' in accordance with its population. As a simple example, in the UK the English account for 84% of the population yet have only 53% of the land. Meanwhile the Scottish account for just 8% of the population but hold 32% of land, while the Welsh are 5% and hold 9% of the land.¹⁸⁸ Northern Ireland stands apart as it is itself a mixed population, but nevertheless it accounts for 3% of the population and 6% of the land. Disparities like this are entirely normal. In addition to agreeing to cede land, the Turkish Cypriots also agreed to pay reparations for property and to drastically reduce, if not completely remove, the Turkish troops stationed on the island. Complete removal would have remained an option for the future, if circumstances proved it viable. However, despite all these concessions the Turkish Cypriots steadfastly refused to accept the loss of their political equality and their partnership status. It proved to not be enough. In short, there is no overlap between the red line of one community and the red line of the other. Given that the decision to largely entrust their security to the EU was taken before they witnessed the bloc stand by while Israel committed genocide in Gaza, it is doubtful that Turkish Cypriots would take such a decision again. The horrors witnessed in Gaza, the apparent indifference - and even complicity - of many Western states, including many in the EU, the US and the UK (from their military bases in Cyprus), and the demonstration of the total lack of authority of the UN has shown oppressed people everywhere that they cannot rely on external powers to protect them. Whether it is the Greek Cypriots fearing the Turkish army or the Turkish Cypriots fearing the Greek-Greek Cypriot forces, either side would be certifiably insane to entrust their safety to the rest of the world.

The Greek Cypriots have proven themselves unwilling to accept any solution which places the Turkish Cypriots on an equal footing with them. They remain wedded to the idea that Cyprus is Greek, even if the dream of enosis is now largely consigned to a nostalgic memory. In simple terms, they refuse to concede their political

¹⁸⁶ Eurostat – Population by citizenship and country of birth

¹⁸⁷ Republic of Cyprus census 2021-2023

¹⁸⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Countries_of_the_United_Kingdom

domination. In addition, while they continue to protest *“the invasion and occupation of the island”*¹⁸⁹, they refuse to recognise their leadership’s and their community’s role in the suffering of the Turkish Cypriots between 1963 and 1974. It is often said that while the Turkish Cypriots cannot forget the 11 years between 1963 and 1974, the Greek Cypriots cannot remember.

It's easy to understand that the Greek Cypriots feel that Cyprus is their home, because of course, it is. But it is also the home of the Turkish Cypriots. A common argument is that the Greeks arrived thousands of years before the Turks. As shown above, this is also true. But the Turks have now been present on the island for 450 years. Approximately 18 generations of Cyprus-born families. Surely long enough for them to consider Cyprus as their home too. To argue otherwise is to deny reality.

If the two peoples of Cyprus are unable or unwilling to live together on a mutually agreeable basis, then there can be no justification for forcing them to do so. Unfortunately, in the case of Cyprus, the international community appears to see no other option than to push two unwilling partners together, whether in a unitary state or a federal one. Judging by the outcome of talks, which have taken place in various guises since 1963 and as formal negotiations under UN auspices since 1968, it is evident that a solution would be akin to a forced marriage between two people who don't particularly want to be together, who emphatically don't trust each other and who, consequently, would be more concerned about how they would fair in a subsequent divorce. If we look at other similar situations, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea share the island of New Guinea. Haiti and the Dominican Republic share Hispaniola. Saint Martin is split between the French and Dutch. The island of Ireland has a separate North. And the island of Borneo is split between the nations of Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia. While it may sound like a nice idea to see each of these islands united as one nation, there are no urgent calls from the UN attempting to force them to do so. There are similarly no UN resolutions which declare recognition of these separate states to be unlawful and none of them are being punished with embargoes. In another curious parallel, while a separate state for Turkish Cypriots appears to be anathema to the UN and Western powers, the two British Sovereign Areas which were carved out of Cyprus territory – and which constitute a downsized continuation of empire and a significant security risk for the island - do not provoke similar concerns.

Is the peace we have seen in Cyprus since 1974 worth risking by forcing two communities together when it is abundantly clear that they have no real desire to do so? More importantly, is it worth anyone dying for? Dr Hugo Gobbi, the former UN Special Representative for Cyprus, told the Cyprus Mail in October 1995 that *“Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots living in harmony together is a nice idea, but it's a dream. I saw the reality and I realised that division is the best thing for both.”*¹⁹⁰ As Turkish Cypriot Undersecretary, Ergün Olgun, explained *“The break-up of partnership states like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia set relevant precedents for ‘Cyprus’. It is high time to benefit from such precedents and to revisit the case of the TRNC, the oldest but so far ignored and demonised constituent of a failed partnership. The opportunity is still there for the two ex-partner states in Cyprus to negotiate a common roof over their heads that will be built on their sovereign equality.”*¹⁹¹

When considering the UN and the EU, it would perhaps be more logical for the members to look at their own history to find a way forward. In the aftermath of WWII mainland Europe found a fragile peace and then concentrated their efforts on maintaining that. Both the UN and the EU were born largely of the need to avoid another war. They patiently sought to find common ground.

Looking at the huge turnaround in Europe itself, before the EU was even conceived of perhaps the most critical ingredient of their newfound peace was time. Time in which their people could assimilate the past and then, as confidence grew, begin to imagine a future together. The former adversaries, France and Germany, were

¹⁸⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A91997E002934>

¹⁹⁰ Cyprus Mail 12 October 1995

¹⁹¹ <https://www.sam.gov.tr/media/perceptions/archive/vol4/19990900/ErgunOlgun1.pdf>

not immediately thrust into endless talks with the sole objective of agreeing on a unified state. Instead, along with other European countries, they were given the necessary time to heal their psychological wounds. Just as importantly, each country was treated as equal, and each had an individual choice. European integration was first economic and then developed step by step over decades¹⁹². It was only after several generations had lived safely within their own borders that they felt secure enough to begin removing them. Furthermore, the decision as to the level of integration was also taken individually. Most European states have totally embraced a united Europe, bringing down borders, opening up to free trade and movement, and sharing a common currency. Others, such as Norway, Switzerland and Iceland, have decided to remain outside of the bloc, with differing levels of integration depending on the will and appetite of each state. No countries have been forced into agreements at the behest of outside powers. In the case of the UK, they initially formed an integral part of the EU but retained the sovereign right to later choose to leave the bloc.

There is no reason why similar integration could not eventually happen in Cyprus. And so, for those who continue to chase the ideal of a unified Cyprus, I would go as far to say that the only way to achieve this – both voluntarily and without risk - is via two states. But by taking the example of Europe, there is also no imperative that it should lead to unification. To discover if unification is plausible and desirable, the situation requires equal rights and time. Nicos Rolandis explained the risk of reunification before the people are ready when he appeared on Cyprus Television on 30th June 1992 and asked the viewers to *“imagine that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots started living together in 400 villages. Wouldn't all 400 villages be 400 sources of fire? Imagine the eruption of 400 volcanoes. If a murder was committed somewhere, the whole of Cyprus would be destroyed.”*¹⁹³

Instead, the world has persisted in repeating a perpetually failing formula, ad nauseum. The Cyprus problem persists in part because, although the conflict ended in 1974, the status quo has never been accepted, and the peace has never been agreed upon. As a result, both sides have been left feeling aggrieved. The scars remain raw because the wounds are constantly being picked at by countries who do not have to live with the consequences of their actions.

A more realistic approach to the problem would be to find an amicable and workable way for the two existing states to live side by side with equal status. Based on past discussions, the Turkish Cypriots could cede territory to the South and, in return, the North could be recognised internationally, and so free itself from the embargoes which leave it isolated and impoverished compared to the South. With there being no realistic hope of a mutually agreed settlement, this would satisfy Otto von Bismarck's common-sense approach that success in politics is achieved by *“the art of the possible”*.¹⁹⁴ The alternative is to continue to chase apparently impossible and unattainable goals. And evidently, that alternative means a continuation of the Turkish Cypriots' isolation.

In conclusion, neither side in Cyprus can possibly have all that they want. But by drawing a line under the past and leaving each to manage their own affairs within their own territory, it would allow them the opportunity to look forward with hope instead of constantly looking back with bitterness. With nothing to lose or gain from each other's existence it is entirely reasonable to believe that, in time, the two communities may choose to move closer together, entirely of their own accord. Or of course, they may not. What is clear is that the choice should not be down to any preconceived ideas by the UN, the EU or any other outside powers. It should be solely down to the wishes of the Cypriots themselves, both Greek and Turkish.

¹⁹² https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en

¹⁹³ Nicos Rolandis CyBC Television 30 June 1992

¹⁹⁴ [Otto von Bismarck: 'Politics is the art of the possible.' — The Socratic Method](#)