

## BI-COMMUNALITY IN CYPRUS

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### Abstract

*Bi-communality has been an integral part of Cyprus's make-up since the island's conquest by the Turks in 1571. Before that, Greek-speaking traders, by introducing their Orthodox form of Christianity, influenced an apparent "Greekness" amongst the Cypriots but historians remain divided as to its authenticity. After the Turkish conquest, thousands of Turks migrated to Cyprus, settling in villages evacuated by the defeated Venetians. Through these immigrants and army officers who settled in Cyprus, a strong Turkish Cypriot community emerged.*

*This article, after describing the historical background to bi-communality in Cyprus, will demonstrate the developments of the bi-communal system created and practised during both the Turkish and British periods; its role in establishing in 1960 the republic based on the co-founder partnership of these two communities; how it has affected the tragic events since then; and how bi-communality based on self-determination remains with us to shape the future of Cyprus.*

### Keywords

Bi-communality, Bi-zonality, Apparent "Greekness", Co-founder Partnership, self-determination, Political Equality.

### Introduction

Before commenting on bi-communality in Cyprus and the relations of its two peoples of different origins, it would be appropriate to say something

about the origins of these two communities.

Archaeological and anthropological research has shown that the primitive population of Cyprus was an offshoot from the regions of Asia Minor and North Syria and formed the bulk of the people of Cyprus as early as the Stone Age.

The British historian, Sir George Hill, who devoted many years to the painstaking research of his four-volume history of Cyprus, states in his fourth volume: "It was religion combined with language that fostered the idea that the Cypriotes were Greek in origin.... That there was real racial affinity with the Hellenic stock there is nothing to prove. The anthropological evidence, so far as it goes, seems on the whole to favour the contrary view."<sup>1</sup>

However, Sir Ronald Storrs, who was the Governor of Cyprus when Greek Cypriots burned Government House during their uprising in favour of *Enosis* (the union of Cyprus with Greece), stated that the Greekness of Cypriots was, in his opinion, indisputable and no sensible person would deny that.<sup>2</sup>

In 1928, *The Times* concluded "A Cypriot may be anything blood, but being Orthodox, he thinks of himself as Greek".<sup>3</sup>

However, the modern concept of being part of a nation is not based on the origins and race of a people but the passionate feeling of the individual.

When it comes to the second largest community on the island, the Turkish Cypriots, it is easier to trace their origin and the nation to which they belong. A year after the Turkish occupation of Cyprus in 1571, a general registration showed that in the Mesaoria Plain and the area of Mazoto at least

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<sup>1</sup> Sir George Hill, *The History of Cyprus*, Volume IV, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952, pp. 488-489.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Ronald Storrs, *Orientalism*, London, Ivor Nicolson and Nicholson, 1937, pp. 469-470

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 5 May 1928.

76 villages, which were in the possession of Latin lords, were completely evacuated. When the results of this registration were sent to Selim II, together with the report by the Turkish Governor (*Beylerbeyi*) Sinan Pasha advocating the immediate resettlement of the island and enclosing a list describing what kind of people were needed to reactivate the economy of Cyprus, Selim II issued a *ferman* (firman - imperial decree) on 21 September 1572 ordering the transportation of Anatolian Turks to Cyprus.<sup>4</sup>

The *ferman* provided that the people to be transferred to Cyprus should be skilled in a wide variety of crafts and trades, agriculture and farming, according to the list sent by the *Beylerbeyi*.

This was a compulsory transportation of one family out of every ten from provinces opposite Cyprus. Within a year or so, 1,689 families moved to Cyprus, one third of which were voluntary immigrants. Craftsmen brought their tools and farmers were accompanied by a pair of oxen. In addition to that, the soldiers and pashas who took part in the war for Cyprus were granted privileges if they decided to settle in Cyprus.<sup>5</sup>

Sir Harry Luke, an authority on the Turkish period of Cyprus and the author of *Cyprus under the Turks, 1571-1878*, described the origin of the Turks in Cyprus as follows:

The original Turkish settlers were principally drawn from Lala Mustafa's soldiers, who were given fiefs in the island by Sultan Selim; but they were added to from time to time by Turkish immigrants from Anatolia and Rumelia. The Turks thus became a permanent element of the population of Cyprus. They refrained from intermarriage with their Orthodox compatriots and they preserved the purity of their language to an extent unequalled in any other part of the Ottoman-Turkish speaking world before the language

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<sup>4</sup> Mühimme Defteri, XIX, p.334. For full text of the ferman and its English translation see A.C. Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus*, London, K. Rustem and Brother, 1990 pp. 297-303.

<sup>5</sup> Cengiz Orhonlu, *The Ottoman Turks Settle in Cyprus (1570-1580)*, The First International Congress of Cypriot Studies, Institute for the Study of Turkish Culture No. 36, Ankara, 1971, pp. 99-103.

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reform carried out by the Ankara Government under Atatürk. But they have maintained relations with their Greek Christian neighbours which, if not intimate, were on the whole amicable.<sup>6</sup>

Particularly taking into consideration the bi-communality situation, Professor C.F. Beckingham of Oxford University, who conducted research on the people of Cyprus in 1954, underlined that Cyprus was in the fullest sense a plural society, for the two principal communities were distributed over the whole island (reference?). Both were represented in each of the six towns; and villages inhabited exclusively by one or the other community, or in which the two were mixed in varying proportions, were found everywhere. Of the two smaller groups, one, the Armenians, was not represented in the villages and the other, the Maronites, lived only in a few Maronite villages, mostly in the Kormakiti area.

According to the 1946 Census figures, out of a total of 627 villages, the number with mixed Turkish and Greek inhabitants amounted 146, whereas there were 112 wholly Turkish and 369 totally Greek villages. According to Professor Beckingham, this pattern of distribution was a characteristic result of the social structure of the Ottoman Empire, in which religious communities or *millets* were in many respects autonomous.<sup>7</sup>

Many of those wholly Turkish villages and some of the mixed villages, in which Turkish Cypriots were in the majority, had become Turkish property after their former Latin owners left the island. The Turkish mainland emigrants who settled on and owned these estates formed part of the homogeneous Turkish community.

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<sup>6</sup> Sir Harry Luke, *Cyprus: A Portrait and an Appreciation*, London, publisher, 1957, p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> C.F. Beckingham, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 87, part 2 (1957), pp. 165-174.

## The Existence of Bi-Communality

### a) Self-Rule Based on Bi-Communality

When Cyprus was occupied by the Turks, they treated the Greek Cypriots with considerable goodwill. Sir Harry Luke stated that:

The Turks assured the Greek Cypriots the free enjoyment of their religion, with the undisturbed possession of their Churches; gave them permission to acquire houses and land with the power of transmission to their heirs; and recognised the supremacy of the Orthodox Community over all other denominations in the island. ... They abolished serfdom, under which the peasantry had groaned even during the Byzantine domination and they restored the Orthodox Archbishopric, which a Christian Church had caused to be in abeyance for 300 years. ... This was a change in the status of the majority of the population far greater than any they had known before; and restoration of the Archbishopric had results almost equally important.<sup>8</sup>

The result of tolerance and privileges granted to the Greek Cypriots during 308 years of Turkish rule was the emergence of a prosperous and influential native Christian people who were regarded as a separate *millet*, enjoying self-rule, through which they were free to run their communal affairs such as religion, culture, education and local administration.

During the Turkish period “two independent powers existed in Cyprus, one was Turkish, the other Greek ... Turks, unlike Latins, imposed no rituals, launched no anathemas against the Orthodox people.” This is how W. Hepworth Dixon, one of the first British colonial administrators, described the essence of bi-communality in Cyprus under Turkish rule, a point of view shared by other British authors and observers (reference?). Even Greek Cypriot historians, lawyers and clergy acknowledged the Turkish policy of bi-communality based on separate autonomy for each community. George Chakallis, a distinguished lawyer, politician and historian, wrote this in 1902: “The Church of Cyprus has enjoyed important privileges recognised by the Turks since the Conquest of the island and always

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<sup>8</sup> Luke, Cyprus, *A Portrait and an Appreciation*, pp. 15-16.

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acknowledged whenever a new Archbishop was elected by an imperial decree (Berat).”<sup>9</sup>

Another very important aspect of bi-communality was the right of each community to elect, with their own free will, their local representatives as well as the representatives in the Central Administrative Assemblies, called *Meclis-i idare*. The Greek Cypriot community also had the privilege to elect its Archbishop who was recognised as the leader (*Ethnarch*) of his community. This traditional right continues until today and the election of Archbishop Makarios as the first President of the Cyprus Republic in 1960 was based on this privilege.

### b) Two Official Languages

Hepworth Dixon underlines the fact that Turkish rule in Cyprus was based on a dual system. Another important instrument of creating this dual system, as well as the essence of bi-communality, was a full respect not only for the religion but also the language of Greek Cypriots. As a matter of fact, the names of streets, squares, public places and offices were displayed in both the Turkish and Greek languages.

Archduke Louis Salvador of Austria, who visited Cyprus towards the end of Turkish rule, observed that “The localities appear in white characters on blue metal tablets in Turkish and Greek”.<sup>10</sup>

In 1858, on behalf of the Greek inhabitants of Prasyo village, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop made an application written in Greek to the Turkish Governor of Cyprus, for the repair and re-building of Ayia Yiorgi Church. This application in Greek was endorsed by the Mejlis and then forwarded

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<sup>9</sup> George Chakallis, *Cyprus Under British Rule*, Nicosia, Zavallis, 1902, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> Archduke Louis Salvador, *Lefkosia*, The capital of Cyprus, new edition by Tiegrap, London, 1983.

to Istanbul, where approval was granted.<sup>11</sup>

### c) Equality and Bi-Communality In Justice

Under Ottoman law, the presidency of each *Nizam* Court was held “ex officio by the judge of the Court of *Mahkeme-i Sheri* but the remaining members of *Nizam* Courts consisted of an equal number of Christians and Mohammedans, elected separately by their respective communities”.<sup>12</sup> Advocates were allowed to address the Courts in either Turkish or Greek.

## Acts Undermining Bi-Communality

### a) The British Period

Despite the fact that the Greek Cypriot community had been saved from serfdom and gained the right to be equal to the Turkish Cypriot community, which was part of the ruling Turkish nation, and that they had reached a position of economic superiority and autonomous status during the Turkish period, they began their struggle for *Enosis* (union with Greece) as soon as the administration of the island was transferred to Britain. Thus, without any real justification, they started their campaign to undermine the concept of bi-communality in the island.

In March 1883, only five years after the British occupation, according to the Queen's Order-in-Council, the High Courts of Justice merged with the District Court and Mr. C.P. Walpole, a barrister-at-law, was appointed President. Two Cypriot judges, Mr. A. Cramie and Mr. Hassan Hilmi, were appointed to work under him; one from each community. Later, the British Colonial administration kept the principle of bi-communality, but changed the principle of equal representation in both the Legislative and Executive Council, and ruled that the numbers should be adjusted according to the

<sup>11</sup> A photocopy of the Greek text of the appeal appears in Appendix 7 of *The Turks in Cyprus* by A. C. Gazioğlu, pp. 297-303.

<sup>12</sup> From the message from General Sir R. Biddulph, the British High Commissioner, to the Earl of Kimberley on 7 July 1881, *Account Papers* (9), 1881, LXV ( Vol.45).

population ratio of the communities. Thus the elected numbers of Turkish and Greek representatives in the Legislative Council according to the 1882 Order-in-Council and 1883 Constitution were changed to 6 Greeks, 3 Turks and 9 *ex officio* - in order to keep the balance in the hands of the British High Commissioners and the Governors, who were entitled to use their casting vote should there were equal votes cast.<sup>13</sup>

One rule that was kept and applied was the principle that neither community represented the other, and the representatives of both communities at all levels continued to be elected separately by their respective communities.

#### b) Greek Cypriots' Rejection of Self-Rule and their Struggle for Enosis

Following World War II, British efforts to set up autonomy based on self-rule, and all plans for a liberal Constitution providing for the sharing of power with the peoples of Cyprus, were rejected by Greek Cypriot leaders and the Church. Early in 1947, Attlee's Labour Government appointed Lord Winster as Governor of Cyprus, with a special mission to form a Consultative Assembly for the specific purpose of drafting a new Constitution. Thus, this newly established Consultative Assembly, composed of Greek and Turkish Cypriot representatives, started its work with the Governor's opening speech explaining the intention of the British government to set up a new system based on self-rule. Meanwhile, the mainland Greek Parliament passed a resolution in favour of *Enosis* and news was leaked that the union of Cyprus with Greece was favourably mentioned in the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, during the debate concerning American aid to Greece and Turkey. These developments encouraged the Greek Cypriot nationalists and the Church not to co-operate with efforts towards autonomy and to insist on *Enosis*. Consequently, the Greek nationalist representatives, on the instructions of the Church, declined to take part in the assembly, and

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<sup>13</sup> Order in Council, 23 March 1882.

thus only left-wing Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot representatives attended the meetings and participated in preparing a new Constitution for the island.<sup>14</sup>

The Greek Cypriot representatives who participated insisted on a wider and more liberal Constitution for “full self-rule” in order to achieve Greek Cypriot domination in the administration of the island whereas the Turkish Cypriot members' main concern was to protect their rights and not to be subjected to Greek hegemony.

Any suggestion of union of Cyprus with Greece was ruled out by the British Government, and that ruling was something which the powerful Greek Cypriot Church and nationalists would never accept. Consequently, the Archbishop and right-wing Greek Cypriot organisations denounced the proposals for self-rule and, under pressure from the Church and nationalist organisations, the remaining left-wing Greek Cypriot representatives withdrew from the Assembly, even though they thought that it would be easier to use self-rule as a way to promote *Enosis*. On 12 August 1948, Lord Winster dissolved the Consultative Assembly, having realised that there was no chance of agreeing a new Constitution, no matter how much effort was expended. The Turkish Cypriot side, who fully co-operated in order to achieve their communal rights, lobbied the colonial government as they felt disadvantaged when compared to the Greeks and wished to be treated equally. Lord Winster accepted their plea and appointed an ad-hoc Turkish Affairs Committee, headed by Judge Mehmet Zeka, to prepare a report on Turkish Cypriot affairs, e.g. *Evkaf*, education, *Sheri* courts, etc., and make proposals for their improvement.<sup>15</sup>

The Committee prepared its report, which was submitted on 20 January 1949. Amongst other things, the report recommended the election

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<sup>14</sup> Gazioğlu, *Enosis Çemberinde Türkler*, Lefkoşa, Cyrep, 1996, pp. 389-408.

<sup>15</sup> *The Cyprus Gazette*, 11 June 1948.

of *Miifti* by the Turkish Cypriot people; the re-organisation of *Sheri* Courts according to a modern family law to be enacted, which would be identical to the one applied in Turkey; and the transfer of both the administration of schools and of *Evkaf* to the Turkish Cypriot community, including updated proposals for running them. The report also recommended that the members of those organs that would run Turkish affairs should be elected by Turkish Cypriots, rather than by government nominees. The Turkish Cypriot leaders and press urged the colonial government not to delay the implementation of these recommendations, and thus the improvements were applied gradually during the 1950s.<sup>16</sup>

It was later admitted by left-wing Greek Cypriot leaders that by rejecting the British proposals for self-rule in 1948 they missed the first real opportunity to realise in a gradual and smooth way their ultimate goal, in other words, to be masters of the whole island and unite it with Greece.<sup>17</sup>

Greek Cypriot sociologist, Kyriacos C. Markides, says that when the British decided to install a more liberal Constitution, the *Enosis* movement was the central political issue, as the post-war era signalled the beginning of an uncompromising struggle for union with Greece.

Greek Cypriot nationalism reached its peak following the Second World War and as Markides stated, “it was the Church which dominated Greek Cypriot politics by exploiting nationalistic feelings; and AKEL, together with its left-wing associates, had to accept the supremacy of the Church. It became clear that whoever controlled the campaign of *Enosis* ultimately controlled the society”.<sup>18</sup>

The EOKA terror campaign (information should be given about it), which was the cause of deep mistrust and animosity between the two communities, is now being celebrated by the Greek Cypriot community. Apart from opening

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<sup>16</sup> Türk İşleri Raporu, *The Cyprus Gazette*, 24 January 1949.

<sup>17</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 April 1949.

<sup>18</sup> Kyriacos C. Markides, *The Rise and Fall of the Cyprus Republic*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 12 - 13.

old wounds, these celebrations should serve to remind all concerned parties of the aim of the original campaign and will definitely not help any rapprochement leading to bi-communal harmony.

### **The Return to Bi-Communality**

a) Right to Self-Determination and Bi-Communalism (the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus)

The right to self-determination for peoples under colonial rule was first heard of in Cyprus in 1954 when, on 20 August, the Greeks appealed to the UN. The Greek case was based on the right to self-determination.

When the General Committee of the UN met on 23 September to consider the Greek appeal, Alexis Kyrou explained that Greece was resorting to the UN because the British Government had refused to settle the problem by direct talks and had denied the Cypriots the right of self-determination.<sup>19</sup>

The British and, particularly, the Turkish delegates responded that the principle of self-determination in Article 1(2) of the Charter could not be used to undermine treaty arrangements, and if self-determination were allowed, it should be granted to both communities.<sup>20</sup>

It was also stated that to allow the Greek application would be an intervention within England's domestic jurisdiction. But later, by the 11th General Assembly session, Britain followed a new line with a complete reversal of the Article 1(2) contention and accepted that the Cyprus problem was indeed an international issue that could be discussed in the General Assembly; it was not simply a colonial question but a complex matter that involved not only the British and Cypriots, but also Turkey and Greece.

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<sup>19</sup> Nancy Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1978, p. 83

<sup>20</sup> 10th UN GAOR 55 (1955), and 9th UN GAOR, 1st Committee - 549-52 (1954).

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In December 1956, the British Government announced publicly that, after a limited period of self-rule, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities would be given a chance to decide their own future through self-determination. In the House of Commons, both the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for the Colonies announced that both communities were separately entitled to self-determination and if the Radcliffe Plan for self-rule worked satisfactorily, then H.M. Government would be ready to review its application. Alan Lennox-Boyd then underlined the following:

When the time comes for this review, that is, when these conditions have been fulfilled, 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. In other words, Her Majesty's Government recognise that the exercise of self-determination in such a mixed population must include partition among the eventual options.<sup>21</sup>

The British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, underlined the fact that the people of Cyprus had a bi-communal character and “a considerable number of Turkish Cypriots lived in the island, who looked on Turkey as their fatherland”.<sup>22</sup>

This was followed by the Macmillan Plan, which, apart from bi-communality, was aimed at creating a triple condominium and was described as an experiment in “partnership and co-operation”. It envisaged sharing the sovereignty of Cyprus with Greece and Turkey on condition that Britain should retain military bases and facilities.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 19 December 1956, vol. 562, No. 32, col. 1272 & 1276.

<sup>22</sup> 13th UN GAOR 148 (1958).

<sup>23</sup> For details of the plan, see A.C. Gazioğlu, *Two Equal and Sovereign Peoples*, 2nd Edition, Lefkoşa, CYREP, 1999, pp. 20 - 39.

Although Greece and the Greek Cypriots rejected this, the first stage of the Macmillan Plan was put into practice on 1 October 1958. The Turkish Consul-General in Nicosia was appointed as the representative of the Turkish Government. This alarmed the Greek side and Averoff, the Foreign Minister of Greece, remarked that the Greek Government had to find some way to forestall the plan's full implementation.<sup>24</sup>

This was a turning point, which prepared the ground for restricted independence. A leading Labour MP, Mrs. Barbara Castle, went to Athens and warned Makarios that unless he accepted a bi-communal and restricted independence, the next move would be the partitioning of the island. Makarios agreed. The Greek Prime Minister, Karamanlis, declared himself “overjoyed” and said that he himself had raised this a year ago in NATO Council.

On 6 December, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution (1287 - XII) which “expressed the confidence that continued efforts will be made by the parties to reach a peaceful, democratic and just solution in accordance with the Charter of the UN.”

The Political Committee, where Averoff and Zorlu (the Turkish foreign minister) had two hours of heated discussion, called on “the three governments directly concerned and the representatives of the Cypriots to start discussions for a final solution to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Cypriots”. Averoff, describing this, said, “the Greeks lost the final battle”.

The Turkish Foreign Minister met Averoff after resolution 1287 (- XII) was unanimously adopted on 6 December 1958, and suggested that the two of them should come together and start a dialogue leading to the final

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<sup>24</sup> Evangelos Averoff, *Lost Opportunities* (1950 - 1963), New York, New Rochelle, 1986, p. 239.

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solution envisaged by the UN. It was this initiative by Zorlu that started the dialogue, which led to the creation of an independent, bi-communal partnership republic.<sup>25</sup>

It was agreed that Turkish Cypriots should not be regarded as a minority but accepted as a separate community on an equal footing; the island should be Turkish and Greek, not Greek and not Cypriot.

The British Foreign Secretary stated that “Her Majesty's Government would welcome a scheme for the future of Cyprus based on cooperation between the two communities in the island and between the Greek, Turkish and British Governments”.<sup>26</sup>

Zorlu, after receiving this British official view on 23 December 1958, confirmed in his reply that his objective had been to:

- a) safe-guard British Sovereignty over the British Bases and
  - b) to establish cooperation between the two communities on the basis of equality and of a federal constitution
- The key concepts of the Agreements reached in Zurich on 11 February 1959 and then confirmed in London on 17 February included:

- a) equality and
- b) bi-communality

Averoff wrote the following: “I readily admitted that there were two communities and that was why we should make different arrangements for them where necessary.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Averoff, *Lost Opportunities (1950 - 1963)*, p. 303.

<sup>26</sup> British National Archives (hereafter PRO), Foreign Office document FO 371/136414 - v52864.

<sup>27</sup> Averoff, *Lost Opportunities (1950-1963)*, p. 302.

b) The 1960 Republic and Bi-Communality

The basic structure of the Republic of Cyprus was founded on a regime of effective partnership and political equality through the acceptance of separate election rights on every level for each of the two main communities; and that executive authority should be vested in the Greek Cypriot President and the Turkish Cypriot Vice-President, both of whom would have the power of veto.

Former Turkish Cypriot Attorney-General, Zaim Necatigil, stated that “The Republic of Cyprus has never been a unitary state in which decisions are made solely by one community, except in regard to matters within the jurisdiction of the respective Communal Chambers. The two communities were equals ... in the sense that each existed as a political entity.”<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the establishment of a joint, bi-communal House of Representatives of 15 Turkish Cypriot and 35 Greek Cypriot elected members (Deputies), two separate Communal Chambers also were created according to the 1960 Constitution, as a symbol of bi-communality, to exercise autonomy in matters relating to their respective communities. Bi-communality was a source of power-sharing and created conditions by which it was expected that one community would not be able to exert hegemony over the other.

It was due to the concept of bi-communality and the provisions based on this principle that many decisions of the joint Cypriot parliament and the Cyprus Government had to be approved either by two-thirds of Turkish Cypriot members or by the Vice-President of the Republic who had a veto on certain vital issues, such as foreign relations, defence and security.

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<sup>28</sup> Zaim Necatigil, *Cyprus Question and the Turkish Position in International Law*, Oxford University Press, revised second edition, 1998, p.15

Polyvios Polyviou, a prominent lawyer specialising in constitutional theory, who worked with the Greek Cypriot delegation during the Geneva Conference in August 1974, says that:

The central principles of the 1960 Constitution were, first, that the state being set up was a bi-communal one. ... Other provisions established the communal character of the state and entrench the recognition of the two communities' separate existence, particularly in the political and cultural offices. Thus, to take but two examples, all elections take place on the basis of separate communal electoral lists and separate voting. Additionally, the Constitution provides for an exclusively communal level of political and social activity.<sup>29</sup>

### **The End of Bi-Communality**

#### a) Greek-Cypriot Takeover of the Republic of Cyprus

Makarios and other Greek Cypriot leaders, as soon as the Zurich and London Agreements were signed, started a campaign to change the main provisions of the Constitution which underlined bi-communality. Thus they attempted to establish a Greek Cypriot state, within which the Turkish Cypriot people, the co-founder partner, would henceforth be considered as a minority.

In order to achieve this aim, Makarios argued that the Constitution based on bi-communality could not function properly and on 30 November 1963, only 3 years after the Constitution came into force, submitted his Thirteen Points proposal to change it.

Polyviou stated the following: "A piecemeal and gradual amendment process would have been much preferable. ... For a start, some of them are undeniably more controversial politically than others, the potentially adverse

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<sup>29</sup> Polyvios Polyviou, *Cyprus - Conflict and Negotiation (1960 - 1980)*, London, Gerald Duckworth, 1990, p. 16.

impact on bi-communalism of a specific proposal being taken here as the relevant test of political acceptability.”<sup>30</sup>

Polyviou, like Glafkos Clerides, criticised as premature the attempt to change the balance created by bi-communality through Makarios's thirteen amendment points, which “was a political miscalculation of the first order”.<sup>31</sup> Clerides expressed his view on this issue by stating that “a correct, realistic evaluation of the situation would have led to the conclusion that any attempt to bring about constitutional amendments was premature and doomed to failure”.<sup>32</sup> Since then, all Greek Cypriot and mainland Greek policy has been to remove the concept of bi-communality and create a unitary state system based on majority rule.

#### b) Inter-communal Talks, 1968-1974

During the 1968-74 inter-communal talks between Denktaş and Clerides, the Greek Cypriot government was not prepared to accept local government and administration which might result in a federal or cantonal system because, as Clerides explained later, this system would not preserve unity and was contrary to the principles of a unitary state and accepted forms of local government. Denktaş felt that the Greek side's objection to local autonomy was political and not based on “practical considerations”.

In the third volume of his memoirs, Clerides clearly stated why, in 1970, the Greek Cypriots rejected a solution based on local government for the Turkish community, saying the reason “was again our antipathy to the partnership concept and our intention to reduce the Turkish community to a minority in a Cypriot state”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Polyviou, *Cyprus - Conflict and Negotiation (1960 - 1980)*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>31</sup> Polyviou, *Cyprus - Conflict and Negotiation (1960 - 1980)*, p. 34

<sup>32</sup> Glafkos Clerides, *Cyprus: My Deposition*, Volume I, Nicosia, Alithia Publishing, 1989, p. 115.

<sup>33</sup> Glafkos Clerides, *Cyprus : My Deposition*, Volume III, Nicosia, Alithia Publishing, 1990, p. 46.

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Thus, the views of the two sides continued to remain apart, and the inter-communal talks led nowhere when Makarios also insisted that any settlement should not close the door to *Enosis* and would not end up with agreement on a new bi-communal partnership.

By studying these historical facts of Cyprus, one can understand better why the Greek Cypriot leaders since Makarios, and in particular the present one, Papadopoulos, have been following a policy which blocks the ways to a bi-communal partnership republic based on the political equality of the two communities, under a federal or con-federal umbrella within a united Cyprus.

Polyviou had to admit that:

The Greek Cypriot side too was not as flexible as might have been either. The main factor of this conduct was that Makarios and the Greek Cypriot leaders, ever since 1963, were in control of the machinery of government; the Republic, of which it was now in sole charge, was recognised internationally; the 1960 Constitution had in practice been substantially modified; the Greek Cypriot community was remarkably prosperous. Therefore, it was vitally important that the outcome of the bi-communal talks should be a unitary state.<sup>34</sup>

This ended the bi-communality concept, which had been the vital factor all along within the existence and relations of the two Cypriot peoples.

This narrow-mindedness, this desire to have a unitary Greek Cypriot state based on majority rule, against a bi-communal concept and partnership, created the situation and internal friction among Greeks which led to a series of tragic events, a military coup, Turkish intervention and division of the island and the final separation of the two communities.

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<sup>34</sup> Polyviou, *Cyprus - Conflict and Negotiation (1960-1980)*.

### **Seeking Bi-Communality Again**

After the 1963 Greek Cypriot coup against the bi-communal partnership state and the subsequent occupation by Greece, which resulted in the second coup in 1974 (this time by Athens against the Greek Cypriot regime of Makarios) all negotiations for a new partnership were based on bi-communality and political equality, in two separate zones or states.

a) On 9 January 1977, the Turkish Cypriot President, Rauf Denktaş, sent a letter to Makarios and declared that he was ready to discuss with him the establishment of a transitional bi-communal administration as a first step. Makarios agreed. They met on 12 February and agreed on four guidelines. The first is as follows: “We are seeking an independent, non-aligned, bi-communal federal structure.” And the last one underlines that “the powers and functions of the central federal government should take into consideration the bi-communal character of the state”.

b) Anglo-American-Canadian proposals of 10 November 1978 suggested in their first clause that “the Republic of Cyprus shall be a bi-communal, federal state with two constituent regions, one of which will be inhabited predominantly by Greek Cypriots, the other by Turkish Cypriots”.

c) On 19 May 1979, the Denktaş-Kyprianou Ten Point Agreement endorsed the four guidelines agreed between Denktaş and Makarios two years earlier.

d) On 9 August 1980, the UN Secretary-General in his opening speech at the intercommunal talks in Nicosia, stated that both parties reaffirmed the validity of the 1977 and 1979 top level agreements.

Dr. Hugo Gobbi, the respected Cyprus Representative of the UN Secretary-General, under whose auspices the inter-communal talks in Nicosia continued in the early 1980s, published his experiences and the ideas he developed over many years in Cyprus in “Rethinking Cyprus”. He was of the opinion that neither of the communities was ready to construct a real multi-cultural state. In another book, “Contemporary Cyprus”, he asked this: “In Cyprus, are there any social, internal or external reasons to build a common state?” and then added, “The only reason could be a common will, but that does not exist.”<sup>35</sup>

To bring that right up to date, we might ask: “Has the Annan Plan created such a common will, despite its rejection by a substantial majority of Greek Cypriots in the 24 April 2004 referenda?”

Other quotations from Dr. Gobbi include:

“... I have reached the conclusion that the Cypriot communities do not have common grounds from which to work ... The basic truth is that they do not want to share a common destiny.”

“We have to realize that we are faced with two peoples who have coexisted for more than four hundred years without any desire for integration ...”

“Furthermore, there is nothing to constitute a unifying factor. What we do have is the existence of real confrontations and anachronic prejudices. There are no cultural similarities, where language, religion and race are different. There is no will to share a common destiny, an important factor in modern multiracial American societies.”

“This hostile social environment ... and ... the access of only the Greek Cypriot community to the European Union constitute new separating factors.”

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<sup>35</sup> Hugo Gobbi, *Contemporary Cyprus*, Tel Aviv, Aurora, 1997, p. 107.

“... The only link at this stage that I can recommend is that of the mutual respect shared by equals and good neighbours.”<sup>36</sup>

When Perez de Cuellar's Framework Agreement was concluded after months of negotiations, the UN Secretary-General announced that the summit at which the Framework Agreement would be signed would take place in New York on 17 January 1985.

Accordingly, Denktaş and Kyprianou went to New York to sign the agreement but suddenly, the Greek Cypriot leader changed his mind and refused to sign, demanding more discussions on almost all clauses, which he initially had accepted. According to *The Times* of 22 January 1985, “UN officials said, 'Kyprianou even questioned the basic tenets and principles of accommodation with the Turkish Cypriots, including the concept of bi-zonality and equal political status for the two communities'.”

Foreign Minister Rolandis, who resigned in protest at Kyprianou's intransigent attitude said, “de Cuellar's document could have been rejected only by those who opposed a federal solution”.

The Secretary-General, shocked and upset, reported to the Security Council that “unless the two sides are willing to take this step and agree on the framework, no further progress can be expected”.

The Turkish Permanent Representative in the UN, İlder Türkmen, commented: “The Greek side is consistent in one respect: not to accept anything”.<sup>37</sup>

A similar rejectionist attitude against any solution based on establishing a bi-communal partnership on an equal footing has recently been openly

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<sup>36</sup> Gobbi, *Contemporary Cyprus*, pp. 135-137.

<sup>37</sup> S/AV, 2729, 11 December 1986, p. 46.

demonstrated by the present Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, who actively campaigned for a “NO” vote in the 24 April 2004 referendum.

On 25 July 1989, the Secretary-General submitted to both Denktaş and Vassiliou the “Set of Ideas”. He invited both leaders to New York in early 1990, and after two meetings with them, he said this:

Cyprus is the common home of the Greek Cypriot community and of the Turkish Cypriot community. Their relationship is not one of majority and minority, but one of two communities in the state of Cyprus. My mandate, given to me by the Security Council, makes it clear that the participation of two communities in this process is on equal footing. The solution that is being sought is thus one that must be decided upon by, and must be acceptable to, both communities. ... The political equality of the two communities and the bi-communal nature of the federation need to be acknowledged.<sup>38</sup>

On 27 March 1991, Perez de Cuellar repeated that his mission was (?) with two communities, participating on an equal footing, and that the solution should be approved by both communities separately. Towards the end of 1991, he repeated that “agreement will result in the establishment of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation of two politically equal communities in which sovereignty will be equally shared but indivisible”.

The latest and most comprehensive plan for a solution was the Annan Plan, which made it plain that the New Cyprus Republic would be “an indissoluble partnership, with a federal government and two equal constituent states, the Greek Cypriot state and the Turkish Cypriot state”.

Annan recommended the holding of referenda “as an underlying concept that the act of re-unification should be an act not of the community leaders, but of the people on each side. The two leaders would agree to put the Foundation Agreement to approval by the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots in separate simultaneous referenda. The Greek Cypriots and the

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<sup>38</sup> UN document, S/2183.

Turkish Cypriots would exercise their inherent constitutive power, renewing their partnership. The new partnership would be based on a relationship not of majority and minority, but of political equality.”<sup>39</sup>

### **Conclusion**

A long, long time ago, an Ottoman Education Minister declared that, had it not been for schools, running educational matters would have been very easy.

By extending that reasoning, perhaps we can also say that, had it not been for the existence of two separate but politically equal communities, solving the Cyprus Problem would have been easy.

If there were not two separate communities co-existing on Cyprus, who were accepted as the two equal components of the Cypriot people, why then did we have “inter-communal talks” throughout the 38 years since 1968?

In no way can denying the realities of Cyprus help to achieve a final, viable and just settlement. Therefore let us face the facts and try to solve the problem without political delusions.

It is very unfortunate that the EU accepted a divided island with its unresolved problems as a full member. Thus, it defied its own basic principles. Furthermore, the Greek part of the island and its leaders do not represent the North and the Turkish Cypriot people whatsoever.

The EU by accepting the Greek Cypriot part as a full member, 'representing the whole island', made a big mistake as they themselves have now admitted. By doing so, they also showed total disrespect for the 1960 Cyprus

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<sup>39</sup> UN document S/2003/398, The Report of the Secretary-General, 1 April 2003.

## Bi-Communality in Cyprus

Agreements and Treaties as well as the constitution of the bi-communal republic, which was based on co-founder partnership, and political equality of the two communities.

Now is the time for the EU to have the courage to face the realities of Cyprus and adjust its policy in favour of two Cypriot communities thus creating the balance both in Cyprus and between Turkey and Greece, the two guarantor powers.

The EU as well as the US should seriously consider not to encourage the situation any further which would lead to the domination of one community over the other.

## ANNEX

In the communiqué issued on 2 August 1975 following the Vienna III talks, Paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Voluntary Population Exchange Agreement underline the bi-communal, bi-zonal essence of Cyprus:

“1. The Turkish Cypriots at present in the south of the island will be allowed, if they want to do so, to proceed north with their belongings under an organized programme and with the assistance of UNFICYP.

3.The Greek Cypriots at present in the north who, at their own request and without having been subjected to any kind of pressure, wish to move to the South, will be permitted to do so.”

These two basic provisions were subsequently implemented as indicated in paragraph 4 of the UN Secretary-General's second interim report No.S/11789/Add.2 dated 13 September 1975, paving the way for a bi-zonal federal settlement of the Cyprus problem.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Necati Münir Ertekün, *In Search of a Negotiated Cyprus Settlement*, Lefkoşa, 1981, pp. 275-276.

