Dementia Cypria:
On the Social Psychological Environment of the Intercommunal Negotiations

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SECTION I

Introduction

There is a well-known adage frequently attributed to Einstein to the effect that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. This, I suggest, is the kind of insanity which characterises successive attempts by the Greek and Turkish sides to the Cyprus problem to reach through negotiations – some ten rounds of negotiations since 1975 – an *agreed* settlement by which each side hopes to secure for itself certain objectives that *it knows* to be incompatible with the objectives of the other side, and for the achievement of which it employs negotiating tactics and diplomatic moves that *it knows* from past experience to be ineffective.

It has often be noted by scholars and diplomats that the two Cypriot communities in their vast majorities, give very different explanations of the character of the Cyprus problem, how it came about, and what would be a just and 'viable' way to solve it; and further, they dismiss with disdain each other's accounts as untrue, insincere and self-serving. The Greek Cypriots in their large majority believe that the central core of the problem – the 'essence of the problem' as they often say – is the terrible wrong done to them by the 'barbaric' Turkish invasion of 20 July 1974 which resulted in probably more than 3,000 dead and 1,400 missing persons, as well as other victims of inhuman mistreatment and systematic rape. The continuing occupation of the northern part of the island by the Turkish army, in blatant breach of international law and morality, is for Greek Cypriots a continuing trauma and humiliation, with numerous adverse practical consequences for the rights and interests of the Greek Cypriot community, such as the displacement of some 180,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes and properties in the north, the effective partitioning of the island, the illegal immigration of tens of thousands of people from Turkey intended to change the demographic composition of the island, and so on. The meaning which '1974' has for Greek Cypriots, has been interpreted by politicians and political commentators of the community as a long catalogue of traumas and injustices inflicted by the Turks on them, 'Cypriot Hellenism'. For the Greek Cypriots, therefore, a settlement to the Cyprus problem – a *just* settlement – involves righting that wrong, reversing the injustices, undoing as far as possible the results of what they regard as the illegal Turkish invasion and its consequences.

On the other side of the divide, the Turkish Cypriot community in their large majority, take

the view – which is also the standard view of Turkey's officialdom and the media – that the Cyprus problem did not begin in 1974, but it existed at least as far back as the intercommunal fighting of which broke out in December 1963, when Greek Cypriots, failing to intimidate them into accepting changes to the bicommunal constitutional order which would relegate them to minority status as a prelude to bring about *enosis*, attacked them with groups of armed irregulars. Turkish Cypriots, in their thousands, were forced to leave their homes in isolated or mixed villages and move in fear of their safety to enclaves defended by a few hundreds of Turkish troops and their own poorly armed irregulars, mainly in an area extending from North Nicosia to the Pentadaktylos mountains, covering just 3% of the island's area. They slept in tents or sub-standard dwellings, few had jobs or anything useful to do, and they were provided for by the Red Crescent and watched over by the UN Peacekeeping Force, and for many years the Greek Cypriot forces had them surrounded and controlled all traffic of people and goods into their enclaves. The experience of living as second-class citizens left a deep trauma on thousands of Turkish Cypriots and had a formative influence on the collective mind of all those who went through it.

Given the Turkish Cypriot view of the Cyprus problem, the Greek Cypriots are not hopeful they can reach a fair and just settlement with the Turkish Cypriots. Indeed, Greek Cypriots believe that *ideally* they should not have to negotiate for their restoration of their rights and rightful interests with the Turkish Cypriot leader (the 'occupation leader' as the media often call him, who is supported and managed by the Turkish government), but rather the international community should apply painful sanctions on Turkey – the true culprit – to force it to release its grip on occupied north Cyprus and withdraw its forces and settlers, leaving the constitutional and other matters to be settled between their government and the small Turkish community. Similarly the Turkish Cypriots do not really want to enter into negotiations with the deniers of their rights and former oppressors, especially as such negotiations will involve their yielding currently populated territory in the north in exchange of international legitimation to which they believe they are entitled, anyway. The trouble is that the Greek Cypriots want to go forward to a future which resembles, as far as possible, the past of a Greek-dominated, virtually unitary Cyprus; and the Turkish Cypriots want to go forward to a future which resembles, as far as possible, the *de facto* two-state present.

Why don't the parties abandon the talks as a method for solving the problem, if it is ineffective? Maybe many people on each side are hoping against hope that in the current negotiations, unlike previous occasions, the other side will be induced to yield a little. Besides, the UN Security Council has long urged the parties to negotiate with good will for a settlement and in recent years the European Union has done the same; and neither side wants to appear to the international community to be intransigent. Thus, abandoning the negotiations does not seem to be an advantageous option for either side; so, they go on and on without ever reaching an agreed settlement package.

Why, it may be asked, don't the negotiators modify to an appropriate extent their main objectives or moderate their demands in order to accommodate the objectives and demands of the

other side? The question is reasonable. However, it must be appreciated that the President of the Cyprus Republic Demetris Christofias, as current leader of and negotiator for the Greek Cypriot community, reflects in his conduct not just a set of tactical decisions intended to secure for his people certain objectives which he regards as right and fair, but also a complex and tangled set of rational and irrational political and ethical beliefs, desires, illusions, hopes and worries which form part of the collective mind of his community, permeate political life and influence the formulation of the objectives themselves. To put the point bluntly, his objectives in the negotiations are shaped by the political and ethical beliefs and desires of the large majority of Greek Cypriots. In a similar way, the current Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat, as representative of his community *and* the Turkish government which supports, controls and funds the Turkish Cypriot 'state', reflects in his own conduct a different set of political and ethical beliefs and desires – rational and irrational – which form part of the collective mind of the Turkish Cypriot community and the Turkish establishment, and which are in certain significant ways *mirror images* of those of Greek Cypriots. Indeed, the continuing leadership of current negotiators Christofias and Talat and their respective democratic legitimacy depends on keeping faith with their respective election commitments to promote and secure the interests and rights of their own communities. In that case it is hard to see how the two leaders, with all the good will in the world, can moderate their objectives which reflect the beliefs and desires – rational and irrational – of their communities without risking accusations of sell-out, personal rejection and humiliation in any future parallel referenda called to ratify any settlement package that may be reached.

I suggest that the conscious or unconscious collective political beliefs, desires, anxieties, aspirations etc that are experienced by most Greek and Turkish Cypriots respectively can be usefully likened to a syndrome of mental conditions which are studied by psychiatry and psychodynamic psychology under the name of *dementia*. What I refer to is the complex of disorders, usually found in the most extreme forms in a geriatric population, such as illusory beliefs, distorted judgments, unrealistic expectations fuelled by phantasy, selective memories and amnesia, and the development of two or more personalities within the same individual, e.g. one gentle and one aggressive. The *dementia* of the Greek Cypriot community and the *dementia* of the Turkish Cypriot community jointly form the social psychological environment of irrational political and ethical beliefs and desires in which successive rounds of intercommunal negotiations for a Cyprus settlement have taken place for the past generation, and failed dismally. This overall social psychological environment of the negotiations may be called *dementia Cypria*. My question is: what are the prospects of success of the current round of the Christofias-Talat negotiations, conducted as they are in the context of and under the constraints of *dementia Cypria?*

Section II

The Manichean Conception of Greek-Turkish Historical Conflicts

The contemporary British philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has argued that what gives unity to a human life is the unity of a *narrative* embodied in that life, a life with goals whose realisation calls

for certain virtues. By analogy I want to suggest that gives unity to the life of a Greek or Turkish Cypriot person, a unity that includes a sense of *membership* of the Greek or Turkish Cypriot community respectively, is the existence of a certain narrative which is embodied in the community's public life and institutions, and is a narrative within which individual Greek and Turkish Cypriot fit their personal narratives at various significant moments. When my community is involved in a struggle against an adversary, I need to identify with the struggle and I am expected to display a fighting spirit, or the spirit of active resistance required by the struggle.

But I want to go further. During the first half-century of British rule, an increasing number of Greek and Turkish Cypriots came to conceive of their communal or public identity, through expanding literacy and higher education in the Greek or Turkish language and culture, as part of Greek and Turkish national identity *sans phrase*. Thus most Greek and Turkish Cypriots came to subsume their individual life's narrative under the community narrative, which itself had been derived and was constantly replenished from a certain comprehensive way of telling the story of the Greek and Turkish nations in the two mainlands. The aims which the nations achieved and the rights they realised through the application of virtuous effort, talent and sacrifice are national achievements, which cast a positive light on the ways individuals in Greece, Turkey and the two Cypriot communities think about their communal identities. On the contrary, the frustration of national aims, the assault on national dignity, the denial of national rights, humiliations and other negative experiences are conceived and narrated as *national traumas*, which again reflect tragically on an individual's and a community's senses of self-identity.

The Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities conceptualise their respective traumas and grievances from 1963, 1974 and subsequently − directly remembered or acquired at second hand through school books, media, films, videos available on the internet etc − in terms of a larger 'national' historical narrative, or perhaps better, the partial and inaccurate quasi-historical narrative employed by people in Greece and Turkey, respectively, when they talk about the course of their relations since the Greek revolution of 1821-1828, if not the 'fall' or 'conquest' of Constantinople in 1453.

The Greek quasi-historical national narrative presents the Greeks throughout as virtuous, civilised, enterprising, brave people, who suffered under oppressive Ottoman rule for centuries and who rose in revolt in 1821 for the freedom of the nation in and the Orthodox faith, who achieved glorious victories and the liberation of ancient Greek lands in the next one hundred years, but tragically suffered a number of defeats, which resulted in great pain and humiliation in the hands of the Turks, the most dramatic of which (before 1974) was the Asian Minor disaster of 1922-23. The narrative itself, not unnaturally, contains a rich vocabulary used to enhance the moral and cultural standing of the nation, and belittle or diminish that of the nation's adversaries. And how does the Turkish national narrative present the wars between Greeks and Turks? Naturally enough, the Turkish national narrative of the history of Turkish-Greek relations is pretty close to a mirror-image of the Greek national narrative. According to this, the Greeks had been constantly seeking to expand their land at the expense of the Turks, and committed atrocities against Turkish

populations in conquered areas, most prominently in the Smyrna area in 1919-22, until they were expelled by Turkish national forces under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The idea of Ataturk as the leader of *national resistance* and saving his country from the humiliation of the Treaty of Sevres is very important for Turks and Turkish Cypriots, but it does not meet with much understanding by Greeks, which see Kemalism as an aggressive and barbaric movement.

These two potted quasi-historical narratives of Greek-Turkish relations during some one hundred years of intermittent conflict and tension from the Greek revolution to the Turkish War of Liberation, the former believed by Greeks and Greek Cypriots, the latter by Turks and Turkish Cypriots, provide two broad frameworks of ideas which Greek and Turkish people respectively have been taught for successive generations. Both narratives contain simplistic or distorted events of glory and trauma for the nation which involved a Manichean conception of Greek-Turkish conflict. One's own nation is good, virtuous, brave and freedom-loving; the other nation is totally evil, unjust, uncouth, cruel and oppressive.

The quasi-historical narratives of the two nations with its Manichean implications had already been established in the political consciousness of Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the 1950s, when EOKA led a 'national liberation struggle' against British colonial rule and in support of the *enosis* or union of Cyprus with Greece. This development provoked vigorous reaction from the Turkish Cypriot community who were opposed to 'replacing a colonial master for a worse one', and – more significantly – it provoked a determined opposition in Turkey, which now demanded *taksim*, the partitioning of Cyprus between Turkey and Greece. In Cyprus the Auxiliary Police which employed mostly Turkish Cypriots became involved in the local struggle and a Turkish underground militant organisation was set up in Cyprus under the initials TMT to protect Turkish Cypriots and attack Greek Cypriots. In 1958 some Greek and Turkish Cypriots were killed in intercommunal clashes, and properties were attacked and burned in acts of vandalism and revenge.

When Greek and Turkish Cypriots experienced their respective traumas under the conceptual scheme of their respective quasi-historical national narratives, they also adopted from these narratives the relevant forms of explanation ('why are *we* in conflict with *them*?'), and also what might be called, by analogy with the various kinds of individual trauma and distress studied by psychodynamic psychology, a number of habitual methods or 'strategies' for coping with them or alleviating them. These are strategies whose particular forms are suggested or sanctioned by the narratives themselves, and provide for many people an indispensable type of self-support. How, then, do the two communities cope with traumas, hurt, tension, humiliation, misery, insecurity, loss of loved ones and collective victimhood, given that they both see the protracted conflicts in Manichean terms, viewed of course from opposite standpoints? In the next section I shall attempt to outline an answer to this question – something in the nature of an explanatory model involving a degree of 'idealisation' – and trace its implications for the intercommunal negotiations for a Cyprus settlement.

SECTION III

The Use of Coping Strategies for Community Traumas

When you suffer a trauma or contemplate the personal consequences of disaster, it is easier to tolerate the pain when you are convinced you acted honourably, justly and wisely, than you acted badly and foolishly and got your comeuppance. The strong tendency of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, at least in their large majorities, to see the conflicts between them in extreme terms, in black and white, the struggle of good against evil, is supported by the quasi-historical narratives of the Greek and Turkish nations. This is analogous to the psychological phenomenon of *splitting*. Child psychologists have long noted that infants think of the world purely in extremes, but adults of immature personality who come under stress, tend to cope with their problems in light of the belief that whereas they are good and decent, innocent and blameless, they have been put upon or suffered injustice from an evil person. When a person tries to cope with hurt in some way which involves splitting and is told by third parties, especially friends and family, that he must take or share the blame for what happened, he tends to get upset. Both sides to the Cyprus problem have had to hear from foreign statesmen, diplomats and UN officials, as well as journalists and writers that they are entirely innocent and blameless, and their stock reaction is to blame the third parties for hostile feelings towards them.

Very often Greeks and Turkish Cypriots are reminded of abhorrent acts which their community carried out and they just deny them. What, Greek Cypriots harmed Turkish Cypriots in 1963-74, terrorised them away from their homes in some 100 villages and usurped their properties? Impossible! What, Turkish Cypriots in 1963 forced Greek Cypriots out of their homes in mixed areas where the former predominated, such as Kermia in north-west Nicosia? No way! Sometimes people are lying through their teeth; but on other occasions they are genuinely *in denial*: they don't want to believe and they will not believe that they had been unjust and cruel, or just indifferent when their own militias carried out hostilities, no matter what evidence is brought before them. There are certainly many precedents in the quasi-historical narrative of the Greek and the Turkish nations when any suggestions of violent and oppressive behaviour towards groups belonging to the other nation are given short shrift despite ample historical evidence. When a Greek author writes about Greek atrocities against Turks in Smyrna in 1919-22 (as happened in early 2009 when a Professor at Panteion University in Athens found the evidence undeniable), or when a Turkish writer admits Turkish atrocities against Greek communities in Western Anatolia or the Black Sea in 1919-23 (or for that matter, against Armenians in 1915), then he can expect the mindless wrath of nationalist media and public opinion. In a community of deniers, the courageous admitter of unpalatable facts is considered a traitor.

It is interesting that one of the public deniers of Turkish Cypriot killings by Greek Cypriots is a man who should have been much better informed than most Greek Cypriots: Tassos Papadopoulos. On 4 September 2004 the Khaleej Times, an English-language newspaper based in the United Arab Emirates published an interview of Papadopoulos, President of the Cyprus

Republic at the time. The representative of the newspaper asked Papadopoulos to comment on Turkish Cypriot claims that "after independence and before the Turkish troops came, lots of massacres occurred … the Turkish troops … saved them from further violence … ." Papadopoulos replied as follows:

> "They [the Turkish Cypriots] say that and claim that the Turkish troops protected them … From the beginning, they were planning for a separation. But, in fact, the Turkish Cypriots were the ones who committed massacres and in 1963 we asked to increase police patrols, but they refused. From 1963 to 1974, how many Turkish Cypriots were killed? The answer is none."

The answer *ought* to have amazed tens of thousands of Cypriots who were old enough to remember hearing about Turkish and Greek Cypriot killings during that period, and thousands of people who took part in bloody battles. Richard A. Patrick in his ground-breaking book *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict: 1963-1971* estimates that about 350 Turkish Cypriots and 200 Greek Cypriots lost their lives in intercommunal hostilities between December 1963 and August 1964, when the Greek Cypriot National Guard attacked Cypriot units in Tylliria and Turkish Air Force responded by bombing them. On 14-15 August the National Guard and Police Tactical Reserve force under General Grivas attacked Turkish Cypriot positions in the Ayios Theodoros − Kophinou area. According to Patrick, 22 Turkish Cypriots were killed and 9 others were wounded. Greek Cypriots reported their casualties as one dead and two wounded. The incidents provoked a sharp reaction by Turkey which threatened to invade Cyprus unless the Greek division of 12,000 men was withdrawn, Grivas left Cyprus and the Cyprus government disbanded the National Guard. President Lyndon Johnson sent his Deputy Secretary of Defence Cyrus Vance to Nicosia, Athens and Ankara to find a mutually agreed formula to avert war − a possibility which the Cyprus government certainly took seriously. (The Greek division was soon withdrawn, but the National Guard remained in existence to fight another day, on 15 July 1974!) Could Tassos Papadopoulos, who was a minister in Makarios's government in 1960-70, have forgotten the whole affair?

Papadopoulos's claim attracted comment in the Greek and Turkish Cypriot media. Loucas Charalambous in an article which appeared on 12 September 2004 in the Cyprus Mail under the title 'Does the President have memory problems?' wrote: "I do not think there is anyone who would consider it wrong to describe the President's claim that no Turkish Cypriots were killed as a blatant lie. Which leads me to deduce one of two things: either our President is a liar or he is suffering from an illness that causes memory loss."

Both possibilities are credible, but there is yet a third possibility. If, as I suggested, a community suffering from a trauma or distress absolutely needs for its own sanity and self-support to assert its own complete righteousness and innocence, it will deny and deny vehemently that it has ever done anything to bring its present calamity on itself. The community internalises the denial of guilt, acts and speaks as if it has done no wrong, so it demands that the adversary is

blamed for the pain it is experiencing, and in due course it creates in its collective mind a state intermediate between knowing and not knowing that it has done wrong. This state of *denial* which, long before Freud gave it prominence in his account of the defence mechanism of the traumatised mind, was indicated by Friedrich Nietzsche by the remark: "'I have done that', says my memory. 'I cannot have done that', says my pride, and remains adamant. At last, memory yields." Perhaps Nietzsche could well have added to one's pride, one's need to enhance his moral standing and belittle that of his adversary.

Greek Cypriots must have felt comforted to hear their leader's reassuring words, to the effect that their community had not killed any Turkish Cypriots. Indeed, Papadopoulos's remark that the Turkish Cypriots "from the beginning ... were planning for a separation" and in fact "they were the ones who committed massacres" may have come as a confirmation of the belief held by thousands of Greek Cypriots who had joined the armed militias in 1962-63 and received weapons training that it was the other community which had planned a breach of the constitutional order and not their leaders, and so it was *legitimate* for them to engage in battle preparations. This observation neatly illustrates the familiar psychological phenomenon of *projection* where side A in a dispute attributes (sometimes sincerely) to side B hostile feelings and intentions which are similar or analogous to those which side A in fact has. Projection, like the mechanism of selective amnesia and selective memory works for individuals as well as peoples who have trouble accepting their own failings and errors.

SECTION IV

The Creation of *Dementia Cypria*

The Manichean conception of Greek-Turkish conflict, the splitting of human affairs into total good and total evil, the self-serving illusion that 'our' side was always right and when 'we' engaged in armed action we were only carrying out legitimate defence of our rights and just interests and that – and this is the ultimate phantasy – one day in the not-too-distant-future the civilised world will recognise the justice of our cause shape the climate of ideas, an environment of collective irrationality, in which intercommunal negotiations have taken place since 1975, or even earlier in the period 1968-74. The negotiators changed from time to time, but the fundamental demands raised by each of them were an inflexible reflection of collective belief and illusion, concern and anxiety, splitting and phantasy in his community, as was his resistance to the demands of the other side.

Various attempts were made by successive UN Secretaries-General to encourage a compromise between the two sets of beliefs and desires – by Kurt Waldheim in 1981, Javier Perez de Cuellar in 1984-86, Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992, Kofi Annan in 2002-04 – but whereas one or other side accepted it reluctantly, the other rejected it in the belief that it was unjust and that the future would surely bring along a fairer proposal. Indeed, the leaders of the rejecting side tended to

be very critical of any voices within its own community calling for acceptance. It may be that each community realised that they could not have a 100% just settlement package (even though they had all justice on their side!), but public opinion tended to be divided between those who insisted on securing, say, 90% of their rights and rightful interests, and those who more realistically declared themselves content with 70%. The 90 percenters accused the 70 percenters of being unpatriotic, defeatists and more eager to please foreign powers than fight for their just cause. The 70 percenters, in turn, accused the 90 percenters of having their heads in the clouds and of risking losing everything by their bloody-minded rejectionist attitude, but it is interesting that none of the two groups in either community acknowledged that the other community may have also suffered from injustice and have just grievances against it. In any case, during periods when power was exercised in each community by 90 percenters (Makarios, Kyprianou, Papadopoulos, Denktash) or 70 percenters (roughly, Vassiliou, Clerides, Christofias, Talat), the fact is that the declared objectives of the negotiators were a reflection of the beliefs, desires, concerns, prejudices, illusions and phantasies of their respective communities.

It may be asked: Since Christofias and Talat are realistic and moderate leaders, should they not have come to realise that they cannot agree on a deal which would give each of the communities even 70% of what they believe is their due, should they not be lowering their sights to 50%? It is *possible* that is what they inwardly want; but they are both captives of the Manichean ideas, rational and irrational beliefs, rational and irrational desires, pious hopes and unrealistic expectations of their communities, constantly fuelled by maximalist claims of nationalist politicians and the media in their respective communities. Christofias must know full well that Turkish Cypriots suffered killings, atrocities and cruel treatment in 1963-74, and indeed in the wake of the invasion in the villages of Maratha, Aloa, Sandalaris, Tochni and elsewhere. Talat must know full well of well documented and independently corroborated killings, atrocities and cruel treatment against Greek Cypriots in 1963, and especially in 1974. But can the two leaders ever acknowledge this to their own peoples and tell them that *they do not deserve* to get all they are demanding, as the other side also has just grievances and must secure their rights and protection? Can Christofias and Talat stand together at the Ledra Palace checkpoint which saw scenes of battles in 1963 and 1974, hold hands as French President Francois Mitterand and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl did on 23 September 1984 before the memorial of the fallen in the Battle of Verdun of 1916 and pledge 'never again'? Could they retain their authority with their respective communities if they sought sanity in a world of collective *dementia*?

But maybe a ray of rational hope can reach the madhouse of Cyprus. In recent years a number of distinct developments have posed serious challenges to the mutually reinforcing phenomena of the Manichean conception of Greek-Turkish historical conflict and its moral elevation of one's nation and diminishment of the adversary nation on the one hand, and on the other hand the subsumption of each community's traumas and humiliations under the quasi-historical national narrative and its attendant mechanism of splitting, denial, selective amnesia and memory, and projection.

The first development is that a new generation of Greek, Turkish and foreign historians trained in the methods of evidence-based historiography delved methodically into primary sources – government documents, diplomatic despatches, memoirs, personal and formal correspondence, official announcements and statistics, photographic and film records and so on – and produced historical accounts of important past events as they happened. When the light of rational historical understanding falls on historical myth and prejudice, the political elite who receive their authority and prestige from the myth and people who receive comfort from prejudice will offer vigorous resistance, but the resistance may be worn out in the long run. If serious historians find overwhelming evidence for the occurrence of massacres on both the Greek and Turkish sides during the various phases of Greek-Turkish conflict, how long can the Manichean conception survive? Already history school books in Greece and Turkey are changing in line with the need to increase factual accuracy and reduce offensive stereotypes of the other nation. Turkish Cypriot school books have changed, and the Cyprus government is trying to do the same for Greek Cypriot books, although it is facing rearguard action from conservative teachers and the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus!

Some historical and political scholarship has already established itself in Cyprus, and a small number of writers have offered balanced, and so anti-Manichean accounts of what happened in Cyprus during the conflicts of the mid-1950s, 1963-74 and beyond. In the long term it is likely that an increasing number of people will be able to understand that both communities have had their victims and killers, and that some of the victims of one community met their fate in the hands of that same community's killers or execution squads. The demented Goliath of nationalism remains the principal intellectual force in the political life of both communities, but it constantly has to watch out for David's sling of rational scholarship which is taking aim at some cherished myths in the narratives of the communities.

Another development that has unnerved nationalists in both communities is the work of the Anthropological Laboratory of the Committee on Missing Persons. For the first 30 years following the 1974 events the fate of Greek and Greek missing persons – the number was fixed at 1,619 – was a subject of great political interest and intense propaganda. In due course it turned out that some at least of those listed as missing had been killed and buried in cemeteries in the Greek-controlled part of Cyprus, *and* that a number of Greek Cypriot politicians and officials had known about it but kept silent so as not to weaken the official propaganda line. A new procedure was set up whereby the bicommunal Committee on Missing Persons undertook to follow up any information about burials of missing persons, carried out exhumations, and tried to identify the dead by matching their genetic material again DNA samples offered by relatives of the missing. The Anthropological Laboratory of the Committee has been asked to track down 1,340 Greek Cypriots and 502 Turkish Cypriots. From time to time the remains of missing persons are successfully identified and given over to their relatives for proper burial. The slow process of looking and finding more human remains in shallow graves and wells, identifying them through the DNA method, and returning the remains to relatives for burial at the final resting place under

the gaze of the media presents opportunities to hear the circumstances of the deaths of ordinary Greek or Turkish Cypriots, people who met their death while going to work, or looking after their herds, or undergoing treatment in a hospital, or doing their military service and finding themselves in a battle, people who were killed because of the community to which they belonged. Some people, on hearing these stories draw grave conclusions; but others just shrug their shoulders as if to say "It's nothing to do with me – I am innocent!"

Perhaps the day will come when it will be generally understood by the two communities that it is just nonsense to think that only their side have victims and sufferers, but not killers and oppressors. This understanding will not happen any day soon. Even if for each community the image of its leadership is to some extent besmirched, it believes that any settlement that is sufficiently just to be acceptable must involve the restoration of its rights, if not fully at least to a very considerable extent, irrespective of what the other side needs and desires. The division of Cyprus into a Greek and a Turkish Cypriot community, the majority of which dislikes and distrusts the other side (Turkish Cypriots and Turkey's political-military establishment, Greek Cypriots and the dominant Greek culture) is one of the fundamental aspects of Cypriot reality. The fact that each community, over a period of several generations, has developed a sense of its own identity through a quasi-historical national narrative which incorporates the traumas and humiliations, as well as the aspirations and virtues of the nation, in terms which are antithetical to that of the other community has contributed to their adversarial relationship – and this is also another fundamental aspect of reality in Cyprus. These two fundamental aspects, together with a series of accidents of history, including the ways Greek and Turkish politicians perceived Cyprus, have contributed to the creation and maintenance of the Cyprus problem. The Cyprus problem and the EOKA struggle of 1955-59 which aimed at *enosis* and provoked Turkish demands for *taksim*, reinforced the sense of separate identity of the two communities, and a separate sense of their respective rights and just interests.

However, the compromise settlement of the Cyprus problem in 1959-60 reinforced the existence of separate 'ethnic' leaderships which based their authority on their respective claims to advance the rights of their own communities. The violence of 1963-64 and 1974 brought about traumas and loss of rights for both communities, and they both yearn for justice *for themselves*, rather than a balanced political arrangement for Cyprus. For one reason or another the view has prevailed in Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the international community that the Cyprus problem now needs another attempt at a settlement through negotiations for a *bizonal, bicommunal federation*. The two communities are willing to negotiate, if only reluctantly, on the understanding that the projected settlement is going to be just and fair, as defined by the terms of the national narrative. But each of the national narratives incorporates rational and irrational beliefs, rational and irrational desires, twisted ideas of virtue and bravery, anxious concerns and so on, and as a result the social psychological conditions in each community, which together constitute the social psychological environment in which any negotiations take place, prevent or rule out the achievement of an agreed settlement which the majority of each community could endorse in

separate referenda as sufficiently just and fair.

As was indicated, Christofias and Talat, no matter what they think privately, are bound by their commitments and democratic relations to their respective communities to be guided by their rational and irrational beliefs and desires, which are fundamentally incompatible. This is the kind of madness that keeps Cyprus in an *impasse* when the world moves forward to ever closer forms of cooperation: the Greek Cypriots want to move forward though negotiations to the unified past and the Turkish Cypriots want go move forward through negotiations to the separatist present. This is *dementia Cypria.*