

The Politics of Honour and the Greek Divide at Cypriot Independence

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Abstract

This paper will look at developments concerning the EOKA leader, George Grivas, right at the end of what the British called 'The Emergency'. Although his actions at this point had no bearing on the substance of the settlement, they could affect its successful implementation. An examination of accounts and discussions surrounding these developments provides an eye-opener into the damage limitation exercise the handling of events was for all participants. The purpose of this paper is not to assess the accuracy of the conflicting accounts, but to examine the circumstances and discussions surrounding the manner of the departure of the EOKA leader from Cyprus in the aftermath of the Zurich and London Agreements and their connection with the delicate balance required by the key players to maintain as positive an atmosphere as possible towards the Cyprus settlement and the forthcoming independence. The importance of honour and prestige in the process, and its relation to the political future of the parties involved, resulted in attempts to manipulate events in a way that would satisfy all parties. Such manipulation proved impossible. While the Grivas legend became a central part of Greek Cypriot collective memory, his differences with Makarios created the most potent divide in Greek Cypriot politics for years to come.

Keywords: Grivas, EOKA, Makarios, Averoff, Macmillan, Zorlu, Honour, AKEL, *Enosis*, Greece, Turkey

As the representatives of Britain, Greece and Turkey, the future guarantors of the Republic of Cyprus, gathered in London on 17 February 1959, their chief preoccupation was to secure the acquiescence of Archbishop Makarios, the inscrutable Greek Cypriot political leader, to the Greco-Turkish deal on the Cyprus issue. It was only after Makarios reluctantly signed the Agreements that their interest turned to the possible reactions of George Grivas, the legendary leader of EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters), who was still at large on the island. He had been briefed, but had not been seriously consulted on the Agreements because his reaction would have been predictably negative. This paper will examine the developments concerning the EOKA leader right at the end of what the British called 'The Emergency'. Although it was the spectre of

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strife *beyond* rather than *in* the island, that finally swept aside the insurgency, and with it, the brand new irregular techniques of British counter-insurgency, and although the actions of George Grivas at this point had no bearing on the substance of the settlement, they could still affect its successful implementation.

An examination of accounts and discussions surrounding these developments provides an eye-opener into the damage limitation exercise the handling of events was for all participants.¹ The importance of honour and prestige in the process, and its relation to the political future of the parties involved, resulted in attempts to manipulate not only the way in which Grivas left Cyprus and arrived in Athens, but also his subsequent career. He must be honoured to appease the Greek sense of victory, so vital to acceptance of the London and Zurich Agreements, but not so honoured as to outrage Macmillan's opponents. He must be allowed some sort of career in Greece as a way of diverting him from dabbling in Cyprus, but not one that would make him a threat to the Karamanlis Government. Such manipulation proved impossible. While the Grivas legend became a central part of Greek Cypriot collective memory, his differences with Makarios created the most potent divide in Greek Cypriot politics after independence. The EOKA leader haunted the Cyprus problem beyond his death in January 1974, while EOKA B, the group with which he turned against the Archbishop, and President of the Republic, was in 1974 to provide a Trojan horse for the island's dismemberment.

But first let us take a brief look at the events of the immediately preceding years. By the autumn of 1955, six months after the start of the violent Greek Cypriot struggle for the union of Cyprus with Greece, the British governor, Field Marshal Sir John Harding, embarked on talks with Makarios in a bid to bring violence to an end through limited political concessions. After the failure of these talks in March 1956, a British policy which sought to end violence through political negotiations was replaced by the conviction that EOKA must be defeated before any renewal of negotiations could be contemplated.² The hasty despatch of the Greek Cypriot Ethnarch to the Seychelles and the ordering of the first executions signalled a new phase in 'The Emergency'. The popular indignation aroused by these and by the Archbishop's deportation fuelled vociferous

1 Key accounts examined: G. Grivas (1984) *Απομνημονεύματα Αγώνα 1955-1959* [Memoirs of Struggle], Athens; C. Foley (ed.) (1964) *The Memoirs of General Grivas*, London; Gen. Sir Kenneth Darling, 'Cyprus: The Final Round', unpublished film script completed in April 1979; Gen. Sir Kenneth Darling: Papers relating to Cyprus, Imperial War Museum (IWM) 05/41/1; A portrait of George Grivas put together by G. Prendergast referred to in Darling Papers 05/41/ and carried in CO926/1125, National Archives. A. Azinas (2001) *50 Χρόνια Σιωπής: Η Ώρα της Αλήθειας* [Fifty Years of Silence: The Hour of Truth] (Vol. II), Nicosia and E. Averoff-Tossizza (1986) *Lost Opportunities: The Cyprus Question 1950-1960*, New York.

2 For analyses of the Makarios-Harding Talks, see, for example, R. Holland (1998) *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus 1954-1959*, Oxford, Chapter 4, N. Kranidiotis (1987) *Οι Διαπραγματεύσεις Μακαρίου-Χαρνίγκ 1955-1956* [The Makarios-Harding Negotiations 1955-1956], Athens and D. Weston Markides (Sept 1995) 'Britain's New Look Policy for Cyprus and the Makarios-Harding Talks', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 23, No. 3.

popular civil disobedience in the towns. At the same time, Makarios' removal from the scene endowed Grivas with a new autonomy to which the marked change in the tone and direction of the EOKA campaign bears witness.³

The political revolution in the towns was, by 1957, acknowledged as the greatest potential danger to British sovereignty on the island. The authorities' recognition of the participation of a broad spectrum of the population was reflected in punitive measures aimed at collective responsibility: snap curfews, collective fines, house-to-house searches and the detaining of large numbers of people, described privately by the British as 'man-in-the-streetish', in special detention centres. Nevertheless, the elimination of the core of EOKA and, more particularly, Grivas himself, was perceived as the quickest way to put an end to escalating urban violence and the confrontation of a growing number of troops with civilians.⁴ No amount of verbal denigration of EOKA and chocolates for the kiddies could counteract the growing Greek Cypriot perception of the British as a brutal occupying force. With Makarios removed, the British commanders were convinced that the elimination of the legendary Dighenis would have a 'terrific impact' on the dynamics of the Greek Cypriot revolt.⁵ By destroying the carefully cultivated image of a mysterious and unassailable leader – 'Ο Αρχιηγός' – they were confident they would take the heart out of the popular revolution. At the same time, the personal control exercised over every detail of the EOKA campaign by Grivas, led to hopes that his elimination could not but emasculate it.⁶

The radical mountain sweeps of 1957 were carried out to this end but Dighenis once more slipped the net. Tracking down the EOKA leader was taking too long. Nevertheless, the tremendous personal kudos of Field Marshal Harding and the sense, through 1957, that the security forces were on the brink of success, tended to delay any radical change in British military tactics. Not even the governor's resignation in October 1957 brought much shift of emphasis. On the contrary, the security forces' fierce loyalty to the Field Marshal created problems for his successor, Sir Hugh Foot, whose attempts at a lighter and more politically-oriented touch were bedevilled by bristling military disapproval.⁷

In the autumn of 1958, the fierce EOKA response to the stated British intention to go ahead with the unpopular Macmillan Plan, regardless of Greek objections, provoked a change of guard.

3 E. Hatzivassiliou (2005) *Στρατηγικές στο Κυπριακό: Η Δεκαετία του 1950* [Strategies on the Cyprus Problem: The Decade of the 1950s], Athens, pp. 270-273.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 233-273 for an interesting discussion of the 'revolutionary' aspect of the 1953-1959 Greek Cypriot campaign.

5 See Darling, 'The Final Round' p. 10. 'Dighenis' was figure of Byzantine legend who defended the marches of the empire.

6 See generally Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, Grivas-Dighenis, *op. cit.* and J. Prendergast's portrait of George Grivas, especially part VI, pp. 13-25. Prendergast also develops the concept of the EOKA leader's step-by-step approach. See also Georgos Grivas-Dighenis (1962) *Αγών ΕΟΚΑ και Ανταρτοπολέμος* [The EOKA Struggle and Guerrilla Warfare], Athens, pp. 37-40.

7 See, for example, R. Holland, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 223-224.

It became clear that the guerrilla fighters had regrouped after the severe dents created in the organisation by Harding the previous summer. The point was made by the powerful bomb that almost blew up General Kendrew, the Officer in command of the Security Forces, in his car on 28 September.⁸ EOKA's renewed assault required a new approach.

With the new Commander of the Security Forces in Cyprus, General Sir Kenneth Darling, came alternative methods of achieving what he described as his 'only worthwhile military target, eliminating Grivas and his immediate entourage'.⁹ On his arrival in mid-October 1958, he submitted radical proposals to the governor for an overhaul of the clumsy intelligence machinery. It would be concentrated in a team that was independent of the police, which was heavily infiltrated by EOKA.¹⁰ The Foreign Secretary, Lennox Boyd, had recommended John Prendergast, who had distinguished himself in intelligence work against the *Mau Mau* in Kenya, as the best man to head this team. Darling duly requested his transfer to Cyprus. Prendergast was to be given complete authority over all intelligence work, his title being adjusted for this purpose from 'Director' of Intelligence to the more autonomous 'Chief' of Intelligence. His brief was to concentrate on pinning down Grivas.¹¹ MI5 which had wanted to be involved in the hunt for Grivas as early as 1956, was now called in to help with 'Operation Sunshine'. Peter Wright, one of the MI5 team recalls, 'From the start we were in a race. Could we find Grivas before the colonial office stitched up a ramshackle deal?'¹²

Building up the logic of his 'success' in 'The Final Round', a film script completed some years after the end of the 'Emergency', Darling pinpointed the wide use of helicopters, for immediate access to the men in action on the ground, as giving him the edge over the EOKA leader, whose campaign was carried out entirely by correspondence from a hide-out in Limassol.¹³ In contrast, piecing together for posterity his 'success' in evading Darling's clutches and continuing to operate, Grivas denigrates Darling and his 'schoolboy' stealth methods.¹⁴ Prendergast, the brain behind the new intelligence network, is given no mention.

The purpose of this paper is not to assess the accuracy of the conflicting accounts, but to examine the circumstances and discussions surrounding the manner of the departure of the

8 Grivas described it as 'the biggest mine ever made by EOKA; Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 164.

9 Darling, 'The Final Round', p. 9.

10 For the infiltration of the Cyprus Police by EOKA, see D.M. Anderson (1994) 'Policing and Communal Conflict: The Cyprus Emergency 1954-1956' in *Emergencies and Disorder in the European Empires after 1945*, London, pp. 184-186.

11 Prendergast did not arrive in Cyprus until 21 November 1958. See 'Final Round', p. 20 section on 'Re-organisation of Intelligence' written by J. Prendergast.

12 P. Wright (1987) *Spycatcher*, New York, p. 196. Wright does not mention Prendergast. Were they working in separate cells like EOKA?

13 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

14 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 164 and pp. 171-175.

EOKA leader from Cyprus in the aftermath of the Zurich and London Agreements and their connection with the delicate balance required by the key players to maintain as positive an atmosphere as possible towards the Cyprus settlement. Marginalised by the international bargaining that brought about Cypriot independence, Grivas remained the loose cannon with the capacity to blow the settlement sky high.

The British Government had also been marginalised by the Greco-Turkish initiative which, with the discreet encouragement of the United States, proceeded at an accelerated pace through December and January 1958-1959. Much to Macmillan's annoyance, his government was kept in the dark as to the progress of the secret talks on the future of the colony.¹⁵ If they succeeded, they would render the role of British 'arbitration' between the two communities and between Greece and Turkey – Harold Macmillan's formula for retaining sovereignty over the island – redundant. The British Prime Minister's preferred method was to bypass the need to confront violence by refereeing an international settlement. The international bargaining he had so assiduously encouraged was now slipping beyond his powers of manipulation. It therefore became more important to use whatever remaining military leverage existed on the island in pursuit of purely British interests. On 31 December 1958, he urged the security forces in Cyprus to do all they could to break up EOKA, using effective *but subtle* measures that would not disrupt the international climate.¹⁶ Although Macmillan indicated that the need to continue operations against EOKA arose because the talks were unlikely to succeed, the equally important need was, in fact, to improve the British negotiating position if the talks did succeed.¹⁷ It became even more important to gain the military initiative – to be perceived to be making gestures from a position of strength.

The final hunt for Grivas incorporated all the complex pressures created for the British Government by the Cyprus Problem. Their particular need to retain influence in Ankara was reflected in it. The Turkish Foreign Minister himself asked specifically, as late as January 1959, for the counter-insurgency campaign to be stepped up.¹⁸ More generally, they were egged on by the perception that in an era of decolonisation and dwindling prestige, a base in the Eastern Mediterranean was essential to Britain's continuing role in the big power stakes. If they were not to retain sovereignty over the whole island, Britain wished to ensure sizeable bases and access to military facilities and installations beyond them. Macmillan's need to retain sovereignty over part of the island was dictated by domestic political concerns, as well as strategic need. Two 'Gibraltars' must be salvaged from a colony that had long been slipping beyond British control.¹⁹ Like his

15 R. Holland, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

16 Note by the Prime Minister, 31 December, Gen. Sir Kenneth Darling: Papers Relating to Cyprus 1958, 05/41/1, IWM.

17 See, for example, Darling to Nancy Crawshaw, 2 June 1979, 05/41/1 IWM.

18 D. Weston Markides (2001) *Cyprus 1957-1963: From Colonial Conflict to Constitutional Crisis*, Minnesota, p. 35.

19 R. Holland, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

predecessor Eden, Macmillan was under the constant scrutiny of the powerful right wing of the Conservative Party. Hackles were easily raised on his back benches by anything that smacked of defeat. The colonial government therefore rejected the truce offer made by EOKA in December 1958. The prospect of EOKA re-emerging to harass British bases in a post-colonial Cyprus was an added incentive to keep up the pressure. Macmillan was firm on this point. EOKA was not to be parleyed with.²⁰

The British army proceeded to carry out 'phantom' operations in areas where they knew EOKA was not active.²¹ This was a bizarre move to demonstrate that the pressure was still on, without engaging in action which might have a negative effect on the talks, but it was also intended to divert attention from the very serious intelligence operation still underway under the new Chief of Intelligence. The objective of hunting Grivas down was pursued with tenacity right up to the eve of the Lancaster House Conference summoned, on 17 February to ratify the Zurich Agreements. As the interested parties gathered, Prendergast was despatched post-haste to London to inform the Prime Minister personally that he believed he had achieved his objective. He was to ask, as Darling put it, 'whether Grivas's head was required on a charger or whether he was to stew in his own juice'.²² While neither Darling nor Prendergast would be drawn on the specifics of the whereabouts of the EOKA leader, even twenty-five years after the event, there is little doubt that they were confident that they were in a position to go in and get him (dead or alive) in mid-February 1959.²³ Writing to his father on 23 February, Darling divulged that they now had Grivas 'by the scruff of the neck'. The comment that follows – 'I wish I could wring it', speaks volumes for the British general's frustration that the long-awaited moment had come too late.²⁴

The prize considered for so long by the British to have been the key to their regaining control of the situation, politically as well as militarily, had indeed come too late: A successful Cyprus settlement now hinged on Greco-Turkish agreement, rather than British arbitration. When Macmillan asked for the opinion of the Greek Foreign Minister, Evangelos Averoff, on the eve of the Lancaster House Conference, he was warned that it would be politically impossible for the Greek Government to continue negotiating if Grivas were 'run to ground'.²⁵ A Greek walk-out in such circumstances would signal destabilisation of Greco Turkish relations *beyond* the island. An attack on the ever-vulnerable Greek minority in Istanbul could trigger regional instability on a

20 Note by the Prime Minister, 31 December, IWM 5/41/1.

21 Darling, 'Final Round', pp. 23-24.

22 *Ibid.*, p.26.

23 See, for example, Darling to Norma Percy, Granada Television 28 January 1983 and Prendergast to Darling 22 May 1983 IWM 05/41/1.

24 General Darling to Mr. G.K. Darling 23 February 1959, IWM 05/41/1. P. Wright, whose account of the political developments is more than a little hazy, simply records exasperation at operation Sunshine being aborted by the London Agreements and that Grivas emerged, 'from the precise area we had foreseen'. See P. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

25 Averoff Tossizza, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-360.

grand scale. It has been suggested by the most authoritative historian of the period that Macmillan's decision to deny the military in Cyprus their quarry at this point was the most statesmanlike gesture made during his handling of the Cyprus problem.²⁶ International considerations now entirely dominated the Cyprus issue.

In his memoirs, Grivas records ignoring the urgent warning from Averoff that the British knew where he was. He was convinced, he said, that it was an Anglo-Greek bluff – a contrivance to pressure him into accepting the Zurich Agreements.²⁷ He argued that 'there was no reason whatsoever for the British to follow [his] men since the agreements had already been signed [in Zurich]'.²⁸ Darling's papers indicate, as we have seen, that on the contrary, the prospect of an agreement, if anything, made the hunt for the EOKA leader more urgent.

While the substance of the agreement was in no way affected by the delicate developments surrounding Grivas on the island, his attitude to the talks, the Greek Government's behaviour towards him and the perception of a victorious outcome to the EOKA struggle were all delicately linked to Greek popular acceptance of the Agreements and the survival of the Karamanlis Government. The fragile Greco-Turkish *détente*, which had been the main purpose of the agreement, would be affected by what the EOKA leader decided to do next. Therefore the colonial government found itself having to parley, indirectly at least, with Grivas both as to the terms of amnesty and about the timing and manner of his departure from the island and to do so in spite of the fact that he had instructed EOKA to ignore the ceasefire ordered by Foot on 28 February 1959. By then, the governor had already met with the Bishop Anthimos of Kition (an ecclesiastical go-between) for 'first consultations on the best means of encouraging Grivas to leave the island with the minimum of fuss *and no honour from us*'.²⁹ While Foot's concern was for the British military reaction on the island, at this late stage, Macmillan's mind would necessarily focus on how the final round was going to play out in British public opinion, but more immediately in parliament.

Though he could not, at this stage, risk challenging the substance of the settlement, Grivas gained maximum leverage from his knowledge of how anxious both the Greek and British Governments were to get him off the island. Averoff argues in his memoirs that Grivas had, at the time, indicated 'wholehearted' acceptance of the agreements and is at pains to explain that the EOKA leader adjusted his position much later in readiness for a political debut against the Greek Government in Athens.³⁰ Grivas' acceptance, such as it was, could not be described as wholehearted. He was careful to distance himself from them and made the most of the fact that an

26 Holland, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.

27 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 194.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

29 Foot to Lennox Boyd 26 February 1959, CO926/1124, National Archives (henceforth NA), Kew.

30 Averoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-379.

official EOKA delegate had not been included amongst the clutch of representative Cypriots Makarios had summoned to London to share the burden of acceptance. Particularly for this reason, the Archbishop must also have been anxious to see the EOKA leader go with no fuss. Although the Greek Foreign Minister, straining every nerve in Athens to present the settlement as a unifying victory, announced that 'the whole of Cyprus, with Dighenis at its head, is gathering to hail Makarios, the creator of the independent state', Grivas, in fact, pointedly avoided any participation by EOKA in the massive demonstrations that attended the return home of the Cypriot Ethnarch. 'I did not', he later recorded, 'even send a representative to bid him welcome'.³¹ The colonel's delay in ordering a ceasefire and the uncertainty surrounding his departure became a source of 'mounting anxiety' all round.³²

It was not until 9 March, three weeks after the London Conference that Grivas finally announced that he was 'obliged to order a ceasefire'. In the EOKA leaflet announcing it, he described the settlement simply as 'preferable to the national division' that would follow a rejection on his part. In a letter to EOKA members he elaborated on the need to avoid 'civil discord' which would 'raze everything to the ground'.³³ Dighenis seems here to be 'protesting too much' about his concern for national unity. More to the point, his experience told him that, cut off from Athenian support, he could not easily and quickly dominate an inter-ethnic conflict. In his Memoirs he ponders:

The prospect of civil war among the Greek Cypriots was a nightmare; yet if Cyprus had offered more space for manoeuvre and easier communications with the outside world for arms supplies I would have seriously considered turning Greek against Greek in the confidence that I should quickly master the situation. Unhappily, I had to decide that as things were, the odds against carrying on the war in Cyprus were overwhelming.³⁴

His main concern was to extract the fullest amnesty from the British for his men and to avoid any *humiliation* for them or for himself in the manner of their release and in the laying down of their arms. He warned the Greek Government that he would 'go on fighting' rather than accept

31 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 198.

32 Crawshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

33 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.* Appendix 6, 'EOKA leaflet ordering a ceasefire, 9 March 1959' and Appendix 7, 'Letter sent by General Grivas to all EOKA fighters on the declaration of a cease-fire on 9 March 1959'. See also the position of Averoff on this matter in Averoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-358. Averoff argues that, at the time, Grivas was satisfied with the settlement and points out that in replying to a congratulatory radio message from Karamanlis during his flight from Nicosia to Athens on 17 February, he talked of the 'hard struggles of the Cypriot people' being 'vindicated', Averoff, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

34 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 199. In the original Greek version of the Memoirs, Grivas lays more emphasis on the certainty that Makarios had planned to neutralise him if he attempted to continue the struggle and that somehow Makarios too was implicated in the 'feigned' British knowledge of his whereabouts. See Grivas-Dighenis, *Απομνημονεύματα ...*, p. 402.

humiliating surrender terms. Since the British 'wanted [him] out of the island more than ever before, they would have to pay the price'.³⁵ By threatening to stay in the island for at least two months or until the last EOKA member had been satisfactorily liberated, he was able to force the British into agreeing to a full amnesty.

Following the EOKA leader's lukewarm response to the settlement, British reactions and decisions regarding Grivas were focused on the important relations between the Greek Foreign Minister and the EOKA leader. Averoff had been the key architect with Zorlu of what later came to be generally known as *ο οδυνηρός συμβιβασμός* (the painful compromise). He was also the Greek minister who communicated directly with the leader of EOKA under the pseudonym, 'Isaakios' and had cooperated in the smuggling of arms to the island.³⁶ These facts and the strong defence of EOKA he had undertaken at the United Nations made Averoff the member of the Greek Government with whom Grivas was most at home.³⁷ That it was Averoff, the protagonist of international compromise who cooperated with EOKA's ordinance man, Andreas Azinas, in gun running, is perhaps no more extraordinary than the fact that it was through Azinas, among others, that he conveyed reports to Grivas on the progress of the Greco-Turkish talks.³⁸ Having summoned Azinas on 22 December, for the purpose of sending a report to the EOKA leader on his talks in Paris with Zorlu, he was careful to enquire first as to the progress of a consignment of sten guns being hidden for despatch to Cyprus in 100 gas cylinders. This was, perhaps, another way of maintaining the confidence of, as well as keeping tabs on, the EOKA leader. The cylinders arrived in Limassol on 7 February, the day agreement was reached in Zurich between the Greek and Turkish Prime Ministers on a settlement of the Cyprus issue.³⁹ The cylinders evaded detection by the security forces and were stored in Nicosia for future contingencies.⁴⁰

Averoff had suffered the brunt of the opposition's attack on the Government on the Cyprus settlement in the Greek parliament. The leader of the opposition Liberal party, Sophocles Venezelos, had already described the Zurich Agreement as a 'national humiliation'.⁴¹ Now Grivas was complaining bitterly that he had not been consulted in advance of the Agreements and questioning the accuracy of Averoff's briefing notes.⁴² It was essential for purposes of his personal

35 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 199.

36 Azinas, *op. cit.*, pp. 553-571.

37 For Averoff's defence of EOKA at the United Nations General Assembly on 5 December 1958, See Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, Appendix 3. It is a Churchillian response to Darling's repeated denigration of EOKA as 'gangsters' and 'terrorists'.

38 Azinas, *op. cit.*, pp. 757-772.

39 Azinas, *op. cit.*, pp. 746-777.

40 According to Foley and Scobie, this consignment was not handed over in the decommissioning process. See Foley and Scobie, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

41 The Turkish Government, on the contrary, succeeded in presenting the Cyprus Agreements as a major diplomatic triumph. See Nancy Crawshaw (1978) *The Cyprus Revolt*, London, p. 345.

42 Allen to Selwyn Lloyd, 16 March 1959, CO926/1124, NA.

survival as a politician and the survival of the settlement, that the London Agreements should be presented as a vindication of the EOKA leader's heroic struggle and that Averoff's name should be linked *with* that of Grivas not in juxtaposition to it. The leader of the military struggle would arrive hand in hand with the diplomat, who was able to make the most of his efforts in the field of international politics.

To this end Averoff went as far as suggesting to Macmillan that he should rekindle the dying embers of Anglo-Greek friendship by providing a British guard of honour to see Grivas off at Nicosia airport.

The guard of honour can present arms and Grivas can inspect them and shake hands with their commanding officers before boarding the aircraft.⁴³

Neither this, nor the prospect of the Greek Foreign Minister flying to 'British soil in order to do honour there to Grivas by fetching him away personally', was ever on the cards for the British Government although they understood how important it was for the Greek Government 'that Grivas should know that they [the Greek Government not the opposition] wanted to do him honour'.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the dilemma of how to cope with this hated enemy, without ruining the prospects for a settlement remained acute for those immediately responsible. Other considerations apart, collapse as a result of British action would severely displease the United States Government, a factor which, given his post-Suez inheritance, Macmillan could never afford to ignore.

The wording used by Foot in conversation with the Greek Consul and the Bishop of Kitium on the organisation of the EOKA leader's departure is indicative of the embarrassing dilemma the British military now faced. On the one hand, he said, 'it was completely unacceptable for Grivas either to make an appearance or remain in the island and that he must leave as quickly and as secretly as possible'. On the other hand 'There was no question of imposing on *Col.* [my italics] Grivas anything which could be taken as either humiliating or dishonourable'.⁴⁵ The governor's difficulties were compounded by the problems of communication with the EOKA leader whom Andreas Azinas has since described as being 'semi-hidden' at this point.⁴⁶ A measure of the uncertain ground Foot was treading as he edged his way towards a compromise formula is indicated by his wishful communication to London on 9 March, the day of the EOKA ceasefire, that 'we have one or two pointers that Grivas may already have left Cyprus on his way to Athens. One report said he would be in Athens by midnight tonight'.⁴⁷ Foot had never succeeded in overcoming the hostility created in British military circles simply by the fact that he had replaced

43 Averoff, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

44 Allen to Selwyn Lloyd 25 February 1959, CO926/1123, NA.

45 Meeting between Sir Hugh Foot, the Bishop of Kitium and the Greek Consul, Aristos Frydas, 27 February 1959, 05/41/1. IWM.

46 Azinas, *op. cit.*, p. 787.

47 Foot to Lennox Boyd 9 March 1959, CO926/1123, NA.

their beloved Field Marshal. Now it fell to him to secure the EOKA leader's departure – if not with honour bestowed by the British, at least with no dishonour.

General Darling departed for England on leave, thus ensuring that he would not be available to bid Grivas farewell at the airport, a prospect that he would have found unbearable. 'For my part', he wrote twenty years later, 'I must record for posterity the fact that we ended by running EOKA into the ground and by having Grivas at our mercy. In comparison anything else is of minor importance'.⁴⁸ He found the 'perfect' man to do the job.

'At six foot four inches, immaculately turned out *and unarmed*, [Lieut. Col. Gore-Langley] would be able to gaze down, *perhaps with disdain*, on Grivas from a considerable height. But the strongest point in his favour was that he had no right arm, having lost it in the war, and no offence could be interpreted if he did not salute' (author's italics).⁴⁹

To the end, each side acted out its own part for its own audience. For his part, Grivas had made it clear that he did not want any British person anywhere near him during his departure.⁵⁰ Averoff's vision of an escort of Blues (Royal Guards) would have been as misplaced in the EOKA leader's view as in that of Darling's. It was important for him to leave Cyprus with his revolver at his hip in EOKA uniform. Nancy Crawshaw's description of him during his arrival at Athens airport, 'looking wan and emaciated, still clad in his guerrilla's outfit' quite misses the point. Charles Foley, a journalist on far more intimate terms with the EOKA leader, is more convincing. Grivas was perpetuating a carefully cultivated image. At a first meeting before a select group of Greek Cypriots in Nicosia, 'he appeared in a doorway, dressed in a guerrilla suit *that had been specially prepared for him by the women of EOKA* – knitted jersey, breeches, bandolier and beret; on his hip, a revolver'. Far from being 'wan and emaciated', Foley described him with 'a sheen of health on his dark olive features'.⁵¹

This appearance took place soon after the equally stage-managed start of the collection of weapons, or 'the decommissioning of terror', to use a modern term. Enough weapons were handed over in a manner that would 'satisfy protocol' – no hint of surrender, no overt British participation.⁵² The more substantial and worrying conclusions that could be drawn from this procedure that took place on 13 March 1959 were that EOKA was by no means on its knees, that only some EOKA weapons had been handed in and even fewer *Turk Mukavemet Teskilati*

48 Darling to Norma Percy, 28 January 1980, 95/41/1 IWM.

49 Darling, *The Final Round*, p. 27.

50 Foley (ed.), *op. cit.*, 'Letter from Grivas to Frydas, 28 February 1959', Appendix 5, p. 214.

51 C. Foley and W.I. Scobie (eds.) (1975) *The Struggle for Cyprus*. Stanford, California, p. 158 and *Times of Cyprus* 18 March 1959, cited in R. Holland, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

52 Foley and Scobie, *op. cit.*, p. 158. For an interesting account of the problems of arms collection during the Transition, see E. Hatzivassiliou (1993) 'Post-Zurich Cyprus, 1959: Arms Smuggling and Confidence Building', *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, Vol. 9, pp. 71-93.

(TMT) weapons. The greatest incentive to press on with the implementation of a settlement, which offered little satisfaction to any of the parties on the island, was fear of a relapse into chaos. The ex-fighters created a vociferous elite in the fledgling state. Those who, for one reason or another, were left out of a share of power, responded to the unsettled field of political competition by appealing to Enotist patriotism and, in some instances, indicated a readiness to use violence.⁵³

In the war of nerves surrounding the disposal of Grivas in March 1959, new British concerns focused on the extent of triumphalism that would attend the arrival of the EOKA leader in Athens and, more specifically, its effect on the debate on the Cyprus settlement in the House of Commons scheduled for 19 March. British and Greek Government requirements at this point were in direct contradiction. British diplomacy now pulled out all the stops to limit the celebrations and honours. 'The more any impression was given that Grivas had 'won' against the British, the more awkward the ramifications would be in Westminster'. Selwyn Lloyd, the British Foreign Secretary reminded Averoff that 'in recent days the British Cabinet had helped the Karamanlis ministry by keeping quiet about those features of the Agreements which could be represented as a British and Turkish triumph over the Greeks'.⁵⁴ Now it was the Greeks' turn to restrain themselves. Averoff made a few gestures in this direction, the EOKA leader being promoted to General rather than the more elevated Marshal.⁵⁵ There was no advanced advertising of 'the arrival' which was organised at civic level. Nevertheless, the Greek Government and the King could not but be prominent in honouring the man Athenians regarded as a victorious hero.⁵⁶ The lack of notice did not stop them pouring on to the streets to greet him.

Averoff had refrained reluctantly from flying to Cyprus in the Royal Hellenic Dakota that brought the EOKA leader back to Athens and Grivas' departure from Nicosia which took place on 17 March, just under a month after the signing of the London Agreements, had been as low key as the British could have wished. Makarios had been there to see him off and a small group of friends and colleagues had flown over to escort him to Athens. Andreas Azinas, who had acted as go-between for Averoff with Grivas, was among them. But as soon as Grivas touched Greek soil, Averoff made sure he was standing beside him. He was still there as, crowned by the Archbishop of Athens with a wreath of silver laurels, the EOKA leader turned to acknowledge a crowd that roared its enthusiastic welcome 'Di-ghe-nis'. The Greek Parliament declared him 'a glorious and heroic officer worthy of the fatherland'.

The debate in Westminster was not, in fact, unduly affected by the adulation in Athens of Britain's 'terrorist' adversary. The subject was, deliberately perhaps, avoided on both sides of the House. The debate focused on empire and honour, on the dilemmas of decolonisation. Labour pounded the government benches with accusations of the pointless sacrifice of British lives. It was

53 For developments during the Transition, see Markides, *Cyprus 1957-1963* ... Chapter II.

54 R. Holland, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

55 Allen to Selwyn Lloyd, 17 March 1959, CO926/1124, NA.

56 Allen to Addis, 5 March 1959, CO926/1124, NA.

left to Enoch Powell on the Conservative back benches to summon his extensive powers of rhetoric in defence of the government's record. Concentrating on the problems that arose from the fact that while 'the reality inside our sovereignty had been hollowed out', responsibility remained, 'responsibility for minorities, for peace, for well-being, for those who served the crown', he argued that 'whereas the Conservative Party was prepared to make sacrifices to meet those responsibilities, the Labour Party was not Those civilians and those in the Queen's uniform died no less certainly for Britain's honour than if they had fallen in the field of battle in our campaigns of imperial expansion'.⁵⁷ For the soldiers on the island there was no alternative to extracting the maximum amount of honour – or the minimum amount of dishonour from the peace settlement. As the transition period proceeded, the climate improved. 'There is no animosity now', Darling wrote to Harding in December 1959, 'and my bet is that by February, we will be the most popular people in Cyprus'. They were popular, of course, because they were leaving. Similar transformations of Hellenic feeling had been experienced by earlier generations of British soldiers finally leaving the Ionians in 1864, Crete in 1909 and Rhodes at the end of World War II.⁵⁸ For Macmillan, whose immediate preoccupation was his imminent and controversial breakthrough visit to Moscow to consult Nikita Khrushchev, Agreement to grant independence to Cyprus meant one problem less to juggle with. There had been little British input in the essentially Greco-Turkish accord. What remained to be secured in Cyprus were bases and extensive military facilities. With the threat of partition removed by the Agreements, the difficult bargaining for Britain was still to come. In broader terms, the Cyprus issue loomed large for a relatively brief period, a small area in their larger concerns over decolonisation and over a painful reassessment of their world role.

The consequences of a wrong move were more serious for the Greek Government. A wrong move on the most emotive national issue would cause its downfall. Nevertheless, there was no artifice in the placing of the EOKA struggle firmly within its Greek context. It was the survival of the mythical *Dighenis* more than anything else that quickened the subsequent perception of an *unfinished* struggle – a struggle that was seen in Greece as 'a further stanza in the national epic along with Thermopylae, Mesolonghi and Souli'. The EOKA leader was able to claim that the sacrifices of the Greek Cypriots had been 'crowned with victory' because they would now be interpreted as simply the *first* phase in the *last* of many such struggles. By July 1959, Grivas was beginning to attack the London and Zurich Agreements in an unsuccessful bid to enter Greek politics. His festering differences with Makarios found fertile ground in his native island where dissatisfaction with the new *status quo* could so easily serve the frustrated political ends of those left on the sidelines in the new Cypriot polity.

57 See R. Holland, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-329 for an astute analysis of this debate.

58 For a comparative study, see R. Holland and D. Markides (2006) *The British and The Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean 1854-1960*, Oxford.

Thus for the Cypriots the impact of the way the EOKA struggle ended had chronic implications. To a large extent the Grivas–Makarios divide defined Greek Cypriot politics in the new Republic. Divisions resulted not only from personality cults and tiny power struggles. The overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots considered the struggle *unfinished*, but they were divided over tactics required to achieve completion and the extent of completion achievable. Neither the communist left nor the extreme nationalist *Grivikoi* could gain power without the support of the more moderate nationalist *Makariakoi* who held the middle ground. Initially Makarios tried to create a right-wing grouping, EDMA, which would contain the *Grivikoi*.⁵⁹ The controversial appointment of EOKA members in his first embryo cabinet was a gesture in this direction – a move, incidentally, resented by Grivas as an attempt to weaken his [Grivas'] influence. His failure to do so made him strongly reliant on the Communist Party, AKEL, who became the king-makers in Greek Cypriot politics by wooing the *Makariakoi* against the *Grivikoi*.⁶⁰

Now that, years after the deaths of the two leaders, the *Makariako–Grivikoi* divide is not so clearly definable AKEL is having to re-invent itself to attract the necessary nationalist votes. A discernable attempt is being made to reconstitute the image of the Communist Party during the 1950s struggle. More is heard about the exoneration of AKEL 'traitors' assassinated by EOKA and in the last electoral campaign for the presidency, the AKEL leader, Demetri Christofias, appeared on television unveiling a hide-out used, not by *Dighenis*, but by the AKEL leader's predecessor, Ezekias Papaioannou, to avoid arrest by British security forces during 'The Emergency'.

In the final analysis the most telling impact of the complex 'Final Round' was on the heightened sensitivity it created in all the political players to their domestic constituencies. In Athens this very Greek struggle found enough popular resonance to threaten the Karamanlis Government. In Britain, for a while, it stirred the prickly and powerful ranks of British imperial Conservatism, but, inevitably, the deepest and most chronic impact was in Cyprus itself. The intensity of the divide within the Greek Cypriot community tended to encourage a competitive enotist patriotism that influenced the posturing of the political leaders and subsequently the inter-communal dialogue itself.

This competitive nationalism was encouraged, not only by the continuing involvement of the EOKA leader in Cypriot politics, but by an injection of Cold War priorities. Although the Zurich

59 Markides, *Cyprus 1957-1963 ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

60 In 1959, during the Transition period, AKEL joined Themistocles Dervis, the dynamic mayor of Nicosia, in supporting the candidacy of John Clerides for president. Their failure to defeat Makarios resulted in their forming an alliance with the Archbishop and newly elected president in the subsequent elections for the House of Representatives. The only Presidential election in which the AKEL-backed candidate was defeated, after the creation of the Republic, was in 1993 when ex-presidents Glafkos Clerides (heading the largely *Grivikoi* party, Democratic Rally) and Spyros Kyprianou (heading the largely *Makariakoi* party, DIKO) combined to oust George Vassiliou who had taken the foolhardy step of going it alone. The AKEL candidate, George Iacovou, was also defeated.

and London Agreements had been welcomed as a means of retaining Cyprus for the West, the republic was not specifically aligned, while the Americans had failed to prevent the legalisation of AKEL during the transition. They now feared that the respectability the communist party derived from legality would be boosted by their electoral alliance with Makarios and that the communists would be in an exceptionally strong position to come to power through the ballot box. The presence of a large Soviet diplomatic mission that cooperated closely with AKEL and the proliferation of scholarships for young Cypriots to study behind the iron curtain, seemed to be displacing the old British connection. Complications in approaching inter-communal issues arose, from a shift of emphasis in diplomatic efforts, after 1961, to anti-communist tactics, but also from the extremism in intra-communal politics they inevitably encouraged. The trappings and ceremonial of Greek nationalism, the natural vehicle of the extreme right, were not conducive to the growth of inter-communal confidence and understanding.

With the exception of the left-wing trade union, PEO, which sought members across the communal divide, there had never been much Greek Cypriot interest, during British rule in political developments in the Turkish Cypriot community. This lack of interest was now encouraged by a constitution that did not allow a politician from one community to have any constituency in the other. Consequently, in order to stay in power, politicians were obliged to accommodate and appeal to the nationalist tendencies in their own community. These had been strongly cultivated in the previous years and would not suddenly vanish because of an agreement made by third parties elsewhere.

There is no doubt that it was important to Ankara that the island should be perceived as 'Greek-Turkish' rather than Cypriot. This perception was central to the maintenance of a separate political identity for the Turkish Cypriot community on which the Turkish Government's political leverage on the island depended. Extremism was therefore not restricted to the Greek Cypriot community. On 26 April 1962, for example, the editors of *Cumhuriyet*, a Turkish Cypriot newspaper promoting cooperation with the Greek Cypriots, were murdered. The Greek Cypriots turned a deaf ear to the significance of such acts and more perilously to the implications of Ankara's chronic involvement in Turkish Cypriot affairs. They remained apparently oblivious to the fact that demonstrative Greek nationalism provided the Turkish Government with the pretext it required to tighten its hold on the island's Turks. No serious Greek Cypriot attempt was made to influence the evolution of Turkish Cypriot politics.

Any political interest beyond the Greek Cypriot community, tended to be devoted to Athens or to the international strategy of the Cold War powers. Thus the cooperation of the Cyprus Government's Ministry of the Interior in the anti-communist drive, in spite of Makarios' alliance with AKEL, together with visits to the United States and Europe, to balance those to Egypt and India, were intended to retain the support of the West, the assumption being that the Western Powers would automatically restrain Ankara. An ostensibly successful state visit by Makarios to Ankara in the summer of 1962 fed into this assumption.

In social terms, the Greek Cypriot educational model, which had been integrated with that of

Athens since the nineteenth century, ensured an automatic popular conformity to the enotist ideal or vision, but it was the incestuous absorption with competitive Enotist politics within the Greek community after independence, which fed into a devastating neglect of political developments within the Turkish Cypriot community, more especially since these themselves reflected the limitations of Ankara's tolerance. Thus, for example, in December 1961, the shift in power to the partitionists in the Turkish Cypriot community was obscure to the Greek Cypriots who were, at that time, engaged in the divisive political drama created by the publication of the memoirs of George Grivas. These contained sensational allegations regarding the role of individual Greek Cypriots in the anti-colonial struggle. The stereotype images of 'the other' served up to the members of each community by a politically loaded and sensational press were read and believed, insofar as there was any interest. Real interest was always focused on the more immediate drama of politics within their own community. The fact, within the Greek Cypriot community, that lip service was always paid by non-communist politicians, to the nationalist ideals of the struggle of the previous decade can be attributed, at least in part, to the efforts made in the immediate aftermath of the settlement by all concerned to extract themselves from a complex and less than satisfactory situation with their honour and the Agreements intact.

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The Political Evolution of Northern Cyprus and its Effect on Turkish-Cypriot Relations with Turkey

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Abstract

While ethnic kinship and perceived commonality of interests have ensured close relations between Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, the political ties between them have changed significantly over time. From a community that once dutifully followed Turkey's lead in all matters of political significance – their relationship with Turkey being essentially one of client and patron – Turkish Cypriots have evolved into a community with a distinct political identity, its own democratic institutions, a well-developed sense of its own interests, and leaders who represent and articulate a Turkish-Cypriot point of view. Though heavily reliant on Turkish financial assistance and other forms of government-to-government support, those leaders nevertheless display considerable confidence regarding their capacity to manage their own affairs. In consequence, Turkish-Cypriot relations with Turkey have grown progressively more complex and nuanced, and in certain respects more distant.

Keywords: Northern Cyprus, TRNC, Turkish Cypriots, Turkey, identity, democratic consolidation, political parties, elections

Introduction

Our aims in this paper are, first, to trace the evolution of Turkish-Cypriot political institutions and processes since the collapse of bi-communal government with particular attention to the growth of democracy, drawing briefly on the theoretical literature on democratic consolidation, and second, to show how this evolution has affected relations between Turkish Cypriots and Turkey.

Unpromising Beginnings

Until the mid-twentieth century Turkish-Cypriot political activity remained essentially pre-democratic, with political leadership exercised by a small class of notables whose authority to speak on behalf of the community was rarely contested. It was not until the 1940s and 50s that organised political parties appeared. These parties, however, were basically reactive and defensive, driven less by the pull of democratic ideas than by the push of threatening circumstances. The first such parties – KATAK (Association of the Turkish Minority in the Island of Cyprus), formed in 1942, and KTP (Cyprus is Turkish Party), formed in 1955 – were ethnically-based umbrella parties

whose commitment to democracy was instrumental and secondary. Their main purpose was to rally popular support for a unified Turkish-Cypriot position.¹

In the late 1950s, however, as communal conflict escalated, parties of the KATAK or KTP type began to seem ineffectual, resulting in a shift of Turkish-Cypriot support towards more militant organisations that combined political representation with the promotion of Turkish nationalism and the sponsorship of armed militias. Foremost among the latter was TMT (Turkish Defence Organisation), formed in 1958 with covert aid from Turkey. Militarily, its aim was to counter EOKA; politically, its aim was to counter the Greek-Cypriot demand for *enosis* with an equally inflammatory demand of its own: for *taksim*, or partition. The internationally imposed solution to these incompatible goals was independence accompanied by a system of democratic bi-communal government, which soon collapsed. By the end of 1963 communal conflict had resumed, this time on a scale surpassing any that had previously been experienced. For the Turkish-Cypriot minority, the consequences were catastrophic: they managed to hold on to a few scattered pieces of territory, which prevented their total defeat, but the dislocation suffered by the civilian population who had relocated to these enclaves was severe (Bahcheli, 1990, pp. 60-70).

The Emergence of Party Politics

The Turkish Cypriots organised a makeshift civil administration in the enclaves and in addition an armed military force, led by officers from Turkey, assumed responsibility for defence and exercised considerable general authority (Patrick, 1976, p. 84). At first the need to maintain communal solidarity was imperative, but life in the enclaves was meagre and full of hardship for most residents, their complaints multiplied, and the argument that their security required a united front began to seem unconvincing. The first sign that political divisions of a traditional ideological kind were re-emerging was the founding of the opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) in 1970. The CTP was a party of the left that espoused views similar to those of Greek-Cypriot Communist Party (AKEL). However, it was not until after the momentous events of 1974 and the partition of Cyprus that Turkish-Cypriot political parties began to proliferate, offering voters for the first time a variety of political choices. A constituent assembly elected to draft a new constitution for northern Cyprus included critics of the existing administration whose influence in shaping the new 'Turkish Federated State of Cyprus' was considerable. A second opposition party, the Populist Party, which espoused a moderate, social democratic agenda, emerged in August 1975. It was soon followed by a new governing party of the right, the National Unity Party (UBP), led by the President, Rauf Denktaş. While generally right of centre on questions of social and

1 The roles of KAYTAK and KTP were circumscribed by the general lack of a democratic environment under British colonial administration and specifically by the suspension of democratic elections between 1931 and 1943 because of the Greek-Cypriot revolt. Both organisations advocated greater democratisation of the political system, without notable effect.

economic policy, the UBP above all espoused a nationalist agenda and close relations with Turkey. In the following year the Populists split, with a breakaway faction forming yet another left-of-centre party, the Communal Liberation Party (TKP). In an increasingly crowded field, the TKP positioned itself somewhat to the right of the CTP on social and economic issues (Dodd, 1993, p. 109).

In the 1976 elections, the first after the division of the island, Denktash and his UBP scored easy victories. But in 1981, a reinvigorated left opposition succeeded in humbling both Denktash and the UBP (*ibid.*, p. 120). Denktash barely managed to hold on to the presidency, while the UBP clung to office by forming a weak coalition government with two splinter parties. This was the first coalition; and ever since coalitions have been a regular feature of Turkish-Cypriot politics.

The gains made by the parties of the left in 1981 were made by exploiting economic and social issues, where the UBP was vulnerable. The main strengths of the UBP resided in its leadership, above all in the person of Denktash, who remained a widely revered figure despite the decline in his electoral support, and in its virtual 'ownership' of the national question. On that question, it was the leftist parties that were vulnerable, particularly the CTP, and to a lesser degree, the TKP. The charge that was regularly levelled at them by their opponents was that they were insufficiently patriotic, or even – the worst insult of all – 'pro-Greek'. It is no wonder, therefore, that the national question was not their preferred field when it came to fighting elections. And it is equally no wonder that it was exactly the field where Denktash and the UBP preferred to fight.

The TRNC and the Development of the Party System

The declaration of the TRNC² may be variously understood. Ostensibly, it was a move designed to strengthen the Turkish-Cypriot case in the international arena, following a series of setbacks,³ by asserting the Turkish Cypriots' right to self-determination and their own separate state. In effect, the Turkish Cypriots were claiming an international status equal to that of the Greek Cypriots – a point not lost on the south, where it provoked an immediate and furious response. But the declaration could also be understood as a move on the chessboard of Turkish-Cypriot internal politics and its timing placed in the context of the delicate left-right party balance after 1981, which it had the potential to disrupt.

Those on the far left of the ideological spectrum rejected the whole idea of independence out of hand as a right-wing nationalist trick designed to prevent the 'working classes' (Turkish-Cypriot

2 Although the northern part of the island is referred to as TRNC in this essay, it is acknowledged that the TRNC is not recognised by the international community except Turkey (editor's note).

3 In particular, resolutions were passed in international forums that Turkish Cypriots (and Turkey) viewed as threatening, such as United Nations Resolution 37/253.

and Greek-Cypriot) from uniting. One young leftist at the time – Mehmet Ali Talat – later revealed that he had wept when the TRNC was declared (Güven, 2009, p. 131).⁴ Others took a less extreme view but were naturally suspicious that Denktaş – who was the driving force behind the declaration – would use it to revive his and the UBP's sagging electoral fortunes. For if he succeeded in once again moving the national question to the forefront of politics, this would likely undercut the left's appeal to the electorate on mundane bread-and-butter issues. They were also alarmed by the possibility that in the process of writing a new constitution Denktaş would try to secure additional powers for the presidency. Ultimately, the latter fear proved groundless: the combined weight of the opposition parties was sufficient to block major changes and in the end Denktaş and the UBP had to be content with a document that was little changed from the one it replaced. The main institutional change was to increase the number of seats in the legislature from 40 to 50. In a referendum held on 5 May 1985, 70.2% of the electorate voted in favour of the new constitution (Dodd, 1993, p. 131).

In the following presidential and parliamentary elections, which were held on separate dates in June, Denktaş's revived reputation as the guardian of Turkish-Cypriot rights ensured his election as president by a wide margin: in an election which saw a remarkable turnout of 85.7%, he received 70.2% of the vote while his nearest rival won only 18.3%. Denktaş thus regained nearly all of the support he had lost in 1981. Yet his party, the UBP, failed to make a similar recovery. While it finished well ahead of the CTP and TKP, it won only 24 of 50 seats, forcing the formation of another coalition government. The opposition as a whole, however, was more fragmented than ever and the need for a coalition ended abruptly when the UBP increased its number of seats to a majority owing to defections from other parties (*ibid.*, pp. 131-133).⁵

In later elections it became evident that the existence of the TRNC did in fact affect the Turkish-Cypriot political dynamic in ways that the left opposition had feared: it did reinvigorate the national question and it did revive Denktaş's electoral fortunes. It also stopped the erosion of UBP support and took away the momentum of the left-of-centre parties, though this was not altogether clear in 1985. Since then, however, although the UBP has at times been forced to form coalitions with smaller partners, and has tasted electoral defeat, it has remained overall the most formidable party in the TRNC and the only party (thus far) able to form single-party governments. Its greatest asset is its large and generally solid base of nationalistically inclined centre-right voters, which it assiduously cultivates. Its ideological appeal, moreover, is bolstered by able leadership, efficient organisation, effective advertising and messaging, a strong list of candidates, and not least, its use of patronage to reward party service. Of all the Turkish-Cypriot

4 In the end the left-wing parties reluctantly voted in favour of the proclamation, including the CTP, the party Talat supported and eventually came to lead.

5 The appearance of a new party, Yeni Doğuş Partisi (New Birth Party), which found a constituency among settlers, contributed to the fragmentation of the opposition. In 1993 the YDP merged with the Democratic Party.

parties, it is the one that most resembles the 'electoral-professional party' (Panebianco, 1988, p. 264).

By 2005, however, there were signs of a possible realignment of partisan allegiances. Between 1993 and 2005 the UBP and CTP had alternated in office in a series of coalition governments, with one issue – the UN-sponsored Annan Plan for reunification – dominating the political agenda and putting the UBP, as the main anti-Annan party, on the wrong side of public opinion. In 2003 the CTP won more seats than the UBP but its gains were inadequate to form a stable coalition government, thus necessitating another round of elections in 2005.⁶ These elections – which followed the 2004 referendum in which Turkish Cypriots had resoundingly endorsed the CTP stance on the Annan plan – were crucial for the UBP (which was in opposition at the time) and potentially disastrous. In the event, the UBP managed to hold its ground, winning 19 seats. But it was no match for the CTP-led coalition government, which won 30 seats (CTP 24, Democratic Party 6) and thus a clear majority. The CTP benefited from being in office during a time when the TRNC economy was enjoying a period of exceptional growth, but it benefited most of all from a carry-over effect from the referendum. It also ran an effective campaign, downplaying its left-wing programme and emphasising instead its reputation as the pro-EU party, which contained an implied promise of future prosperity, and the international acclaim accorded its leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, who was prominently pictured in campaign ads in the company of high EU officials and other world leaders (Sozen, 2005, pp. 468-471).

The carry-over effect gave the CTP an opportunity to make permanent the realignment in the party system that appeared to be taking place. But, for a number of reasons, it signally failed to do so. The favourable treatment that the EU had promised (and the CTP had prematurely anticipated) turned out to be illusory, inflationary public sector wage increases were widely resented, the economy turned sour and, under growing pressure, the coalition disintegrated. In the parliamentary elections of April 2009, the voters who had drifted away from the UBP returned en masse to their former allegiance, giving the party an absolute majority of 26 seats, on 44.1% of the vote. The CTP fell back to its more customary level, with 15 seats on 29.2% (Sozen, 2009, p. 346). Hence, viewed from the perspective of a widely used typology of elections, the 2003 and 2005 elections turned out to be 'deviant' rather than 'realigning' (Campbell *et al.*, 1960). The year 2009 saw the UBP restored to its place of pre-eminence in the party system and once again able to form a single-party government.

Apart from CTP policy missteps and economic problems, one of the factors that contributed to the UBP victory was that it had made use of its period in opposition to moderate its position on the national question, which had been a major handicap in the two previous elections. This in turn led to its adopting a new rhetoric of moderation that was strikingly reflected in the design of

6 In 2003 the CTP expanded its name to 'Turkish Republican Party–United Forces' (CTP-BG) in a bid to attract voters who traditionally supported centre-right parties. For consistency, we use 'CTP' throughout.

its 2009 election campaign. The UBP remained proudly nationalist – projecting an image of itself as the party that had declared the TRNC and stood for ‘national unity’ (its election slogan) – but gone was the intransigent rhetoric that had put it out of step with the mainstream of Turkish-Cypriot opinion. Where previously it had stood for ‘no’ to the Annan plan, ‘no’ to federation, and ‘no’ to anything except separate statehood, now it campaigned as the party that responsibly supported the ongoing negotiations to find a solution, as long as Turkish-Cypriot interests were adequately safeguarded. For the UBP, this also had the happy result of aligning its position more closely with that of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in Turkey (Sozen, 2009, p. 349).

Democratic Consolidation

In retrospect, it can be seen that neither the hoped-for external gains from the TRNC’s creation, nor the dire consequences that opponents feared, actually materialised. Yet it did have important unanticipated consequences. Notwithstanding some setbacks and some persistent shortcomings, the general course of Turkish-Cypriot political development after the coming of the TRNC has been towards the consolidation of democratic principles and practices and a generally enhanced quality of civic life. These, of course, are concepts that require further elaboration. Following the conceptualisations of Juan Linz and Alfred C. Stepan (1996), we define the path of development under the TRNC as one of ‘consolidation’ rather than a ‘transition’ to democracy (such as took place in Eastern Europe, for example), because the shift that took place was not from a prior undemocratic regime to a democratic one, but rather a process of building on pre-existing foundations.

According to Linz and Stepan, consolidation takes place when three ‘layers’ of change – behavioural, attitudinal, and constitutional – combine and interact to make democracy ‘the only game in town’. Genuinely competitive elections are central to the process of consolidation. But consolidation depends also on the growth and entrenchment of other factors, including a well-developed civil society, ‘autonomous and valued’ political bodies, such as parliaments and parties, the rule of law, an ‘institutionalized economic society’, and a bureaucracy capable of providing needed state services (Linz and Stepan, 1996, pp. 5-15). Democracies vary considerably in the way they mix these factors, and no democracy may be said to perfectly exemplify all of them, but they are nevertheless useful criteria of evaluation.

Any application of these criteria to the TRNC must begin with the question of whether democracy is ‘the only game in town’, since that is fundamental. The TRNC record over the past quarter-century strongly suggests that it is. The political behaviour of Turkish Cypriots exhibits a degree of attachment to democracy that is similar to that found in other well-established democracies. Voter turnout in TRNC elections is high by international standards, as is the rate of citizen participation in political parties (Siaroff, 2000, p. 25). Elections are vigorously contested, with no major barriers to new entrants, as the number and variety of minor parties indicates.

Election outcomes are close and typically produce both an effective government (often a coalition) and an effective parliamentary opposition, with a lawful and orderly change of governing party (or parties) if necessary. The details of election rules may at times be hotly disputed since in closely contested elections even the smallest change in the rules can be consequential, but the overriding requirement is that elections must be free and fair. Turkish Cypriots have absorbed those norms into their political culture. Though problems of inefficiency and corruption persist, these have come under increasing critical scrutiny by opposition members and the media and appear to be in decline. On the whole, when it comes to delivering services to its citizens, the governmental performance of the TRNC is rather plodding and unremarkable – much like other small democracies.⁷

Identity Politics and Relations with Turkey

Turkish Cypriots feel the tug of ethnic kinship with mainland Turks, with whom they share bonds of language, culture and religion, and few would deny their debt to Turkey for defending them during past communal conflicts and supporting them afterwards. Their gratitude is deep and genuine, and the events that inspire it are faithfully commemorated. But at the same time they do not for the most part see themselves as singular or ‘unhyphenated’ Turks, indistinguishable from their mainland kin (Ramm, 2006, pp. 528-531; Lacher and Kaymak, 2005, pp. 159-160). Their cultural identity inescapably reflects the complex reality of Cyprus. And that reality, in the twenty-first century, has resulted in perceptual and attitudinal shifts that have reshaped their relations with Turkey. Two key historical events made these shifts possible and perhaps inevitable. The first was the 1974 division, as a result of which Turkish Cypriots became physically concentrated in one area and hence better able to preserve their identity and culture and govern themselves. And as their institutions of self-government expanded and developed so too did their confidence, their faith in their own leaders, and their sense of distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* mainland Turkey. The second was the creation of the TRNC which, by proclaiming their separate statehood, provided them with both a powerful incentive and new state instruments for democratic development, identity formation and the articulation of their national interests.

These changes, it must be emphasised, were unintended. As originally envisioned, the TRNC was meant to strengthen the *Turkish* identity of Turkish Cypriots (thus implicitly foreclosing

7 The treatment of non-citizen ethnic and religious minorities is also a measure of democracy. According to the UN Secretary General's report on the United Nations peace operation in Cyprus dated 28 May, 2010, there are 361 Greek Cypriots and 128 Maronites (UN Security Council, 2010, p. 3), living in isolated villages in the Karpas peninsula and Kormatiki respectively, who face numerous restrictions on the education of their children, the use of their land and properties, and access to the courts (Constantinou, 2008, pp. 158-159). The decision of the TRNC government to allow unrestricted travel across the Green Line in 2003 eased the isolation of these communities but their overall treatment represents a weak point in Turkish-Cypriot democracy.

further processes of identity formation), and promote closer ties to Turkey. Denktash and the UBP thus made the promotion of a common Turkish nationalism and national identity a high state priority.⁸ However, their efforts were very largely in vain, for the contradiction between asserting a distinctive Turkish-Cypriot statehood while at the same time promoting a singular Turkish nationalism was impossible to reconcile. And it was equally impossible to keep the identity question out of partisan politics. The party lines were soon clearly drawn: the UBP became the standard bearer of Turkish nationalism and a 'Turks in Cyprus' identity while the CTP became the main standard bearer of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism and a unique Turkish-Cypriot identity. Their alternation of office naturally caused some confusion, but over time and under pressure of events the parties' outlooks have tended to converge – though important differences remain. The differences are perhaps most evident in their respective approaches to the Turkish settler question. The UBP takes the view that Turks who settle legally in the TRNC are assets to Turkish-Cypriot society who should be welcomed, treated equally and fairly, and protected against discrimination. It is the party of full, unqualified integration and this has earned it a large base of electoral support among the settlers (Hatay, 2005, pp. 23-47). The CTP and other left-of-centre parties generally take a more negative view, seeing the settlers as an obstacle to reunification and a source of social problems. Though not against integration, one of their concerns is to impose tighter restrictions on the entry of new migrants.

Lack of space precludes a discussion of the many ramifications of the settler question. In our view, the balance of evidence suggests that Turkish Cypriots – while by no means unanimous, on this as on other issues – have for the most part pragmatically made the necessary social accommodations and have been able absorb a large influx of settlers with relative ease. This is not to say that there have been no problems, but compared to those experienced by many European countries when faced with much smaller numbers of immigrants relative to their population, the problems have been manageable. One of the reasons for this is that Turkish Cypriots have grown accustomed to having an inclusive, 'permeable' and layered identity – linguistically Turkish, culturally Turkish-Cypriot or 'island Turkish' and, among the young (somewhat ironically) 'European' (Ramm, 2006, pp. 537-539).

Politically, relations with Turkey were long complicated by the UBP-CTP cleavage in the TRNC. Governments in Ankara – almost invariably right-wing, nationalistic, and inclined to view Cyprus as a 'security matter' – were strongly supportive of Denktash and the UBP, whose views they shared, and equally strongly biased against the CTP, whose leftist policies they disliked and whose pro-unification stance they distrusted. The CTP, therefore, had every reason when in power to stress the point that Turkish-Cypriot interests were not the same as Turkey's and to defend their aim to build better relations with Greek Cypriots, with the eventual goal of

8 For example, pictures and statues of Atatürk proliferated in public places and many streets were renamed in honour of Turkish heroes.

reunification. The CTP's dilemma was that it could not go very far in asserting a distinct Turkish-Cypriot national interest without provoking criticism that it was jeopardising Turkish financial support. But in 2002 that concern was suddenly removed by the election in Turkey of the AKP government. Avid for EU membership, and wishing to remove the Cyprus issue as an obstacle, the AKP found the CTP position on reunification much to its liking. It therefore signalled its support for CTP leader Talat, who as prime minister led the Turkish-Cypriot side in negotiations leading up to the Annan plan. It also gave the plan its endorsement, which helped the CTP-led yes side to win the 2004 referendum (Bahcheli and Noel, 2009, pp. 244-247). But since then Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish politics have gone their separate ways. Alignment with the AKP failed to help the CTP in the 2009 elections, which were won by the UBP, with the AKP playing no role. Beseet by problems closer to home, and with its EU aspirations fading, the AKP government continues to support the TRNC financially but shows little interest in its domestic affairs.

Conclusion

Within the constitutional framework of the TRNC there has developed a competitive multi-party system in which two main parties (UBP and CTP, one centre-right, one centre-left) tower over the rest. No government can be formed without the participation of one or other of them. On the whole, this pattern of electoral politics resembles the pattern found in many other democracies. The major difference is that the normal pattern of party competition in the TRNC is prone to give way to plebiscitary voting when the one overriding issue is the recurring national question – but even in that respect the TRNC is by no means unique, as citizens in places such as Catalonia or Scotland or Quebec might readily attest.

Identity formation is always a complex process and, for the Turkish Cypriots, the process has taken them far from the simplistic official formulations of the early TRNC era and towards a more plural, outward-looking and culturally inclusive national consciousness.

This change developed symbiotically with other changes, the most important of which was the creation of the TRNC, which set in motion developments in the party system, in the institutions of government, and broadly in the political culture. Taken together, these developments constitute a sustained process of democratic consolidation.

The effects of this on TRNC-Turkish relations have been significant. At the popular level, while the bonds of language and culture remain strong, politically Turkish Cypriots have grown accustomed to their own way of practicing democracy, which is different from the Turkish way. Quite apart from the huge disparity in scale between the two systems, there are institutional and behavioural differences that are fundamental. The respective party systems, for example, have few if any parallels and the issues that stir Turkish voters (such as the 'headscarf' issue) have practically no resonance in the TRNC. Its parties and voters prefer instead to focus on their own affairs – however parochial these may seem from a Turkish perspective. Moreover, since the 2004 referendum on the Annan plan, the perennial national question has come to be seen by Turkish

Cypriots as primarily a matter of Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot economic and political relations that can only be settled in Cyprus – where their interests are democratically represented by the TRNC. Once one referendum has been held, for all practical purposes it becomes impossible to proceed to a settlement without another. That leaves the EU and Turkey still prominently in the larger picture, but with neither the desire nor the capacity to impose their wishes.

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