A BARRICADE, A BRIDGE AND A WALL: CYPRIOT JOURNALISM AND THE MEDIATION OF CONFLICT IN CYPRUS*

Mashoed Bailie and **Bekir Azgin**

Abstract

This paper draws on frameworks provided by scholars concerned with the possibility of peace oriented journalism in order to highlight a decidedly conflict-centred approach guiding the production and circulation of information in Cypriot media and underscore the problematic (and often unquestioned) role that Cypriot media play in helping to shape the knowledge environments in which publics and policy makers take their cues and consider their options for intervention and action in the seemingly intractable "Cyprus Problem". One example through which this dynamic becomes visible is a series of news articles published between November 2005 and February 2006 reporting on the opening of an historic landmark that has divided Nicosia,[1] the capital of Cyprus, for over forty years. These newspaper articles suggest that the Cypriot media embrace a conflict-centred approach to peace efforts by shaping news that contributes to the increased mystification of the conflict and to a retrenching of divisive attitudes, sympathetic to a cementing of division. The "shaping" takes place indirectly through the "selection" of quotes from elite sources that re-present dominant points of view from within each community. News reporting tends to follow the lead and reproduce the limited perspectives of major national party politics rather than provide a sustained critique of those points of view.

Keywords: Nicosia, Communication, Media, Journalist, Journalism, Peace, Press, Ledra Street

Introduction

This exploration of the role of Cypriot media at that intersection between institutional and private performances comes at an important historical moment in Cypriot political life: one providing a momentary space for respective Greek and Turkish Cypriot opposition parties and politicians to speak out on previously unpopular issues including the contested meanings of "Cypriotness", "unification"

"demilitarization" and the transformation of the island's young Republic into a new "Federal Republic of Cyprus". At the time of writing however, it seems that the governments of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities are merely adopting "languages of unification" as techniques for quite separate agendas.

For most of us, access to the machinations of the political life of both communities means access to those mediated representations that flow through the various communication channels, either state or privately owned, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines and increasingly, the internet. Indeed, for the vast majority of people concerned with the current stalemate in Cyprus politics, to speak of Cyprus is often not to speak of "Cyprus-as-such" but rather to speak of "mediated representations of Cyprus": representations that arise out of the interrelationship between prior knowledge, journalistic performances, media institutions and social, political and economic contextual constraints, each playing a role in shaping the way we ultimately come to think about conflict in Cyprus.

Cypriot media industries are enmeshed in pervasive contemporary political-economic, social and cultural dynamics rooted in idealised or reactionary versions of the past.[2] Historically, the Cypriot media, far from providing the necessary foundations for increased understanding and the promotion of peace, have tended to encourage continued bi-communal conflict, separatism and suspicion or, to the contrary, overly simplistic and short-sighted solutions to the resolution of conflict and the promotion of peace. The pivot around which this social dynamic finds its moorings, its most common reference point, is famously referred to as "The Cyprus Problem".

Although conflict-oriented journalism, between and within Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot media, is often identified with the outbreak of bi-communal violence in the mid-1950s and again in the mid-1960s, it is important to clarify that antagonistic conflict-centred media production has much earlier and therefore that much more entrenched beginnings.

Journalistic tendencies toward conflict reporting in Cyprus are deeply rooted in history. Conflict-centred journalism transcends the bi-communal disturbances of the 1950s and 1960s. During that time period, inter-communal fighting only exasperated an already long standing journalistic tradition and helped to align both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot newspapers and journalists with "national struggles". (With the advent of radio and television and, later still, the internet, they became "national struggle media").

The first Cypriot newspaper began publication in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.[3] From their inception, the Greek Cypriot newspapers have

"persistently and vigorously promoted the demand of the Greeks of Cyprus that the island should be ceded to Greece, thus achieving the vision of their national restoration with their incorporation into the national body" (Sophocleus, 2006, p. 1).

The Enosis demand of the Greek Cypriots was vigorously opposed by the Turkish Cypriots.[4] The earliest newspaper, Zaman [The Times] of which copies survive, states in its first issue, that one of the purposes for its publication was "to fight against the numerous Greek newspapers which were propagating the Greek view on the Cyprus question and to resist the Enosis movement" (Azgın, 1998, p. 642). Yeni Zaman [The New Times] which was published one year later on 22 August 1892, states that its aim was to refute the Greek views of the Greek Cypriot newspaper Phoni Tis Kyprou which was propagating Enosis (ibid., p. 643).

When we look at contemporary journalistic practices in the Cypriot media, and their deeply conflict-centred and antagonistic form, it is not difficult to recognise the remnants of this late nineteenth century historical struggle[5] and see that its contemporary forms also concern struggles over whose vision of a future Cyprus might be realised.

It is understood both from critical political economic and cultural perspectives in communication studies that media knowledge, in general, is never value neutral (Calabrese and Sparks, 2005; Mandelzis, 2003; Morley and Robins, 1995; Mosco and Reddick, 1997; Mosco, 2006; McChesney and Hackett, 2005). Moreover, media representations tend to obscure their own ideological origins to such an extent that one may actually feel that one is reading about an event rather than a media construction of an event. Furthermore, media stories have the capacity for suggesting frameworks for thinking through social conflicts as though they were the only or most likely frameworks within which conflict might be resolved – or left unresolved (Shinar, 2004). Such frameworks are then often taken up by social actors in mundane social practices and social scientists in the analysis of conflict and peace, as though looking at an actual event, rather than at an ideological mediated reconstruction of it.

Media provide ways of thinking about what counts as important as they partially shape the boundaries within which we make sense out of our social world. Thus, when we engage media knowledge, we are exposed to information that has been purposefully constructed from particular points of view and with specific interests in mind. Our limited access to direct experience of heightened politicised events often inhibits our capacity for genuine reflection, analysis and critique of media representations (Morley and Robbins, 1995), impressing upon the majority of readers or listeners a certain "truth value" in as much as the event itself was even worthy of its status in the hierarchy of the news agenda. Events are often reported

in ways that accentuate conflict rather than opportunities for settlement (Entman, 2004; Lazar and Lazar, 2004; Ottosen, 1995; Wolfsfeld, 2004) and especially with regard to news reports of social conflict, it is difficult not to take media agendas as foundations for thinking through solutions to historically difficult problems, or as starting points from which to consider actions that might lead to peace or, at the least, to the resolution of conflict.

We decided to follow the developments of the Ledra/Lokmacı [Lokmah-juh] story as it arose across the Greek, Turkish and English language Cypriot press based upon the premise of the historical importance of the Old City of Nicosia for both Turkish and Greek Cypriots and especially in the divergent account that both have of what the importance of the Old City is. Otherwise, the Lokmacı/Ledra[6] story is one of a myriad of stories whose beginning points and endings are often obscure and difficult to follow. Indeed, we argue that the life span of such stories and their sudden and often "unexplained deaths" are indicative of the volatile and unstable conflict atmosphere among media owners and workers in Cyprus where the value of a story is more often in the sensational, the unpredictable, and the dramatic, than in providing firm ground for critical thought or civic action and participation. Indeed, as we explore the news reports concerning the Lokmacı/Ledra story, it quickly becomes apparent that they give more weight to agendas that have been previously inscribed by various political parties and politicians than to independent, investigative analysis – going so far as to lead with the frameworks provided by those in power. This leads to a poverty of reflection, analysis and critique while ultimately producing little that might allow a citizenry to reflect on alternative and perhaps more constructive approaches to the building of cooperation and community.

The dynamic media environment witnessed between 2003 and 2004[7] continued, albeit with much less dynamism, through 2005 with a daily stream of media reports of much needed "confidence building measures" between the two Cypriot communities. These measures included the importance of increasing the number of meetings between political parties from both communities with a view toward resolving disputes over missing persons, property, movement, and ultimately, what shape the new Federal Republic of Cyprus should take. Also on the daily media agenda were issues of increased access for the Turkish and Greek Cypriot citizenry to "the other side's" media reports, the Turkish Cypriot demand to be rewarded for their "yes vote", followed by reports of the Greek Cypriot administration's politically savvy (or, alternatively, unscrupulous tactics) for thwarting all such attempts to satisfy that demand.

For us, revisiting the Lokmacı/Ledra story represented the possibility of following a media event from its inception through to its conclusion (although it remains, at the time of writing, unresolved). We realised that it is a near impossibility

to follow all stories begun by mass media, being conscious of their beginning points, their twists and turns and then their eventual demise or conclusions. This difficulty also constitutes one of the crucial, although perhaps unintended, dynamics of media power: shaping a political atmosphere by introducing and then dropping particular stories that shape the overall climate without impressing their entry and exit points on media audiences. This is not a question of media having a particular "affect" on audiences but rather of the way the media shape events: constructing and reshaping the boundaries within which we always and actively make sense out of total environments.

Thus, our approach to the collection of the material for this study was to begin with a question concerning the possibility that the Cypriot media might play a legitimate role in the promotion of a framework for thinking through peace-oriented solutions to Cyprus' intractable political and social problems, while entertaining the possibility that they may, to the contrary, prove culpable in the more generally obvious climate of conflict and that they might reveal an obstinate refusal to provide an empathetic mooring for the exploration of peaceful solutions to the long history of conflict in Cyprus. In other words, do Cypriot media promote peace-oriented or conflict-oriented solutions to conflict? We selected an example of mediated reality that would provide a number of entry points into the broader historical malaise[8] that has thwarted conflict resolution for over forty years, and followed the media construct from its entry into media discourse through to its "untimely" demise: prior to resolution of the initial problematic.

Measuring Conflict and the Way toward Cooperation

In this initial exploration of the Cypriot media's propensity for peace-oriented or conflict-oriented reporting, we draw upon two contemporary scholarly sources for categorising the value of media stories in terms of their potential for promoting a space for dialogue and discussion or for their tendency to prematurely close off such avenues and shut down debate. Wolfsfeld (2004) provides criteria for discerning four major editorial values in the production of news stories:

Table 1: News of Peace: The Editorial Process

	News	**Not News**
IMMEDIACY	Events	Processes
	Specific Actions	Long-term policies
DRAMA	Violence	Calm
	Crisis	Lack of Crisis
	Conflict	Cooperation
	Extremism	Moderation
	Dangers	Opportunities
	Internal Discord	Internal Consensus
	Major Breakthrough	Incremental Progress
SIMPLICITY	Opinions	Ideology
	Images	Texts
	Major Personalities	Institutions
	Two-sided conflict	Multi-sided Conflicts
ETHNOCENTRISM	Our Beliefs	Their Beliefs
	Our Suffering	Their Suffering
	Their Brutality	Our Brutality
	Our Myths/Symbols	Their Myths/Symbols

[Wolfsfeld, 2004, p. 16]

The criteria of immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism in the table above speak directly to the overwhelming drive behind the production of media stories in the Cypriot press: there is a tendency to avoid talking about processes that have become stalled, or are not going to be acted upon imminently; a focus on the drama of conflict and difference; an apparent addiction to the "breaking news story" that promises to overcome a previously insurmountable obstacle or resolve all previous conflict-oriented media stories – only to be followed-up quickly by another conflict-oriented report that undermines the "breaking news"; an addiction to the personalities rather than a focus on processes and the institutionalised constraints within which these personalities act; a reduction of complex issues to "them or us" or "win-lose" and an insistence on accentuating what "they did" to "us" and how "we" suffered at "their" hands. Do journalists in the Cypriot media encourage empathy with "the other", accentuate opportunities through dialogue, promote win-win orientations for progress through a process, reveal the multiple and competing interests at work in every issue, or provide explanatory frames for understanding "their myths" or "their beliefs and values" in relation to "our" own? Whereas we agree with Wolfsfeld that the four dominant criteria for editorial decision-making (immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism) provide a valuable explanatory framework, not least for the issue currently under consideration, we do not see these criteria as somehow "unavoidable" or as

"natural" to journalists or journalism. As we discuss in our conclusion, these criteria have everything to do with the specific ways in which the media have developed historically as private elite-centred and highly centralised communication systems and it is precisely this underlying power relation that "naturalises" values like competition, sensationalism, antagonism, aggression, and the desire to "win" at the expense of others. It is these purposefully structured relations that guide the expectations of both editors and journalists and within which such journalistic routines and practices are normalised.

Johan Galtung's "peace journalism" model (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005) provides a second entry point to consider those aspects of Cypriot media reporting on the Lokmacı/Ledra issue that accentuate either peace and conflict resolution oriented journalism, or war/violence oriented journalism.

PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM	WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM
I. PEACE/CONFLICT-ORIENTED explore conflict formation, x parties, y goals, z issues general zero-sum orientation	**I. WAR/VIOLENCE-ORIENTED** focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war, general "win, win" orientation
open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture	closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena who threw the first stone
making conflicts transparent	making wars opaque/secret
giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding	"us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice for "us"[9]
see conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity	see "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war
humanisation of all sides; more so the worse the weapon	dehumanisation of "them"; more so the worse the weapon[10]
<u>proactive</u>: prevention before any violence/war occurs	<u>reactive</u>: waiting for violence before reporting
focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)	focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)
II. TRUTH-ORIENTED expose untruths on all sides/uncover all cover-ups	**11. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED** expose "their" untruths/help "our" cover-ups/lies
III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED focus on suffering all over; on women, aged, children, giving voice to voiceless	**III. ELITE-ORIENTED** focus on "our" suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece
give name to all evil-doers	give name of their evil-doers
focus on people peace-makers	focus on elite peace-makers
IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTED peace = non-violence + creativity	**IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED** peace = victory + ceasefire
highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war	conceal peace initiatives, before victory is at hand
focus on structure, culture, and peaceful society	focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society
aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation	leaving for another war, return if the old flares up again

[Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Model in Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 6]

The model, adapted by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) has also been adapted for use in other studies of communities in conflict (Shinar, 2004, p. 3). It is important to recognise that the "peace/conflict" approach in the left column of Galtung's chart (see p. 63) insists that conflict is not "naturally" resolved through violence. Furthermore, unlike Galtung's war/violence column, where conflict is always represented as "them" and "us" in a zero-sum game, conflict for peace oriented journalism is a complex and multi-party process where the emphasis is shifted from "them" and "us" and who wins, to a dynamic dialogue between multiple partners who, through creative responses to apparent conflict, rise above the conflict paradigm to an entirely new way of understanding their relations to one another. A major difficulty for journalists who attempt to move from the zero-sum game of war/violence oriented journalism toward a less conflict-driven journalism is posed when the communities in conflict (such as is the case in Cyprus) are represented in an overly simplistic "us and them" frame and where journalists have tended, historically, to play a role in support of their own side against the "Other". As Blasi (2004) argues, "A process of creating social commitment to victory over the enemy is typical when group conflicts are constructed as competitive processes". Blasi goes on to point out that journalists who attempt to introduce alternative conflict-resolution techniques into their reporting "are denounced as disloyal" to their "own side" (p. 9).

While our analysis of Cypriot media benefits primarily from utilising Wolfsfeld's conceptualisation of major editorial values, it is useful to note that what Galtung identifies as "peace/conflict journalism" corresponds precisely to Wolfsfeld's "not news" column while Wolfsfeld's "news worthy" column fits succinctly with Galtung's "war/violence" column. Thus, while for Wolfsfeld "peace is not news", for Galtung, the appropriate role for the media in democratic societies is to promote reflection, empathy and understanding. This is something we return to in our concluding remarks.

Combining these two entry points – a consideration of major editorial values and the distinction between peace-oriented versus war/violence-oriented journalistic approaches to the production and circulation of stories about events – provides a useful frame through which to re-evaluate the boundaries that Cypriot media provide the general public for thinking through and reacting to an apparent "peace building" activity between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Below we consider Cyprus newspaper orientations to a potential peace building activity between the two Cypriot communities in Cyprus. First we provide a brief overview of the event and then we consider the media reports of the event that were published across the Turkish, Greek and English language Cypriot newspapers during the four months between November 2005 and February 2006.

The Lokmacı/Ledra Story

In November 2005 a story made the headlines across Cyprus reporting that the walls dividing Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in the centre of Cyprus' capital city of Nicosia (the "last wall of Europe" as it was often referred to) would be demolished and that the major thoroughfare, known as the Lokmacı barricade to Turkish Cypriots and as Ledra Street to Greek Cypriots[11] would be reopened to citizens of both communities. There was an initial excitement among the citizenry of the two communities as the story "broke" in the media in November 2005, reaching its height in December and then all but collapsing over the following two months. In November, as the story surfaced, we recovered 25 articles across the Cypriot press landscape, in December the number reached a dramatic 133, in January the story diminished to 17 articles followed by 12 in February and then abruptly disappeared.

A general survey of the orientation of newspaper stories across the four month period in question, revealed a consistent pattern that accords with Wolfsfeld's chart of editorial values as we review them below. Rather than interrupting the "flow" of news stories throughout the period in question, we first give an encapsulated overview of the dynamics involved in press reports across the time-line of the media event and then follow-up with a brief analysis of the editorial values inherent in the stories. It becomes clear as the articles unfold, that these editorial values are rooted in the "event" and "specific actions" column of the "immediacy" category rather than in an interest in processes or long-term policies.

Immediacy is imminent in the following synopsis of four months of news reporting on the possible opening of a passage between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot sectors of the capital city of Nicosia. While we will also highlight the other characteristics of drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism at the conclusion of this overview of the press, immediacy as an initial category focuses attention on the propensity in the Cypriot press to be drawn to actions and events rather than to the processes that lie behind them. Wolfsfeld (2004) argues that this leaves citizens and policy makers with "an extremely narrow and simplistic view of what is happening" in the world around them (p. 17).

The November Thrill

As the story of Lokmacı/Ledra was released to the public through the Cypriot press, those early November 2005 reports were filled with undiluted anticipation. The Greek Cypriot Financial Mirror[12] exclaimed: "The Cypriot government is ready to proceed with the opening of Ledra Street …" and "We are ready and the moment we receive the green light we can be ready in four weeks." The Turkish Cypriot semi-state controlled BRT[13] claimed: "The TRNC President has said that the

Lokmacı crossing point will be opened soon". The Greek Cypriot governments Public Information Office (PIO)[14] declared "Turkey to donate money for the opening of the Ledra street crossing point". The Greek Cypriot Sunday Mail[15] celebrated: "After 30 years it is finally starting to look like a road again as history was being made yesterday in Nicosia" and "Greek Cypriot soldiers could only look on in amazement …" The Times online[16] carried a story internationally, written by Greek Cypriot journalist Michael Theodoulou in Nicosia with the headline "Cyprus tears down wall for Christmas" and exclaimed that both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot Mayors of the Old City of Nicosia were expecting the opening of the border imminently: "'The plans are all ready,' Semavi Aşık [Ashuk] of the Turkish Cypriot authority said …" and "Michael Zampellas, the Mayor of the Greek Cypriot part of the capital welcomed the move. 'We are ready to open too', he said".

There were no revelations as to how this miraculous event had taken place, no discussions concerning the processes that had led up to this supposed "agreement" to open the divided capital of Cyprus, nor any information concerning a long-term policy of the island's reunification of which this "opening" would play a part.[17]

Before the month of November had come to a close, and without any attempt to re-define the issue or explain the significant problems that (one assumes) were being thrashed out behind the scenes and within and between political parties and military interests across the island, the media's focus shifted dramatically. BRT reported on 26 November 2005[18] "President Mehmet Ali Talat has accused the Leader of the Greek Cypriot Administration Tassos Papadopoulos of carrying out a state campaign to maintain the division of the island" and that it was "the Greek Cypriot Administration which had been trying to prevent the opening of the Lokmacı Gate." Cyprus Today,[19] the Turkish Cypriot English language weekly claimed that "Mr. Talat said the Lokmacı opening was falling victim to the same Greek Cypriot foot-dragging …" and that he said "the Greek Cypriots would place every obstacle in its way because the opening of Lokmacı would sound the death knell for division in Cyprus".

The December Chill

December 2005 saw a dramatic increase in storytelling around the Lokmacı/Ledra[20] issue with 133 articles being published throughout the month although none went further in explanatory value around the deeper issues involved in the opening of the street. On 2 December 2005, in an apparent response to the Turkish administration's replacement of the barricade with a foot-bridge, a Simerini[21] story ran with the headline: "They opened roads for Attila" stating that "The Turkish Cypriot plans to open the barricade are wicked and masterminded by Ankara. Mehmet Ali Talat is the occupation leader … in collaboration with Ankara". On 5

December 2005, the same newspaper[22] claimed that: "The occupying forces are grabbing more land … something that seems to be on their cards for the whole of the island". Then on 7 December 2005, Simerini[23] exclaimed, with a headline that read "Even if a Turk becomes a bridge": "A Cypriot wise proverb says 'even if a Turk becomes a bridge, do not pass over it'. The hypocrisy, the mockery, the arrogance and the irony/sarcasm of the occupational regime has reached the zenith". BRT[24] on 8 December 2005 claimed "The Greek Cypriot side is trying to prevent the opening" and is "responsible for the deadlock" while the "TRNC government is determined to open the gate on the scheduled date" and Kıbrıs[25] published an article by Hasan Hastürer where he claimed: "The truth of the matter is that the Greek Cypriot side doesn't want to open a new gate and improve crossings before an [overall] solution [to the Cyprus Problem]".

On 9 December the Turkish Cypriot Anglophone Cyprus Observer[26] quoted the Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos saying "The case of the Ledra Street will not be a precedent for the occupation forces to claim half of the buffer zone area, something which seems to be their plan throughout Cyprus" and in another article, "Discussions in Cyprus are stuck on a bridge" the newspaper claims that "The efforts made by Turkish Cypriots to open the Lokmacı … is being prevented by the Southern President, Tassos Papadopoulos", paraphrasing Ferdi Sabit Soyer asking the United Nations to "point out the 'reluctant side' on this issue". On 10 December 2005, an article written by DISY Member of Parliament, Nikos Tornarides, appeared in Simerini,[27] where he claims that "There is a very special symbolism at the Ledra Street: It is the wall of invasion and division, the last wall that continues to exist in a European capital". Tornarides goes on to declare: "We must find the way to show who really does not want understanding, who is trying to gain points against the solution of the Cyprus problem".

The whole media orientation of the issue had been transformed from one of opening a street to ease the building of relationships between the two ethnic Cypriot communities, to one of demolishing a bridge that now rested uneasily on that very street.

On 13 December 2005, Politis,[28] accused the Turkish Cypriot administration: "The aim of the Turkish plan is to annex half of the dead zone", while on 15 December 2005 an editorial in Haravgi,[29] titled "They should not ruin the common vision" stated that: "Only yesterday [so-called prime minister Ferdi Sabit Soyer] showed that he is the mouth piece of Ankara and the military and the defender of invasion … he is continuing to make provocations by talking of the occupied areas as if they are his kingdom or empire as he talks about 'the boundaries'".

By mid-December 2005, there had been virtually no historical context to the ongoing "battle of words" expressed through the Greek and Turkish Cypriot media.

An article that ran on December 15th in Turkish Cypriot Kıbrıs[30] under the title "Why this secrecy at Lokmacı" similarly failed to unravel the complex issue: rather than exploring why the public was being given information peace-meal and without any solid historical foundation upon which to consider the issues at stake, the article focused instead upon the irony inherent in the fact that while it was "our" (Turkish Cypriot) side that wanted the gate opened, Turkish Cypriot reporters were forbidden from taking photographs of the ongoing work from "our side" and had to cross into the Greek Cypriot sector in order to shoot images of the new bridge. "It seems that the military is not as willing as the civil authorities to pull down this wall" the article concludes.

Greek Cypriot Simerini[31] newspaper accused the Turkish Cypriot President, Mehmet Ali Talat, of becoming "a slave of the bridge" in an article by Kostakis Antoniou on 15 December 2005. In Antoniou's article, the bridge is likened to a "Trojan horse", Talat is labelled the "leader of occupation", and while claiming that even the "Turkish Cypriot citizens are angry with the bridge", the article warns Talat that he "… cannot play tricks with the empty stomachs of Turkish Cypriots any longer". The Cypriot media's focus on the apparent antagonism between the two communities, or at least, between the two Administrations representing the two communities, became heightened in newspaper reports as the issue raged on past mid-December with Yenidüzen[32] claiming, on 16 December 2005. "The bridge at Lokmacı will not be pulled down. The real problem is that they do not want to open the gate". On 18 December the Greek Cypriot newspaper Alitheia,[33] ran with the headline "Kyprianou: The responsibility is not ours" claiming that "The [Greek Cypriot] government is definitely not responsible for the Ledra Gate … the responsibility rests with the [Turkish] occupying army and the Turkish Cypriot leadership".

On 19 December BRT[34] reported that the Turkish Cypriot side was demanding that the Greek Cypriots "first demolish the wall of shame" and complaining that the international community was not bringing enough pressure on the Greek Cypriots to demolish their wall before discussing whether Turkish Cypriots should demolish their bridge while the Greek Cypriot Phileleftheros,[35] declared "Ledra Street as a symbol of Turkish arbitrariness", explaining that "The problem is not 'the bridge' which prevents the re-opening of the Ledra. The real problem is more general, it is the need to oppose every Turkish military obstacle which was forced [upon us] by occupation and invasion. Every effort on the Turkish side is based on lowering the status of our government in parallel with small steps to increase that of Talat and his unlawful regime". Again, on 21 December 2005, Phileleftheros[36] declared "Their actions do anything but help improve the climate between the two communities".

As Christmas day arrived, the Turkish Cypriot newspaper Afrika[37] was reporting that the Speaker of the Greek Cypriot House (and General Secretary of the Greek

Cypriot AKEL), Demitris Christofias, had declared that Turkish Cypriot "unilateral celebrations" over the completion of their part of the Lokmacı/Ledra "are good for nothing" and that "bridges that are built for show and the military use must be pulled down". Three days later the newspaper quoted the Greek Cypriot daily Phileleftheros claiming that the "Turkish Cypriot administration has postponed the opening and the celebrations of Ledra gate to the new year" claiming that "the postponement was due to external pressures" but also claiming that the Turkish Cypriot government's Secretary had insisted that "The Ledra Bridge will not be pulled down". As December came to an end, the media's focus had shifted slightly again with the Greek Cypriot Cyprus Mail[38] revealing that the Turkish Cypriots had offered "to dismantle the controversial bridge" but had also asked Greek Cypriots to remove "offensive signs".[39] Summing up the whole "event", at the end of a tumultuous month of "media warmongering", the newspaper quoted the Turkish Cypriot municipality's Deputy Mayor Semavi Aşık as saying: "Two months ago it seemed necessary to have a bridge there. But over the last two months it has become clear in discussions with all the bodies involved in the project, including government and the military, that it is not imperative. I think we can convince everyone of this". On the last day of December, Phileleftheros[40] quoted the ex-Minister of the Interior, Dinos Michaelides as saying "If the bridge is not demolished, let's one-sidedly close all of the gates".

What were those discussions referred to by the Turkish Cypriot Deputy Mayor about? Who were the "everybody" involved? How did it become clear that it was no longer necessary? Why was it necessary to begin with? Who is left that needs to be "convinced"? None of these issues, these processes or procedures found their way into the light of a single December Cypriot media news day. Clearly, they were not considered to be newsworthy.

The January Freeze

Turkish Cypriot Kıbrıs[41]treated readers to a "summary of the year" on 1 January 2006 where they traced the root of the Lokmacı/Ledra story back to 27 September 2005 when the Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat claimed "Lokmacı will open soon" through to December 2005 when both Greek and Turkish Cypriot shopkeepers and citizens demanded that the walls and the bridge be torn down and access for pedestrians opened. Interestingly, the newspaper quotes a section of the British High Commissioner, Peter Millet's announcement that the "Lokmacı problem … is turned into a daily war of words" which, of course, the media had faithfully, if not over-zealously, kept alight. On 1 January 2006 the Greek Cypriot Sunday Mail[42] led with the headline "Tassos appeals for Turkish Cypriot understanding" and claimed that Papadopoulos "called on the Turkish Cypriots to understand and recognise the justified concerns of the Greek Cypriot side" and that the solution

could only come through the "reunification of our country". Papadopoulos is quoted as calling on ordinary Turkish Cypriots to "work with us so as to bring down the walls of division" and arguing that "the presence of occupation troops cannot lead to rapprochement, contact and communication". What the Greek Cypriot President "means" by concepts like "reunification" "our country" and "bringing down walls of division" is not contrasted to what those terms mean to the Turkish Cypriots Papadopoulos addresses, although it is undoubtedly clear to Cypriot journalists and Cypriot media workers in general that there are considerable differences between the two communities' interpretation of precisely these terms. Another article in the newspaper on the same day[43] put forward a challenge (but a challenge to whom?) to change the rhetoric of the Cyprus problem and the Lokmacı/Ledra issue: "But will the rhetoric finally change? Why does it need to? One, because we can't take it anymore, the scratched record driving us toward insanity …" however, the author of the article in the Cyprus Mail, Kosta Pavlovitch, goes on: "… but more importantly because … we are losing control of events, allowing de facto situations to shape the future of this country". Whereas the Turkish Cypriots consider there to be two distinct and equally sovereign communities in Cyprus working on the process of negotiating a Federal Cyprus settlement, the author of this article, while challenging the rhetorical practices of those in power in the Greek Cypriot community, speaks from the dominant ideological perspective of the Greek Cypriot administration that recognises only one Cyprus that is perceived to be slipping gradually from Greek Cypriot administration's hands.

The whole media issue of an opening for citizens of both communities to meet together hardened into a frozen paradigm of quoted reaction after reaction to a bridge that has been built on the Turkish Cypriot side of the island. On 4 January 2006 the Turkish Cypriot Afrika[44] claims "if that bridge had not been put there, by now Lokmacı would have been opened" and "the bridge has hindered the opening …" while the Greek Cypriot Cyprus Mail[45] argues that the Greek Cypriot government did not want Ledra Street opened and so "made an issue of the bridge-building and the violation of the buffer zone" in order to stop the process at work in the Turkish Cypriot side. On 15 January, Turkish Cypriot Kıbrıs[46] reported on an interview held by Turkish Cypriot reporter Senem Gök with the Turkish Cypriot leader of pro-solution BDH, Mustafa Akıncı, claiming that from the beginning, the "strong disagreement [about the bridge] was not so obvious" although he already thought that it would be an obstacle for the "old and physically challenged and would be difficult for youngsters carrying their bags". Akıncı is reported as saying "if I were given the choice … either open the gate with a bridge or do not open the gate forever, I much prefer the first choice". Akıncı argued that "We must give preference to the civilian life … soldiers must, on both parts, withdraw back … demilitarise the whole of the old city within the walls … priority to civilians without walls or bridges. This is the right path". Akıncı's crucial points are left unchallenged by the journalist,

unquestioned within the context of the story, and thus, hanging without a framework within which readers and citizens might think about them. Moreover, where Akıncı is quoted speaking of the possibility of "choice" the newspaper fails to take up issues related to choices, debate, dialogue and who ultimately decides on issues like these. While the portion of Akıncı's comments that have been selected by the journalist do speak of a reasonable and rational alternative to what the media has already presented as "the unacceptable status quo", readers are never informed as to why the state of affairs is currently as it is, nor how to get from there to somewhere else. If there had been any hope at the beginning of January, by the end of the month all hope of the opening of a passage way between the two communities around Lokmacı/Ledra had frozen while the mediated sense of continued underlying currents of conflict and antagonism prevailed.

February Flutters

Following a cold January around the Cypriot media's Lokmacı/Ledra "event", Turkish Cypriot Afrika[47] declared "Lokmacı on agenda again" although the number of articles retrieved had dropped from a December high of 133 to just 12 articles in February. The newspaper reported that the Mayor of Turkish Cypriot Lefkoşa had announced to the Greek Cypriot newspaper Politis that the "stalemate for the last month" was "due to the attitude and tactics followed by the Greek Cypriots". On 13 February 2006, Turkish Cypriot Kıbrıs[48] added a new twist to the old story by revealing that the Turkish Cypriot Mayor of Lefkoşa had proposed that "Pedestrians may use the road whereas the bridge may stay there as a monument symbolising the unity of the people." While mockery was made of this suggestion by both the Turkish and Greek Cypriot press, the Mayor was back in the media limelight two days later with BRT[49] claiming that "The Mayor of Lefkoşa Kutlay Erk offers unconditional talks for opening new crossing at Lokmacı" while the article explains that "The Greek Cypriot side's stance prevented the opening of a crossing point at Lokmacı". On the same day, the Greek Cypriot anglophone newspaper Cyprus Mail[50] reported the story from a slightly different angle saying that the Turkish Cypriot Mayor "has again signalled the Turkish Cypriot side might be willing to remove the bridge it built" while pointing out that the Mayor had "fallen victim to ridicule as several Turkish Cypriot papers poked fun at comments he made concerning pedestrians ignoring the bridge but keeping it as a monument to the unity of the two Cypriot peoples". The paper reported "diplomatic sources" saying that "no bi-communal discussions on the crossing were taking place at present" and that the Greek Cypriot Mayor Michalakis Zampellas was "refusing to comment" on the Turkish Cypriot Mayor's comments to the newspaper but rather "only responding once he had received 'official information' on the Turkish Cypriot side's views".

On 19 February 2006, the Turkish Cypriot newspaper Afrika[51] seemed to close this chapter of the media story with the headline "No hope for Lokmacı" where it was reported that the Turkish Cypriot Mayor of Lefkoşa, Kutlay Erk stated that "any movement made by the Greek Cypriot side before their forthcoming local elections will be nothing more than image building" and that the "Greek Cypriot side is hiding behind the excuse of demolishing the bridge". Symptomatic of the whole mediated episode, the reporter claims that when asked what the Greek Cypriot side was doing that might be perceived as "image building" the Mayor "insists not to declare his stance even on the Cyprus question". This brought the three month media debate to an end without either a resolution to the conflict between different parties or a deeper understanding among the interested publics about what the conflict was actually about.

Major Editorial News Values

When we examine the list of concepts in the column "not news" of the "major editorial values" (See Wolfsfeld's chart on p. 62), we can find no correlation between this list and the orientation of the articles themselves. None of the articles we have reviewed have dealt with processes, considered long-term policy issues, promoted or reported on calm, highlighted times when there were moments when crisis subdued, periods of cooperation, moods of moderation, accentuated opportunities over drawbacks, highlighted internal consensus or underlined the possibility of incremental progress throughout the period in question. Neither have the articles explored underlying ideological similarities or differences upon which the apparent oppositional positions stand. The appearance of conflict is never presented as multi-sided, neither are the beliefs or pain of the "Other" ever considered. There is, in the synopsis of the media reporting on the Lokmacı/Ledra "event" above, no moment of reflection on the possibility of compromise or hope, perhaps because, as the editorial values chart suggests, this is "not news".

What we do find instead, is that the news stories concerning the possibility of building community and the opening of avenues for cooperation and understanding consistently undermine the very possibility of hope and bi-communal dialogue – falling squarely into the category considered "newsworthy". As can be seen below, one primary and key reason for this is that "news" tends to be the selection of events and quotes as defined by elites and privileged sources rather than a sustained and vigorous critique of those sources. Following from this, it becomes clear that the agenda for news storytelling arises from the agenda of those in powerful positions, rather than from the desire to enlighten the citizenry around historically complex issues.

Immediacy

Immediacy refers to the media's focus on actions and events and specifically to examples of where reporting lacks the contextual materials that would allow for reflection and critique. This category is especially important with regard to the Lokmacı/Ledra story because not only is the story itself an event, each twist and turn in the development of the story is also an event or an action: that is, the story is never told as a process in as much as even internally, the developing story never refers back on itself to explore or explain its development – how it came to be where it currently is. Our argument is that journalists and editors are often driven "by" events, perhaps due to the news value of immediacy, even while they (perhaps unwittingly at times) play a crucial role in creating the negative media environment within which audiences are encouraged to think or feel about important social, cultural and political issues.

  As the story (which had reached a peak in December of 2005 and plummeted to a measly 17 stories by January of 2006), dissipated without having either provided a clear explanatory framework for thinking about the issue or proffered a reasonable set of explanations for how a "process" or "procedure" or "dialogue" between the communities had come "undone", we decided to ask editors and columnists of those newspapers why they had dropped the story. Rather than use this category to rehearse examples from newspaper articles already fleshed out above, the comments of editors and journalists concerning the embrace and then sudden rejection of this dynamic story provide additional food for thought. We asked why the story had been dropped so suddenly and without resolution. Below we have cited some of the comments that we received:

- The Chief Editor of Turkish Cypriot Afrika newspaper, Şener [Shener] Levent:[52] "I am sick and tired writing about the bridge … presumably we'll return to the subject if something new happens".
- Loucas Charalambous,[53] commentator for Greek Cypriot Politis and the Sunday Mail replied: "I haven't noticed. It seems that it doesn't sell anymore. We have the 'Straw'[54] problem at the moment and that keeps us busy".
- Loucas Charalambous[55] wrote in his column in the Greek Cypiot Politis, 30 March 2006 about a conversation he had concerning the reason for the disappearance of the story from the Cyprus media: "I was at a loss for words when […] a close friend of mine […] recently asked me: 'Have you noticed that suddenly everyone's forgotten about the opening of Ledra Street?' Why do you think that is? I must confess I had a hard time coming up with a satisfactory answer".
- Louis Economides,[56] a veteran Greek Cypriot journalist whose articles are

published in Politis. "We have got new worries now. Everybody is positioning himself to the forthcoming elections. They couldn't be bothered with bridges and walls. On the other hand, attacking Straw sells more, nowadays. The great majority of the G/Cs do not care less about the opening of the gates".

- Resat Akar,[57] Editor of Cyprus' only tri-language newspaper, Cyprus Dialogue whose articles are also published in Halkın Sesi. "Both people and the journalists have lost hope of the opening of the gates. It became obvious that Papadopoulos and his administration are against the opening of new gates. In fact, Papadopoulos is against the solution in Cyprus. People are tired of fighting a lost battle".

- Başaran Düzgün,[58] the Chief Editor for Turkish Cypriot Kıbrıs newspaper replied: "It is typical journalistic forgetfulness. When other, more urgent themes became popular, the bridge was forgotten. To be honest, as a person in this business, I was not even aware that we had forgotten until you asked me".

- Cenk Mutluyakalı,[59] Chief Editor for the Turkish Cypriot Yenidüzen newspaper commented: "Three reasons come to mind: more than enough was written about the bridge during a certain period. Both the journalists and the readers got bored with it, the long holiday period may have interfered with it, or the bridge itself was out of bounds to the public and journalists were not able to visit it. Mind you, it is not only our newspaper that dropped the story: you don't see anything on the subject in any of the newspapers. That is most interesting. I wonder why? I shall ask one of our journalists to write a story about the bridge. It is a very expensive bridge so we must not forget it".

- Akay Cemal,[60] Chief Editor of Turkish Cypriot Halkın Sesi: "It became obvious that the parties cannot and will not agree on the matter and people have lost hope of opening the gate. The visit of Straw became the subject matter and the Lokmacı gate was dropped. It is the result of hopelessness".

In each of the replies above we have underlined the issue of "immediacy" as related to the category of "events" and "specific actions" where the news value is "novelty" and "animation" rather than the long drawn-out and complex dynamics of process and policy. Editors and journalists alike express surprise and even confusion concerning how and why the story no longer seems to matter or when it might become important again. It is useful to note that while some of the respondents found it difficult to explain why they had dropped the story, they did acknowledge that something else (something new and immediate) had replaced it. Furthermore, they concede that should a new "event" take place again around the issue they will probably pick it up again.

The crucial problem here, and one that drives the issues of drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism as discussed below, is the strong sense in which newspapers "follow" events as they arise. The argument that "we will return to the issue if it arises again", mystifies the relationship between the editor and the construction of knowledge environments while placing the newspaper in a dependent relationship with the interests of political parties. Rather than "making an issue" out of a complex social problem through questioning and investigative journalism, the editors and journalists await the event being made an issue of "again" by political agencies.

Drama

Drama refers to the juxtapositioning of conceptual frameworks for thinking through responsibilities as a journalist or media industry toward publics whom one (theoretically) serves. Rather than perceiving this category as a purposeful choice on the part of media workers, it can be seen as an environment within which particular choices appear to be more "reasonable": that is, in environments where the value is toward "being first", "being fast", "beating the competition" and "attracting and sustaining the largest audience", one might "reasonably" prefer violent news headlines over calm ones; crisis over cooperation, discord over consensus.

The story of Lokmacı/Ledra could be (and as we have seen, the newspapers took this route briefly in November 2005) about a "peace breakthrough" and an unusual consensus forming around a bi-communal understanding. However, it is soon necessary to provide explanations for the complexities emerging between the two communities and the multiple points of view that might be at work behind the scenes. At this point, the Cypriot media chose to emphasise conflict rather than the road map toward cooperation and to highlight the extremes that existed within each community rather than those areas where common ground was shared. Furthermore, newspapers presented each small step (or retracing of a step), that might have yielded more explanatory value had it been analysed in the context of previous or possible steps, as a major breakthrough or breaking story on its own. The conflict-orientation increased the tendency in the media to accentuate dangers associated with what might happen to "us" while ignoring completely how "they" perceive dangers associated with what might happen to "them".

The value of "drama" as a category for reporting is pronounced for both Greek and Turkish Cypriot newspapers. One example of this was when the opening of a pathway between the two communities was transformed suddenly, in the Greek Cypriot press, into a question of "them" encroaching on "our" territory and the potential threat that this would bring to "us", while the Turkish Cypriot press presented the Greek Cypriot attitude toward the opening of the pathway as a dangerous precedent for "our side."

Simerini,[61] for example, draws on a statement previously made by Papadopoulos where he "declared that Turks are asking for half of the dead zone" in order to claim:

> "The last Turkish provocation at the Ledra Street is a unilateral act of a plan of the invasion forces to re-draw the boundaries … Turkish Cypriots are enlarging their area of administration close to the dead zone … the occupational forces are helped in this matter by the foreign powers … the occupational forces are trying to change the boundaries … Their provocation at the Ledra Street, at Louroujina village and along the cease-fire line in general are examples of enlarging their area of control."

While the specific problem revolves around the removal of a wall on the Turkish Cypriot side, only to be replaced by a bridge (with the goal of facilitating the Turkish military personnel in the area) that then becomes an obstacle for the Greek Cypriot side, the newspaper introduces information on the possibility of an "invasion" and a "taking of more land" by the Turkish military that has been "obtained from reliable sources in the government". Rather than encouraging a thoughtful debate on how to proceed against the unnecessary building of a bridge at Lokmacı/Ledra, the newspaper attempts to create fear among its readers, drawing on images of "invasion" and "occupation" that are already an emotional trigger for the majority of Greek Cypriot citizens.

The Turkish Cypriot Kıbrıs uses this same technique of drawing on the quotes from official sources in order to tell a story. Kıbrıs[62] quotes Ferdi Sabit Soyer saying:

> "I am calling upon the Papadopoulos administration: He must give up his obstinacy and demolish his wall of division. They have turned the barricade into a place of worship. Let him demolish his taboos and struggle for uniting the two communities on the basis of equality. Let's not become the prisoner of our taboos. Those who become the prisoners of their taboos do not only harm themselves but they also harm their environment."

This style of reporting not only dramatises events, making them seem imminent when they are actually long, drawn out processes, but mystifies those complexities: what is "the basis of equality" when clearly (or unclearly) the two administrations have differing opinions regarding the ultimate solution to the division of the two communities? Who are the "prisoners of taboos" when both sides are locked into ways of thinking about the past and each other, hindering the rethinking of their relationship for over forty years?

The article continues:

> "Our aim is to unite our capital and island by demolishing the wall on the other
> side. This barricade is the symbol of division and miseries … this street …
> became the main entrance to the South from the Turkish canton of Nicosia
> upon the Greek attacks with the aim to destroy the partnership status of the
> "Cyprus Republic." … The barricade … because of the fighting in 1958 and
> 1963 became the symbol of division, inter-communal struggle and animosity.
> Recalling the words of Papadopoulos that there is a precipice between the two
> sides, [Soyer] said that we need to build a bridge to gap the abyss. The bridge
> here can become a uniting factor for the peoples."

Because the newspaper story merely "selects" portions of speeches rather than
providing critical appraisal of them, the contradictions are left unexamined and the
drama of "misery" "attacks" and "destroying partnership" are placed firmly on the
"other". The explicit argument that is left unchallenged here is that the Turkish
Cypriot community is wholeheartedly for the reunification of the island's people
while – as the next section quoting Serdar Denktaş confirms: "If they [Greek
Cypriots] don't demolish the wall in their heads they themselves will make the
division permanent". Denktaş is also quoted as saying: "I want to call upon the
international community. If you don't treat equally the two owners of the island, the
G/C administration who previously grasped and still holds the rights of the T/Cs, will
never accept any solution".

The story concludes with Soyer's answer to a question from a foreign journalist:
"Our greatest problem is the attitude of the Greek Cypriot leadership. The Greek
Cypriot leadership doesn't want reunification of the island because they do not
accept that politically, the Turkish Cypriots are their equal".

Key issues here that could have been, but never were, raised by journalists who
were intent on demystifying the convoluted political style of representation include
questions such as: what rights were "previously grasped" by the Greek Cypriot
community? How do they "still hold them"? What does "calling on the international
community" actually mean? What lies behind the rhetoric of the moment? Who does
"two owners" of Cyprus refer to? In what way are "we" ready while "they" are not?
The implication above is that the Turkish Cypriots are the victims and the Greek
Cypriots the aggressor; there is no space for shared meaning and no possibility of
cooperation. The "international community" alone seems to hold the key – and only
then if power is exercised over "them", the Greek Cypriots.

The transformation from a cooperative enterprise between two yielding Cypriot
communities in early November had gone through a metamorphosis. For the Greek
Cypriots, media represented the impending threat of a Turkish invasion: "Turkish
military is encroaching" … "Turkish Cypriot administration is the puppet of Ankara"
… "Turkish Cypriot military advantage at Ledra" and "The bridge is built on orders

from the Turkish army". At the same moment, the Turkish Cypriot media is flooded with representations of Greek Cypriots as power hungry and uncompromising: "Greek Cypriots want to make us a minority" … "Greek Cypriot administration preventing a solution" … "Greek Cypriot reaction is negative" and "The party not cooperating on Lokmacı is the Greek Cypriots".

While brief, this list of drama/crisis oriented reporting on Lokmacı/Ledra is nevertheless a concise representation of the majority of Turkish and Greek Cypriot news stories concerning the probable opening of a path toward more peaceful relations between the two Cypriot communities between November 2005 and February 2006. While there were a few media representations suggesting a general consensus among Greek and Turkish Cypriot shopkeepers and consumers for opening a pathway through the centre of Cyprus' capital city,[63] the media reflected instead the antagonisms, the conflict and the possible dangers associated with political shenanigans at the level of elite party politics without any attempt to explain, criticise or critique[64] the underlying causes of the apparent animosity.

Simplicity

The editorial value of "simplicity", focusing on the paired oppositions of opinion/ideology, image/text, major personalities/institutions, and two-sided conflict/multi-sided conflict, proves instructive and highly enlightening to this present study. Moreover, as we explore the choices consistently made by media workers and media institutions across the island, we notice that these choices also make the possibility of a journalism that can promote peaceful coexistence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots extremely unlikely at this time. As Ottosen (2004), shows in a study concerning the role of media in providing citizens with the contextualised information necessary for a fuller understanding of a conflict and the possibilities for peace, the media consistently fail to explore the deeper ideological underpinnings of conflict or the "hidden agendas" (p. 13) that may promote a clearer appreciation of the processes at work in an ongoing conflict.

With a primary, indeed addictive compulsion, toward opinion, the image, personalities and the representation of conflict as a two-sided coin (heads wins, tails loses), the media unavoidably heighten conflict, encourage tension and sow discord among readers. The primary tactic of both Turkish and Greek Cypriot journalists appears to be to heighten each community's awareness of the differences between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in, what amounts to, a zero-sum game, where winning for one necessarily means losing for the other. The media also represent the complex and contradictory positions between multiple actors by reducing them to a game being played out by only two sides, one who is always "right" and the other who is always "wrong": "The problem lies with the Greek Cypriot leader Papadopoulos" or "The Turkish Cypriot leader

Talat is pursuing the opening of the checkpoint on his own terms" or again, "Talat says Papadopoulos is the problem".

While we do not intend to critique the ideological underpinnings of journalists or media industries in Cyprus here, we agree with Wolfsfeld (2004, p. 21) when he argues that journalists who are unwilling to deal with ideology may severely limit their capacity to engage a peace process. Cypriot media, both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot have long been acclimatised to the practice of "self-censorship" and the avoidance of speaking directly to the ideological construction of the official state positions with regard to the production and circulation of information within the respective communities on the island. This is a decisive issue and one that should take a central place in future analysis.

Ethnocentrism

Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot media have a long history of demonising each other's communities and while the demonisation process around the Lokmacı/Ledra event does not take the extreme form that it has taken in the past or may take around other issues or in particular circles, it "makes sense" against a backdrop of over forty-five years of inter-communal, followed by bi-communal "national struggles" where the administrations of each community, supported by their various state controlled and/or "private" media institutions waged psychological "wars of words" against each other and sometimes internally against groups with alternative paradigms. In the case of Lokmacı/Ledra, the demonisation process began as soon as the first obstacle in opening the street appeared. The following examples point toward not only the tendency of newspapers to rely upon official sources for their information, but also on their lack of critical engagement – their refusal to question or to raise concerns around the stories they are told by those sources.

Kıbrıs[65] selected comments made by the then Turkish Cypriot Mayor Kutlay Erk in his evaluation of the progress in opening Lokmacı/Ledra:

> "If the aim is to open the gate, and our aim is definitely that, we can remove all obstacles for that purpose … but neither the Greek Cypriot leader nor AKEL is willing to open the gate and they do not want the intermingling of people. They want to keep the division by hiding behind excuses. The aim of Papadopoulos, Christofias, Omirou and the Church is to continue the division of the island and their attitude is proving their racist approach by keeping the city un-united. In contrast, we want to solve the problems through negotiations."

In reproducing this quotation, Kıbrıs failed to question the premise upon which the Turkish Cypriot mayor had made his accusations. If the Turkish Cypriot position

is that "all obstacles" can be removed, is not one of those obstacles the barrier of understanding between the two communities? Are the positions of the Greek Cypriot community to be brushed aside as "excuses" – implying that they are not worthy of consideration? Is there only "our way" or "division"? Is it not possible to disagree with "us" and yet, still be for a solution? Is it only the Turkish Cypriot administration that wants to "solve the problems through negotiations"? What is meant by a "racist approach"? Does it mean accenting the "Greek-ness" and "Turkish-ness" of each Cypriot community and, if so, are not both communities then guilty (or innocent) of the charges? In this article, no questions are raised around the official claim that "we" are right while "they" are wrong. For example, the newspaper does not remind the reader that it was the mayor of Nicosia who, after removing a wall, then replaced it with a steel bridge (creating a new "obstacle"?). Instead, the newspaper leaves the reader to assess the claims without recourse to any contextualising material. The article ends:

> "Even if we manage to open the gate, as a result of this racist attitude, the gains will be very limited. They desire to leave this city and this country divided. Their vision is either a divided country or a country under the control of the Greek Cypriots. Their policies are based on these racist foundations."

Even if the Lokmacı/Ledra is opened – that is, even if "they" agree to open the barrier – it will mean nothing because "they" are racists full stop. Thus, a wedge is placed between the Turkish Cypriot reader and any hope of a future settlement with their "racist other".

Alitheia[66] published a news item under the heading "Kyprianou: The responsibility is not ours" in which the AKEL spokesperson is quoted as saying:

> "The government is definitely not responsible for the Ledra gate if it is not going to be opened. The responsibility rests completely with the occupying army and the Turkish Cypriot leadership in the way it handled the case taking into consideration small party interests. If they try to send falsified information, we must do our best to counter such a stance in the best possible way and be ready for every outcome."

Alitheia, as Kıbrıs above, reports this official source without analysis or context leaving the readership to reach their own conclusions. Again the emphasis on "we" being always completely in the right and "them" being always "completely" in the wrong is accented. Furthermore, "their" point of view must be understood as "false" and "we" must counter that with the "truth". Interestingly, while the newspaper does not take up issues concerning the internal contradictions or alternative points of view within the apparently cohesive "we", the final paragraph of Kyprianou's statement does suggest a less than unified position around the issue of the Lokmacı/Ledra:

> "I hope that some people will not try to put pressure on the government on this matter and that all political parties with the exception of EDI, will continue supporting the activities of the government."

Alitheia does not raise any question concerning who "some people" might be or what kind of "pressure" the government might be wary of. Is the reference to "all political parties with the exception of EDI" something to be explained? Is it a reference to expectations from DISY and an effort to keep check on the "official" position of the government? Is there a veiled threat implied in the statement?

In an article in Simerini,[67] Kornilios Hadjikostas, writing about the Lokmacı/Ledra issue, had this to say:

> "The Cypriot wise proverb which says 'even if a Turk becomes a bridge, do not pass over it', now has got a literal importance, with the bridge which was built by the occupational regime on the Ledra Street. The hypocrisy, the mockery, the arrogance and the irony/sarcasm of the occupational regime have reached to their zeniths. At the same moment as they are erecting a bridge of division and planning for 'border stations', the Turkish Cypriot politicians are throwing carnations in order to complete their well-planned game. Yesterday demonstrations took place, yes, at the presence of the occupational military leadership. What insolence! If it was possible, at that festival, to throw carnations with firearms/cannons, they would have done it."

To begin, it is clear that the author understands the concept of "Cypriotness" in ethnocentric terms: clearly the "Cypriot wise proverb" is not taken from the stock of "Turkish Cypriot wise proverbs". While we cannot vouch for the authenticity of the "proverb" it does seem that if it is a "Cypriot" proverb, the "Turk" in the proverb would most likely refer to the "Turkish Cypriots".[68] In retrospect the building of a bridge to replace a wall in the Lokmacı/Ledra area was an absurd act and counter to the goal of easing passage for the two communities in the heart of Nicosia. Nevertheless, the article above goes beyond reference to an "act" and focuses primarily on an "ethnicity". Rather than encouraging a serious debate around a complex politicised engagement between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot authorities, the article demonises and marginalises the value of an entire group. The author goes beyond assigning blame for a policy decision – however ridiculous – and attempts to encourage contempt for an ethnic group. Of course we cannot, with any degree of certainty, assign a sentiment to the "throwing of carnations" from the Turkish Cypriot to the Greek Cypriot side by official representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community, but the article does more than this: it suggests that the underlying motive for the act was violent and evil: "they" would have used "firearms and cannons" if they could get away with it.

Another example drawn from the newspaper stories around Lokmacı/Ledra comes from Yenidüzen[69] titled "The bridge at Lokmacı will not be pulled down". The newspaper quotes the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community Mehmet Ali Talat as saying:

> "We have to finish our preparations if we want the gate to be opened. We do not have to get permission from anybody for the things that we are doing on our side. Why should we pull down the bridge? The Greek side wants lots of things. What will happen if we do everything they want? The real problem is that they do not want to open the gate. Papadopoulos has asked for demilitarisation and the opening of the gate. That means that he is postponing the opening of the gate since the discussions on demilitarisation will take some time. It may take months or even years. Do I put any conditions [on]to what is happening on the Greek side? Why should they?"

Once again, the newspaper tells the story of the progress being made on the building of relations between the two communities through the antagonistic words from official sources that emphasise "our" rightness and "their" lack of good will. Furthermore, the newspaper story leaves all of the obvious questions unanswered: who is not answerable to the "other side" when the whole enterprise is one of reaching amicable agreement on a settlement? Why is asking for the "demilitarisation" of a shopping district "the real problem", and more importantly, why is it an "individual" in the form of Papadopoulos that is singled out, rather than an institutional problem between two differing sets of policies over how to proceed? Why does "asking for demilitarisation" mean "that he is postponing the opening of the gate"? Could it not as easily be the refusal to demilitarise that causes the obstacle? Moreover, the question raised in Talat's quote is never engaged: "Why should we pull down the bridge?" This would certainly be a worthwhile question for any investigative journalist to pursue following the raising of the question by the leader of the community.

The examples taken from the newspapers above around the issue of ethnocentrism and the lost opportunities for providing more complex and contradictory accounts of official positions on the Lokmacı/Ledra issue are far from unique: they represent the norm in reporting in both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot newspapers.

The central point here is that: "When a peace process breaks down, the news media of both sides emphasise their own righteousness and the other's evilness. We are always the victims, they are always the aggressors" (Wolfsfeld, 2004, p. 23).

We also agree with Wolfsfeld that "It is difficult to exaggerate the overall impact of this constant flow of ethnocentric information on public perceptions of the enemy.

The news media are extremely powerful and omnipresent mechanisms for intensifying and solidifying hate between peoples" (p. 23).

Reflections on "Peace Journalism"

We have drawn out a general framework within which to reflect upon media stories concerning the Lokmacı/Ledra event and have shown that the stories have consistently fallen into Wolfsfeld's criteria for "newsworthy" reporting within contemporary configurations of the Cypriot media. With this in mind, it is important to consider the possibility for what Galtung calls "peace journalism" in the context of the pervasive editorial values of news media examined above.

Galtung assumes that "peace journalism" will explore conflict from multiple perspectives, make conflicts transparent, give voice to all concerned parties, see "conflict" as the problem while focusing on creative methods for transforming it, humanise all sides and promote ways of thinking among general publics that will encourage the prevention of violence (or the end of dialogue) before the process reaches a climax. Furthermore, Galtung anticipates that "peace journalism" will expose untruths from all sides, focus on the suffering of marginalised groups, give access to the voiceless in the society, and accentuate the role of ordinary people in the peace-making process rather than the "elites" who tend to be highlighted in contemporary media stories. Finally, Galtung expects "peace journalism" to lend weight to peace initiatives by focusing on the possibilities of a peaceful society and by following through peace initiatives with a focus on resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation. It happens that all of these expectations are firmly rooted in Wolfsfeld's "not news" category. A few examples will make this point: First, where our analysis reveals the fixation of the Cypriot media on two parties struggling in a zero-sum game to be representative of Wolfsfeld's "simplicity" category for what constitutes "newsworthiness", Galtung sees this as "war/violence journalism" and juxtaposes it to the "peace/conflict journalism" where there are many parties, alternative possibilities and issues, and the possibility for all players to benefit by transcending the initial perception of conflict. Second, as we uncovered the tendency of the Cypriot media toward ethnocentrism with an emphasis on "their" brutality and "our" suffering in Wolfsfeld's "newsworthy" category, Galtung emphasises this as a symptom of "war/violence journalism" and calls for an alternative orientation that accentuates the suffering perpetrated upon and the crime originating from all parties to conflict. Finally, as exampled in our interviews with editors of Cypriot newspapers, there is a tendency on the part of news industries to drop a story when it is overly complex and time consuming and then return to it when another dramatic event ensues. Most often this is because another event has superseded the primary event and captured the imagination of the news editors. While the propensity for drama ("Major Breakthroughs") fits concisely with

Wolfsfeld's category of "newsworthy", it finds its place within the "victory-oriented" ("leaving for another war, returning if the old flares up again") subcategory of "war/violence journalism" in Galtung's model. Galtung stresses the need to move from this victory-oriented approach to what he calls "solution-oriented" where journalists follow-through with a story in order to promote the possibility of resolution and reconciliation. Thus, Galtung has essentially challenged the dominant editorial values that constitute contemporary media news industries.

Galtung's call is for nothing less than a revolution in media structures and journalists' performances. Kempf (2003) also highlights the necessity of radical changes in media institutions before journalistic performances change when he argues that for journalists to take on the role of promoting the resolution of conflict and the recognition of alternatives to war, they will have to be emancipated from "… the institutional constraints that result from the criteria for news selection, editorial procedures and expectations, the economics of the media, the connections between the media and the politicians and the military" (p.10).

Concluding Remarks

Clearly, news stories in the Cypriot media generally "follow" political agendas rather than develop independently. They do this mainly through an over-reliance on highly selected quotations that come directly from elite and socially privileged sources. Furthermore, newspapers suggest their own agendas through the "selection" of quotations and their choices in how to present official sources.

The preparing of a clear agenda for the promotion of more engaged and socially conscious knowledge workers is crucial for the future of any possible participatory democracy given the principle role media play in the production and dissemination of information in advanced technological societies (Wolfsfeld, 2004, p. 12).

Naveh (2002) in a study focused on the role of media in the formation of foreign policy similarly highlights the significant role of media in influencing decision makers (p. 10) while First and Avraham (2003), in their study of the role of media in the coverage of conflict, find that the media "… help us consolidate our interpretation of political, social, and economic conflicts" while playing "a similar role in describing the 'Others' of our world" (p. 2). Mowlana (1986)[70] working on the assumption that the media play a powerful role in shaping media environments and thus contribute to our understanding of and acting in the world, asks "If international media have repeatedly and successfully pursued war-mongering and thereby increased tensions, could they not also do the opposite?" (p. 20).

That the media stand as a gauge against which to measure the state of a particular issue or topic, evaluate the likely implementation of a proposal, and

position oneself as a citizen who is hopeful of a process or disheartened by it, is a prominent characteristic of news reporting. Thus the media play an active role in providing a context for how we think about the political climate surrounding conflict, violence, war and, importantly, initiatives intended to move us toward peace.

The key point here is that as political decision-making becomes more distant from the citizenry, the influence of the media increases. Wolfsfeld's argument echoes similar concerns from communication scholars. Morley and Robins (1995), for example, suggest that "… the further the 'event' from our own direct experience, the more we depend on media images for the totality of our knowledge" (p. 133).

Our concern has been to explore the public media debate on the Cyprus conflict through a frame provided by a synthesis of both peace and critical communication oriented scholarship – drawing from contemporary examples of Cypriot media representations, some sense of how institutionally situated journalists are currently engaging in conflict-oriented rather than conflict-resolving journalistic practices. This is all the more necessary because scholars and students of such fields as political science, international relations and communication studies – and indeed the citizenry in general – invariably turn to this readily accessible stream of press releases and media channels in the form of the world wide web, newspapers, television programmes, magazines and radio stations, and extract from these reports, parameters within which to think about and offer possible solutions to the "Cyprus Problem".

Clarifying the role that the Cypriot media play in the construction of stories that help to shape our general understanding of the current situation in Cyprus accentuates the fact that reports about statements or comments made by either one's own or "the others'' political representatives or processes, are not the statements or processes themselves but rather media representations that have been shaped for public consumption by the media industries. Rather than being witnesses to the "Cyprus conflict" itself, we are rather witnessing carefully orchestrated "media wars" where media highlight and re-present social, cultural, political and economic dynamics in and between the two Cypriot communities in selective and ideological forms: as "win-lose" or "conflict driven".

Having recognised the tendency toward conflict-oriented news production in the Cypriot media, the challenge now is to begin a process of identifying alternative sources of journalism within and beyond the Cypriot mainstream media and the necessary ground upon which to develop and support an alternative journalism[71] that, contrary to contemporary Cypriot newsroom policy, represents social and political life in terms of how it might promote social justice, reconciliation, and the resolution of conflict through creative and peaceful means.

*   **POSTSCRIPT:** Following the completion of this study, dramatic events reshaped the political landscape in Cyprus. On 24 February 2008, Demetris Christofias was elected as the new President of the Republic of Cyprus. One month later the leaders of the two communities, Christofias and Talat, met and agreed to remove the obstacles to the opening of the street. On 3 April 2008, following years of sensational journalism that most often spoke in disparaging and negative terms concerning the possibility of cooperation and compromise, Ledra/Lokmacı opened making it possible for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to meet once again in the heart of Nicosia's Old City.

Notes

1. The capital city of Cyprus is referred to by Turkish Cypriots as Lefkoşa and Greek Cypriots as Lefkosia. We will use these two terms respectively when referring to arguments emanating from their communities and we will use the English language term "Nicosia" when making our own comments in the text.

2. This refers to the recent debates over the future shape of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot ruling elite argues for the maintenance of the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot administration voted in favour of a new bi-zonal, bi-communal federated structure. This new structure, envisaged by the UN plan necessitates the diminution of the present Republic of Cyprus to "constituent state" status within a new Federal Republic of Cyprus. This most recent attempt at building a "partnership Republic" finds its roots in the 1950s struggle of the Greek Cypriot community for Enosis (union with Greece) which was transformed significantly, after an attempted Greek Coup in 1974, into a celebration of an independent Greek Cypriot State with a recognised Turkish Cypriot minority. In parallel with the movement for Enosis, the Turkish Cypriot community argued for Taksim (the creation of two separate sovereign states – one Greek, the other Turkish). The Turkish Cypriots rejected the Taksim "solution" in the UN sponsored referendum when they voted in favour of a new United Federal Republic of Cyprus with two constituent states while the Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected the UN plan.

3. The prominent G/C newspapers published in the last two decades of the nineteenth century: Kypros [Cyprus], Neon Kytion [New Citium], Keravnos [Thunderbolt], Ethnos [The Nation] published in Larnaka; Alitheia [The Truth], Salpinx [The Trumpet], Anayennisis [Renaissance] published in Limassol; Phoni Tis Kyprou [The Voice of Cyprus], Symea Tis Kyprou [The Flag of Cyprus], Empros [Forward], Eleftheria [Freedom], Patris [The Motherland] published in Nicosia; Salamis, Ammochostos (Famagusta), Aghon [The Struggle], Eon [The Age] published in Paphos. (Andreas Sophocleus (1993) Ta Mesa Mazikis Enimerosis Stin Kyprou, Nicosia. pp. 11-13).

4. The newspapers published in Turkish at the same period: Ümid [Hope] published in Larnaka; Sa'ded [The Scope] published in Limassol; Zaman [The Times], Yeni Zaman [The New Times], Kıbrıs [Cyprus], Mirat-ı Zaman [The Mirror of the Time] published in Nicosia. (Azgın (1988), pp. 641-643).

5. At that time, of course, the issue was between Greek Cypriots arguing for union of

Cyprus with Greece and Turkish Cypriots claiming that Cyprus legally belonged to the Ottoman state and that, should Britain decide to vacate the island, it should be handed back to its legal owner.

6. The term Lokmacı "gate" or "barricade" was most often used by the Turkish Cypriot media while the term "Ledra Street" was most often used by the Greek Cypriot media in reference to the same geographical location in the heart of the walled city in the capital Nicosia. Further, Ledra Street, in Greek is "Makridhromos" and in Turkish is "Uzun Yol" with both meaning "the long road". The Lokmacı barricade was demolished by the Turkish Cypriot administration with a view to reuniting the two sides of Nicosia in November 2005, however the Greek Cypriots objected to the building of a bridge where the Lokmacı barricade had been on the Turkish Cypriot side and refused to demolish the wall on their side of Ledra Street until the bridge was removed.

7. Continuous, extensive and often passionate coverage of the opening of the borders between the two Cypriot communities, the election of the CTP/DP coalition government in northern Cyprus, the election of Mehmet Ali Talat to the Presidency of northern Cyprus, the election of Papadopoulos and Akel to power in southern Cyprus, the simultaneous referendums on the UN-sponsored "Annan Plan" with Greek Cypriots voting against it and Turkish Cypriots voting for it and the subsequent entry of the Greek Cypriot administered Republic of Cyprus into the European Union in May 2004.

8. Following the developing story on the Lokmacı/Ledra issue places us at the centre of the historical separation of the two communities during periods that have become important to both: the late 1950s and between 1963 and 1974 for the Turkish Cypriots who were protecting themselves from the Greek Cypriot struggle toward Enosis during that time; and 1974 for Greek Cypriots who consider the invasion of Cyprus by one of their Guarantor States, Turkey, as the starting point of inter-communal conflict. Also, following media representations of the potential opening of this border between the two communities in the capital city of Nicosia after forty years of separation, offers a glimpse into the more general complexities of opening the island cultures to a truly bi-communal, bi-zonal Federation and the role that the Cypriot media might reasonably be expected to play (in its present form) in promoting such a peace or inculcating and heightening conflict.

9. The emphasis on the lines – "giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding and "us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice for "us" – is on peace journalism "giving voice to all parties" and war journalism giving "voice for us". Galtung's original chart can be found at: [http://globalmedia.emu.edu.tr/fall2006/Fall_2006_Issue2/1Johan_Galtungpdf.pdf.]

10. This is also true for the line "more so the worse the weapon". The point here is that peace oriented journalism will accent humanisation more when the situation is worse, whereas war oriented journalism will fan the flames more when the situation is worse.

11. The Lokmacı barricade was a wall that closed off access to Ledra Street until December 2005 when the Turkish Cypriots demolished it with a view to reuniting the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides of the Capital city of Nicosia. There was also a wall on the Greek Cypriot side of the dead zone which was demolished one year later at the end of 2006. Although the walls were demolished, the gate remains closed at the time of writing.

12. [www.financialmirror.com/more_news.php?id=2498].

13. [www.brt.gov.nc.tr/] accessed on 23 November 2005.

14. [www.pio.gov.cy] Turkish Press and Other Media No. 224/05 24 November 2005.

15. Cyprus Mail, 25 November 2005.

16. [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,13509-1890026,00.HTML].

17. Observers who followed the "story" would have been aware that soon after the UN sponsored referenda the Greek Cypriot government, in order to soften the negative international fallout from their "No vote", had proposed to open 12 new crossing points between north and south Cyprus. Later it was decided that for practical purposes the crossings would be opened one at a time. Subsequently, there was much wrangling between the two administrations over which crossing should be opened first. The priority of the Turkish Cypriots was the Bostancı/Zotia gate whereas the Greek Cypriot preference was to start with the Lokmacı/Ledra gate. Finally, the Turkish Cypriot administration opened the Bostancı/Zotia crossing unilaterally and thus the problem was solved. It is feasible to assume that the Turkish Cypriot administration was attempting to use the same tactics at Lokmacı when the Greek Cypriot administration interrupted their activities. The Turkish Cypriot Mayor of Lefkoşa had announced that he would open the crossing at Lokmacı on Christmas day and celebrate the opening by distributing `lokmas` to those who crossed on that day. The Greek Cypriot administration formally protested to the UN and requested that the celebration not be allowed to take place.

18. [www.brt.gov.nc.tr] archived 26 November 2005.

19. [www.cyprusmirror.com/?newsid=2411&category=].

20. By this time the "Lokmacı barricade" had become a "bridge" as the Turkish Cypriot authorities had demolished the wall and replaced it with a bridge that would serve both to allow military personnel to pass beneath it and Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot civilians to pass over it. The Greek Cypriot administration was protesting against the bridge and calling for its removal from the street while the Turkish Cypriot administration claimed that the Greek Cypriot administration was only using the bridge as an excuse for not demolishing their wall at the far side of Ledra Street.

21. Simerini, 2 December 2005. "They opened roads for Attila".

22. Simerini, 5 December 2005. "The division of the deadzone". Michalis Papadopoulos.

23. Simerini, 7 December 2005. "Even if a Turk becomes a bridge".

24. [www.brt.gov.nc.tr] archived 8 December 2005.

25. Kıbrıs, 8 December 2005. Article by Hasan Hastürer "It seems that nobody will pass the Lokmacı Exam".

26. [www.observercyprus.com/politics.htm] 9 through 15 December 2005.

27. Simerini, 10 December 2005. "The Ledra Street". Nikos Tornarides.

28. Politis, 13 December 2005.

29. Haravgi, 15 December 2005. "They should not ruin the common vision" (Editorial).

30. Kıbrıs, 15 December 2005. Article by Ali Baturay.

31. Simerini, 15 December 2005. Article by Kostakis Antoniou.

32. Yenidüzen, 16 December 2005. "The bridge at Lokmacı will not be pulled down".

33. Alitheia, 18 December 2005. "Kiprianou: The responsibility is not ours".

34. [www.brt.gov.nc.tr] archived on 19 December 2005.

35. Phileleftheros, 18 December 2005. "Ledra Street as a symbol of Turkish arbitrariness".

36. Phileleftheros, 21 December 2005. "Free commuting through Ledra" [Opinion of Phileleftheros].

37. Afrika, 25 December 2005 "Unilateral celebrations are good for nothing".

38. [www.cyprus-mail.com] "We don't need the Ledra Bridge", archived on Friday, 30 December 2005.

39. Greek Cypriots had placed depictions at Ledra Palace crossing point from the Dherinia incident where two Greek Cypriots had been killed. The Turkish Cypriot administration called for their removal.

40. Phileleftheros, 31 December 2005.

41. Kıbrıs, 1 January 2006 "Summary of the Year".

42. Sunday Mail, 1 January 2006 "Tassos appeals for Turkish Cypriot understanding". Jean Christou.

43. Sunday Mail, 1 December 2006. "A growning malais" Costa Pavlovitch.

44. Afrika, 4 January 2006. "Letter from Afrika".

45. [www.cyprus-mail.com] "Meritocracy goes mad", archived in "Tales from the Coffee Shop" 8 January 2006.

46. Kıbrıs, 15 January 2006. "The Greek Cypriots want to gain ground, Turkey wants to gain time".

47. Afrika, 2 February 2006 "Lokmacı on agenda again".

48. Kıbrıs, 13 February 2006. "Erk: Pedestrians can use the road and the bridge may stay as a monument".

49. [www.brt.gov.nc.tr] 15 February 2005.

50. Cyprus Mail, 15 February 2006. "Erk: No red lines on Ledra Street".

51. Afrika, 19 February 2006. "No hope for Lokmacı".

52. Personal interview on 14 January 2006.

53. Personal interview on 17 January 2006.

54. Britain's Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's upcoming 26 January visit to northern Cyprus had taken priority over the Lokmacı barricade/Ledra Street story as the Greek and Turkish Cypriot media's latest "event" in January 2006. Straw had agreed to meet the Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat at his presidential offices in the Turkish part of Lefkoşa to the distain of the Greek Cypriot administration as they argued it was tantamount to "recognising" the Turkish Cypriot leader. Greek Cypriot media carried stories of angry confrontations between Straw and Greek Cypriots who demanded that he refuse to meet with Talat although he ultimately did.

55. Politis, 30 March 2006.

56. Personal interview, 27 January 2006.

57. Personal interview, 27 January 2006.

58. Telephone interview on 18 January 2006.

59. Telephone interview on 18 January 2006.

60. Personal interview on 18 January 2006.

61. Simerini, 18 December 2005. "They are applying the Annan Plan as it suits them".

62. Kıbrıs, 7 December 2005. "Give up your obstinacy and demolish your wall".

63. While representations of the desire for cooperation were few indeed, they do point both toward the media's selection process – what could count as 'news' – and to the possibility that alternative ways of thinking about and evaluating the conflict are actually possible. For example, Africa published an article on 12 December 2005 reporting that "T/C Shopkeeper Association, yesterday, organized a meeting at the Lokmaci barricade and demanded the opening of the Lokmacı gate at the earliest possible time" and again on 6 January 2006 quoting a Greek Cypriot shopkeeper, Savas Lemonaris arguing that "I buy materials for 'ekmek kadayafi' from the North. If this gate was opened, life would have been much easier". Again, in an article published in Alitheia, on 18 December 2005: "Tens of Greek Cypriots representing 'Citizens for the Opening of Ledra Street' accompanied by the Turkish Cypriot representatives of 'This Country is Ours' gathered at the Eleftheria Square and then marched to the Ledra barricade on the Green Line where speeches were delivered".

64. The use of the phrase "criticise or critique" is intentional – "criticise" here means to "object to the way that political elites polarise dialogue", and "critique" means to "contextualise the debate by uncovering the way in which political elites polarise dialogue".

65. Kıbrıs, 13 February 2006. "Pedestrians can use the road and the bridge may stay as a monument".

66. Alitheia, 18 December 2005. "Kyprianou: The responsibility is not ours".

67. Simerini, 7 December 2005. "Even if a Turk becomes a bridge" by Kornilios Hadjikostas.

68. Simerini, 8 December 2005. "The Right Rapprochement". Kornilios Hadjikostas wrote the following day in Simerini that his article referred not to the "simple Turkish Cypriots with whom we are invited to live together, but the occupational regime and the Turkish politicians".

69. Yenidüzen, 16 December 2005. "Talat: The bridge at Lokmaci will not be pulled down".

70. Cited in: Becker, J. (2004) 'Contributions by the media to crisis prevention and conflict settlement' in: Conflict and Communication Online, Vol. 3, No. 1/2, p. 4. [www.cco. regener-online.de], ISSN 1618-0747.

71. A key point here and one that needs to be engaged and explored in depth is that – as Manoff (1998) argues: "… journalism is a specific social practice that has a history, and … this history is one of unending social invention. In other words, in discussing 'media and conflict' issues, it is important not to fall prey to an a-historical essentialism that presumes that today's form of journalism is, or ought to be, tomorrow's" (p. 37). Freeing ourselves from the assumption that contemporary configurations of media industries and journalistic practices are somehow "natural outcomes" of the development of

technological and institutional structures is crucial to a more flexible approach in rethinking the potential role of the journalist toward conflict resolution and peace building.

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