

THE 55 YEAR CYPRUS DEBACLE: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

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Abstract

This article attempts an overview of the 55-year Cyprus problem. Seven reasons are identified and examined as fundamental causes of the ongoing conflict from its inception until today: (1) the detrimental role of nationalism, (2) intractability, (3) mutual suspicion and demonisation, (4) non-acceptance of the other side's collective identity and self-definition, (5) the negative role played by leaders and their constituencies, (6) the normative dimension and (7) the role of external parties. The first six of these causes are regarded as self-standing, with mutual non- acceptance at its apex as probably the most crucial obstacle against reconciliation. As for external parties their role is seen as secondary, particularly from the 1960s onward, in what is above an ethnic conflict.

The Cyprus problem has been with us as an intractable conflict for more than half a century, for 55 years to be exact, if 1948 (the Consultative Conference under Governor Winster) is taken as the point of departure. As such it stands together with Kashmir and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the most durable regional conflicts. The Cyprus problem is in many ways unique even in its very own league of difficult conflicts. One of its most striking peculiarities is that it has defied resolution while staying in a state of limbo, for almost three decades, without outbursts of violence.

Fifteen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, new thinking between the two parties in conflict is long overdue. In the period 2000-2002 the most favourable of conditions coalesced (a case of "conflict transformation"¹ to use the relevant jargon): the prospect of EU entry of the whole of Cyprus with obvious "carrots" for both communities; strong encouragement for reconciliation by Greece as never before since 1974; fewer objections from Turkey; mobilisation of UN Secretary- General Annan, with strong support and tangible assistance from the US and Britain; and an unprecedented interest for reunion on the part of a large segment of the Cypriot population (though not a clear majority, particularly on the Greek-Cypriot side). Within this setting, the Clerides-Denktaş Talks of 2002 took place, initially amidst high hopes, coupled by the scrupulous Annan Plan in three versions. But

nothing came out of all this. Denktash harked back to his customary intransigence, while the Greek-Cypriots began to have cold feet when they realised that resolution-reunion could become a reality the very next day. If settlement defied the parties under these circumstances, can there be a resolution in the years to come? Are we to surmise that even today, a reunited Cyprus is "an unimaginable community"?²

What is more than obvious is that reunion can only come about within a framework of a loose dual (binational-bicommunal) federation of Cyprus, on the basis of equality between its two constituent parts. The formula should be unique to the exigencies of Cyprus, but the obvious models to draw from are the federal systems of Belgium, Switzerland and Canada.³ On the other hand, the two ethnic groups cannot be pressed or somehow cajoled to live together if they find cohabitation unsavoury.

At this juncture, after some 55 years of conflict, a birds-eye view is probably worth pursuing.

Probing the Evidence: Seven Self-Standing Reasons for the Ongoing Conflict

The Cyprus conflict has gone through three fairly distinct phases from 1948 onward: 1948-1959, 1960-August 1974 and September 1974-March 2003. Should it continue after 2004, it will probably enter a fourth more opaque phase.

We would highlight some seven reasons for the conflict. Each one on its own provides a fairly comprehensive exegesis of the dispute from the late 1940s until this day.

A fairly obvious reason is the detrimental role of nationalism. Reinforcing this is a second reason – the conflict as decidedly intractable. A third contributor is the social-psychological dimension, the great divide between the two communities erected by acute mutual suspicion and demonisation. A fourth potent reason, associated with the above three, is the mutual non-acceptance of the other side's collective identity and self-definition. A fifth possible explanation for the lack of any real progress in settling the conflict, is the role played by the leaderships of the two communities and the internal publics themselves, who most of the time have spurned meaningful talks for a resolution. The international normative dimension is yet another barrier to resolution, with its differing interpretation of what is right and just. Finally, a possible distinct barrier to resolution is the role of external actors. Some have argued, notably Greeks and Greek-Cypriot analysts, that external forces have always been the main negative factor, a view we have put to task elsewhere.⁴

Virulent Nationalism

Arguing that nationalism played a negative role in Cyprus is almost platitudinous. Yet it took almost three decades to be taken on board as a key element by the mainstream literature on the conflict. As a theoretical tool it is unwieldy. It can be used as an umbrella explanation, a dumping ground as it were, for most of the ills that have befallen the island. We will thus limit ourselves to some of its more pertinent aspects.

From the angle of nationalism, it is Greek-Cypriot or rather Cypriot Greek nationalism that set the ball rolling. The gradual spread of an intense sense of Greekness and identification with "mother-Greece" was mesmerising. Greek pedigree was a source of huge pride and prestige in this forgotten backwater of the British Empire. It also gave the Greek-speaking Cypriots a sense of mission, which was none other than the "natural" union with the motherland.⁵

The educational system and the teachers in the primary and secondary schools (initially most of them from mainland Greece) played a key role in instilling a sense of national identity, as in the case of the Asia Minor Greek-speakers in the latter nineteenth century. Two other major factors fomenting Greek national identity were the Church of Cyprus (which was furious at the curb to its authority and economic capability initiated by the British) and the educated elite, as has been the case in many other "national awakenings" or "national constructions" from Ireland to India (depending on one's theoretical perspective). The Turkish-speaking Muslims reacted with some delay, by setting up a Turkish (and not merely a Muslim) educational system, to the irritation of the British who were not particularly thrilled with this transformation from Muslim to Turk. Thus by the 1930s onwards and until today, the educational systems of both communities propagate love and pride for Greece and Turkey, respectively, coupled with the myth of perennial Greek-Turkish animosity.⁶

By the beginning of the mid-war period, in the 1920s, Greek nationalism was well established in the urban areas, though not in the rural regions, where most of the Cypriots of both communities lived peacefully side-by-side in mixed villages. When a little later, by the 1930s and 1940s, the vast majority of the Greek-Cypriots defined themselves as primarily Greek (and secondarily as Cypriots) or as exclusively Greeks who happened to reside in Cyprus "since time immemorial", with the Muslim Turkish-speakers reacting accordingly (*en masse* by the 1940s), any future co-habitation became highly problematic. It is worth noting, however, that until the late 1950s, "the significant Other" for the Greek-Cypriots were not the Turkish-Cypriots or Turkey, but the British. In fact the Turkish-Cypriots were ignored and not taken seriously as a hindrance to the realisation of the Greek-Cypriot goals.

The Turkish-Cypriots were more realistic: they defined the Greek-Cypriots as the main threat.

Following the Greek Asia Minor Catastrophe, irredentism subsided in the rest of the Greek-speaking world, but not in Cyprus. Since Cyprus was no more under Ottoman ("Turkish") rule, but under the British, Greek-Cypriot expectations soared in view of the Ionian Islands' precedent (the handing over to Greece of these island as a gift), an event they did not fail to reiterate to their British overlords.⁷ The union of Cyprus with Greece, the famous *Enosis*, was soon to become a sacred cause for the Greek-Cypriots ("*Enosis* or Death") and an anathema to the Turkish-Cypriots, who belatedly came up with a steadfast goal of their own, partition ("*Taksim* or Death"), a bogey for the Greek-Cypriots down to this day.

As the two ethnic groups chose to become part and parcel of wider nations, the development of an equally salient - and unifying - Cypriot (pan-Cypriot) civic identity could make little headway.⁸ Even the ideologically committed leftist Greek-Cypriots of AKEL and other moderate personalities could not resist the aspiration of *Enosis* in the 1950s. The only clear distinction from the rest of their ethnic kin was that they favoured a more gradual and peaceful evolution to eventual union and were not lacking in concern for the fate of the Turkish-Cypriots, paternalistic though it tended to be. The fact that the two original religious-linguistic groups did not (and do not) belong to the same wider ethnic or linguistic groups, as, say, the Muslim and Christian Arabs or the Muslim and Christian Albanians, was also an impediment to cementing a pan-Cypriot we-feeling.

To conclude, the irreconcilable national projects of the two sides, the violent ethnic clashes from 1956 onwards (particularly those of 1963-1964, 1967 and 1974) and the memories that have been kept alive through every conceivable means (school textbooks, commemorations, obituaries, museums, parades, erecting statues of "hero-martyrs" or of Kemal Ataturk, respectively, and other rituals) have proved to be, at least until recently, an insurmountable barrier to reconciliation.⁹ In spite of the various attempts by the moderates on both sides, who stress common Cypriot identity, the nationalists have had it their way, even in those instances when moderation and reconciliation prevailed at the highest echelons of power (under Vassiliou's Presidency and in the latter years of the Clerides Presidency).

Irreconcilable Conflict

From 1948 until today the aims and goals of the two sides have being irreconcilable, in spite of the occasional rhetoric to the contrary intended largely for international audiences. As such the Cyprus question appears as a classic "negative-sum" conflict, where no "positive-sum" solution appears realistic. Even a pragmatic "split

the difference" compromise appears unfeasible. Of course there were some fleeting moments of actual moderation, but the quest for compromise championed by one party, be it the Greek-Cypriots (under Vassiliou) or the Turkish-Cypriots (in the Communal Talks of 1968-1974) was hardly ever reciprocated. When the chips were down there was always a vast reservoir of mistrust and disdain to draw from so as to derail the process of reconciliation.

A rudimentary listing of the irreconcilable positions from 1948 onwards is illustrative:

- *Enosis vs. Taksim* (1948-1959 and from then on the stance of the hard- liners on both sides).
- Unitary state in which the numerical majority reigns supreme and the Turkish-Cypriot are afforded minority rights; as opposed to two equal communities or peoples in the island, with some level of regional self-government for the smaller and weaker community (1964-July 1974).
- Unitary state with elements from the 1960 Constitution; as opposed to a fairly loose federation (August 1974-1977).
- Tight federation with strong central government; as opposed to a loose federal system (1977-1983).
- Tight federation on the basis of "the three liberties"; as opposed to a confederation following the recognition of the "TRNC" as an independent state (1983-2001 or perhaps until today).
- Accession to the European Union of only the Republic of Cyprus; as opposed to incorporation-union of the "TRNC" to Turkey (late 1990s-2001).

The existing situation at any given time, however unsatisfactory and below expectations was preferable to any conceivable change or solution that could come about through peaceful means. To use a well-known Cypriot adage, the "lack of a solution is a solution". In other words the resolution has been reached, but each side, for differing reasons does not acknowledge it publicly, among others because of the domestic and international costs involved (this no doubt applies in the case of the Greek-Cypriots) and for fear of being absorbed by the motherland (this is the case with the Turkish-Cypriots). For many the very idea of compromise is anathema: not only a grave mistake but also an affront to national pride and honour.

The above rationale reinforces the "time is in our favour" approach: that in the not too distant future we will be able to secure a solution more to our liking. Patience and an unwavering non-cooperative stance are of the essence. Such a posture was the hallmark of Makarios in the period following the December 1963 events and until the Turkish military intervention of 1974. He claimed again and again to one baffled Greek leader after another, that there was no need for urgency;

with the passage of time, the "Turks" (the Turkish Cypriots) were bound to concede more, adjusting to the fate of a simple minority, above all when they would realise that Turkey would not intervene militarily.¹⁰

Until today, a great number of Greek-Cypriots (probably the majority)¹¹ do not feel compelled to make the necessary concessions for a resolution, especially after having pocketed EU membership (surprisingly with no strings attached). Concessions clearly mean dividing the "cake" with the Turkish-Cypriots and helping them out in view of their dismal economic predicament. But most of all, it seems that the majority of Greek-Cypriots cannot stomach having to treat the Turkish-Cypriots as equals in an eventual reunification. The Turkish-Cypriots, for their part, are aware that little has changed in the attitude of the other community, something that the moderates (the opposition to Denktash) are finding very disappointing, especially when the hardening of the position comes from AKEL, the largest party in the south traditionally in support of bridging the gap between the two communities.

Enemy Stereotypes and Demonisation

In the Cyprus case as in most other difficult internal and inter-state conflicts, the social-psychological dimension, is of considerable resonance: the deeply imbedded mutual suspicion and lack of confidence, enemy images-stereotypes, misperceptions, threat-perceptions, national narratives and so on. As time went by, a huge psychological wall was in place in the island of Cyprus, almost as foreboding as that between Palestinian and Israeli or Tamil and Sinhalese. Perceptions-attitudes and "reality" became one and the same, along the telling dictum, that when a situation is defined as real it is real in its consequences.

Probably the main element which renders such clashes so acute and difficult to cope with is that they are disputes involving collective identity: the self-identity of the Other is rejected, above all because its acceptance seriously undermines "our identity" and our role in the scheme of things. The existence of the other side as "the enemy" is vital for the preservation of the ingroup-outgroup boundary.¹²

Most Greek-Cypriots regard the Turkish-Cypriots as "late-comers in the island" (as not truly indigenous), as merely Turks, a remnant of Ottoman rule, dubbed the "Turkish yoke", an era of suppression and backwardness. The Turkish-Cypriots are Turkey's instruments in its transparent territorial ambitions regarding Cyprus. They do not favour the re-union of the island, but only independent statehood or union with Turkey. It is also stressed that the settlers in the north are already in the majority and there is little point in reuniting before they are expelled.

The until recently prevailing view on the north of the Green Line, was that co-habitation was not feasible and could only be disastrous to them, as the weaker side. The economically more powerful and politically more experienced (and "devious") Greek-Cypriots would swamp them. They are convinced that the other side regards them as a nuisance – not much differently than the way they were perceived by Makarios – as the main obstacles thwarting the hellenisation of the whole island. Consequently their only guarantee against cultural (if not physical) extinction is the protective shield of the Turkish Army on the island.

Historically, the most decisive mutual suspicion that has lead to an almost paranoid attitude was the view that *Enosis* and *Taksim*, respectively, remain the respective cherished aspirations.¹³ This misperception – for misperception it is from the later part of the 1960s onwards – is probably more than any other belief responsible for the disturbing self-fulfilling quality of the conflict, from 1963 onwards.

The Greek-Cypriot and Greek nationalists argue that in substance, the Cyprus question was always one of "invasion and occupation" for the Turkish intension all along was to grab the whole island.¹⁴ The Cyprus problem would be resolved – more or less automatically – if the occupying Turkish forces left Cyprus. For the nationalists in particular, the "invasion and occupation" thesis is functional in cleansing Grivas and EOKA-8 for their crucial role in bringing about the Turkish military intervention.¹⁵

Views such as the above were reinforced by the fact that from 1974 until the latter part of the 1990s the two communities lived separately. Yet by the late 1990s there was a trickle of contacts, notably at the level of "conflict resolution workshops", despite the cries of "treason" from the nationalists.

These revealing workshops have highlighted, according to a recent very useful overview, the following subjective difficulties: the mutual distortion of the past; the mutual enemy images; that the other side is wholly to blame for the ills that have befallen us; the mutual complete lack of confidence; and the lack of any willingness to compromise. Bulwarks such as the above have their antidotes, such as attaining a more balanced view of the past and of one's own responsibilities for what occurred. Another interesting finding is that in most instances the Greek-Cypriot participants are shocked to realise that, after all, they are not one and the same, as Cypriots, with the Turkish-Cypriots; conversely, the Turkish-Cypriots are astonished to discover how much they have in common, culturally, physically and otherwise, with the Greek-Cypriots.¹⁶

The Denial-Rejection of the Other

In ethno-national conflicts, mutual non-recognition is a key factor that does not permit any meaningful dialogue between the two parties, as with the Israeli-Palestinian clash until 1991 or with Turkey and the Kurds. Acknowledging the other party is unthinkable, above all for it would imply that the other side might have a case. Yet in the Cypriot context one could well argue that non-acceptance is not an issue, in view of the many official talks between the two parties from 1968 onwards as well as the mediations from the UN-Secretary General and others that the two parties have accepted. However, a more scrupulous assessment shows that until recently (until the 2002 talks between Clerides and Denktash), this "official" mutual recognition was only superficial and lacked real substance; it hardly amounted to "substantive" recognition, if one could use such a term.

I would argue that in the Cyprus context, the denial-rejection of the Other is the main obstacle to resolution,¹⁷ in the first instance from the Greek-Cypriot side (in view of the fact that they are the majority and the official state); and equally (in view of Denktash's legacy), though with fewer implications by the Turkish-Cypriots, given the international non-recognition of secessionist "TRNC". Interestingly until fairly recently this important dimension of the clash was not very obvious, particularly to Greek-Cypriots and Greeks.

Characteristic manifestations of this frame of mind on the Greek-Cypriot side are the following:

- For the period 1948-1959, the view that the "Turks of Cyprus" cannot possibly have a say in the future political fate of the island (the famous "*then tous peftei logos*") and how "dare they express their wishes" and clamour for their goals ("*pos tolmoun...*").
- The non-recognition of the Turkish-Cypriots as a distinct people or ethnic group, but only with difficulty as a community. The rejectionists regard the other side as a simple minority that has no other option than to abide by the will of the majority.
- The Turkish Cypriots are politically non-existent; they are no more than a puppet of Ankara.
- Turkish-Cypriotness is a figment of the imagination. The so-called Turkish-Cypriots are simply Turks who happen to reside on the island (ironically, this is confirmed by many of Denktash's utterances).
- The Greek-Cypriots regard themselves as *prima facie* Greeks. Hence most of them seem to regard the adoption of the Greek national anthem as something natural and not as strikingly odd and a handy propaganda weapon for Denktash.

- Reference to Cypriots, Cyprus, Cypriot rights, etc., refers only to the Greek-Cypriot side, as if the Turkish-Cypriots lived somewhere else or could be wished away.

The practical outcome of this state of affairs is for the Republic of Cyprus to tend to turn to Ankara for a solution (even President Vassiliou with his well-known acumen did not avoid this mistake). Indeed the Turkish-Cypriot leadership was rarely seen as the interlocutor, a grave error, since after all it is the Turkish-Cypriots who are to be the future partner.

As for the Turkish-Cypriots at official level, they speak in terms of the "Greek-Cypriot Administration" and not the Cyprus Republic; and the President of the Republic of Cyprus is defined as no more than the leader of the Greek-Cypriot community, not the president of an independent internationally recognised state. The Greek-Cypriots are seen as Greeks and not so much as Cypriots. Even more insulting to the Greek-Cypriots, is that this Greek designation is seen as phoney: the "Greeks of Cyprus" are hardly Greeks; they simply chose to define themselves as Hellenes, given the affinity of their language to Greek; and as for their claim to be descendents of the Ancient Greeks it is ludicrous (as is the similar claim of mainland Greeks for that matter).

The end result of this mutual rejection is a cultural *cum* existential fear as far as the Turkish-Cypriots are concerned; and for the Greek-Cypriots an intense military insecurity in view of the Turkish Army in Cyprus. Needless to say, only one's own fears appear as self-evident. The other side's *Angst* is almost incomprehensible and is brushed aside as far-fetched, paranoid or as sheer propaganda^{1,8}.

Without a crucial re-appraisal of the Other, no UN Peace Plan, however ingenious and fair, no amount of wooing or arm-twisting by the "mother-states", the European Union or the United States will make much headway.

Domestic Politics and Leadership

Clearly no lasting settlement can be achieved "without the consent of the large majority of both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots".¹⁹ However lies a major problem. In ethnic as well as inter-state clashes internal politics usually favour the defiant and intransigent stance. The obvious outcome is what one could call "domestic entrapment", a situation not infrequent in democratic settings as well, where governments find themselves unable to adopt bold and far-reaching decisions in order to extricate themselves from the costly confrontation.

At the level of leadership, Denktash's intransigence is legendary from the 1980s

onwards. It is clear that he has hardened to such an extent that he does not favour reconciliation and a reunion of the island, whatever the obvious benefits may be. Of course, at top leadership level, the original past master of intransigence was none other than the venerable Makarios, from 1964 until 1974 and probably until his death in 1977. Kyprianou, his unlikely successor, toed the same line, though more clumsily than his charismatic predecessor. Ironically, with his obstinacy and shortsightedness, Kyprianou rendered a valuable service to Denktash, lending credence to the latter's intransigence and undermining the pro-rapprochement forces in northern Cyprus.

When it comes to political parties' attitudes and behaviour things are very messy in the Republic of Cyprus. There are left-wing rejectionists (notably former EDEK of Lyssarides, now KISOS), right wing moderates (half of DISY) and right-wing rejectionists (DIKO) and of course ultra-nationalist rejectionists, such as Neoi Orizontes. The only useful rule of thumb between rejectionist and pro-rapprochement forces, is to what extent a party is Greek-centric or Cyprus-centric, yet even that criterion is not completely satisfactory, as seen in the case of EDEK under Lyssarides (rejectionist but Cypriot-centred).²⁰ Far clearer is the Turkish-Cypriot side of the fence, where the Left-Right divide corresponds fairly neatly to supporters of rapprochement and rejectionists.

Another oddity of Greek-Cypriot internal politics is the switches in alliances and unexpected marriages of convenience that have had a negative bearing on the prospect of settlement. AKEL in particular which claims to be a party of principles supporting reconciliation, has fallen well below expectations, as seen with its various alliances with rejectionists Makarios and Kyprianou and more recently with its association with almost equally rejectionist, Tassos Papadopoulos, whom it supported for president, with peace talks hanging from a thread. Following the presidential elections of February 2003, AKEL has done very little to steer President Papadopoulos towards a more favourable stance regarding the Annan Plan blueprint.

Finally, worth mentioning is another factor, which makes compromise extremely difficult for most Greek-Cypriots. It is the sheer fact of having been in the driving seat of the state for four decades, since early 1964. Why give up power, why share the Republic of Cyprus when one can have the whole cake and eat it? (Of course they have only half a cake but they seem to delude themselves that someday they will have everything in their possession.)

The Normative Dimension

The Cyprus conflict falls under the grey area of clashing normative principles.²¹ To begin with, there is an obvious clash between two principles of democratic rule: the principle that the majority governs and otherwise prevails in instances of discord with numerical minorities; and the more recent principle of a level of autonomy and effective political participation as regards sizeable groups that are not mere minorities (in the latter case minority rights would suffice).

A related normative thread with a longer tradition in the Cyprus scene is none other than the principle of a people's right to self-determination, a claim that the Greek-Cypriots felt fully entitled to as a kind of "birth right". However, in spite of the famous mention of self-determination in the United Nations Charter in two instances (in Article 1, paragraph 1 and in Article 55, paragraph 1), its meaning remained obscure well into the 1950s: above all, who were "the people" entitled to exercise this high privilege? This ambiguity and lack of a guideline was not understood in Cyprus in the 1950s (even Greece took time to appreciate it). Union (legally, annexation by another state) appeared odd internationally, if not unacceptable, particularly if the entity seeking to be annexed was on the verge of ethnic strife as a result of calls to union-annexation. At UN level the first authoritative clarification came with the momentous Anti-Colonial Declaration of 1960. Self-determination was to be a right exclusively for "non-self governing territories" (colonies, protectorates, etc), which could become independent if they so desired.

In the period following the independence of Cyprus, the dominant view among the more moderate nationalists, such as President Makarios (and not the extreme nationalists under Grivas who sought *Enosis* at all cost branding the Archbishop a traitor to the cause) was that the rights and privileges afforded to the Turkish-Cypriots were so exaggerated that they were not defensible internationally on the basis of international law and other international principles.²² To be fair to Makarios this assessment, though lacking in foresight, was not as misplaced as it appears to us today. In the 1960s it was perfectly normal to define self-determination and democratic rule largely on the basis of the Westminster model: namely that the majority governs at all times and the best that the numerical minority can hope for is adequate protection from the excesses of the majority in power. Power sharing and what by the 1970s became known as "consociational democracy" (the term coined by Arend Lijphart), was already present in a number of countries. But in those days these instances were not widely discussed or regarded very useful to emulate, save in the less developed Third World.

The Cyprus Constitution of 1960 and the logic of the Zurich Agreement take a consociational course: namely greater participation and clout for the numerical

minority. Little wonder that the Archbishop found the scheme so "abnormal". He was also very adverse to the whole "community" business (of the Turkish-Cypriot as a community and a constituent one at that), viewing it as a kind of *diktat* by the Western powers in collusion with Turkey. When a numerical minority that regards itself a distinct group, ethnically and otherwise, constitutes upwards of 15% of the population of a country it is rarely prepared to accept the role of "ethnic minority" equipped at best with minority rights. It can settle for no less than power sharing and being regarded as a constituent people-nation-ethnic community of the state in question; otherwise it may opt for breaking away, as attested by most of the separatist conflicts from the 1950s onward.²³

The Greek-Cypriots may be on weak grounds when pressing for a unitary government or for a tight federation well under their control, particularly in view of what elapsed since 1963. But when it comes to the international law plane they are on better grounds than the Turkish-Cypriots, mainly in two areas. Firstly, the presence and role of the Turkish forces in the island, make the case legally one of occupation, as with the Occupied Territories of the West Bank. Secondly, unilateral self-determination (i.e. secession) is not, under international law, an acceptable way for a territory to gain independence and become officially recognised as a state. This is one reason why the "TRNC" has not been recognised, save by Turkey.

However, with the end of the Cold War, and in the wake of the recognitions of secessionist Croatia and Slovenia as independent states, moves towards independence by numerical minorities, are not seen as necessary beyond the pale.²⁴ These developments would probably have a bearing on Cyprus, particularly if no resolution is achieved in the immediate future, something that is not lost among the rejectionists in the northern part of Cyprus.

Outside Forces to Blame?

In most ethno-national conflicts, the parties at loggerheads tend to blame outside forces for the events. By doing so they try to absolve themselves of any responsibility for the mess they find themselves in. Throwing the blame to outsiders is very much in evidence in the Cyprus case, particularly in the perceptions of many a Greek-Cypriot, layman as well as analyst.

The conclusion that I have reached in my detailed book *The Cyprus Problem: Conflict and Resolution*, is that the Cyprus question is above all an ethnic clash and far less an international one,²⁵ save in the 1950s and, briefly, in the summer of 1974. I would go so far as to call the external factors approach, a fallacy – the "external fallacy" – that as a social construction has made things worse for the two communities in the island.

My overall assessment is based on three grounds:²⁶

1. The international dimension is derivative; it is of the "pull" rather than the "pull" variant,²⁷ with the exception of Britain as an imperial power in the 1940s and 1950s. The Greek-Cypriots, followed by the Turkish-Cypriots, called upon ("pulled") Greece and Turkey to come to their aid, respectively, and they obliged though with some trepidation.
2. External parties eventually became involved (Greece, Turkey, Britain and the US), at one time or another, for different reasons. However they made little headway either in safeguarding their own interests or in trying to assist in the settlement of the conflict. For the most part Makarios outmanoeuvred all outside powers, including mother-Greece, and Denktash followed suit in the latter period.
3. In the final analysis, only by dealing with the ethnic conflict, which is the crux of the problem, could the Cyprus problem be resolved and indeed it could have been settled decades ago.

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To conclude, the last three years have been a period of hard decisions for the two communities in Cyprus. Irrespective of the results of the December 2003 elections in northern Cyprus and the official entry of the Republic of Cyprus in the EU by 2004, the vexing primal question remains. Are the Greek-Cypriots finally prepared, here and now, to make the necessary concessions at the state level and share the Cypriot state, on a basis of equality with the Turkish-Cypriots? Conversely are the Turkish-Cypriots ready, when the post-Denktash era arrives, to shed their suspicions and doubts regarding the Greek-Cypriots and join them constructively in a functional federated state? It takes two to tango. If both or one of them is not prepared to make the dramatic paradigm shift that is needed, than there is little purpose in pursuing, at least for the time being, the business of peace talks which as time goes by smack of a ritual with little substance. After all separation as well as re-union are both avenues that could lead to peace and security in the island provided the solution is acceptable to both sides as well as to Greece and Turkey.

Notes

1. Vayrynen, R. (1991) 'To Settle or to Transform? Perspectives on the Resolution of National and International Conflicts', in Vayrynen, R. (ed.), *New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation*. London, Sage.

2. Taken from the subtitle of Calotychos, V. (ed.), (1998) *Cyprus and its People: Nation, Identity, and Experience in an Unimaginable Community, 1955-1997*. Boulder, Westview Press.
3. For such a solution and the rationale behind it see: Salem, N. (1990) (ed.), *Cyprus: A Regional Conflict and its Resolution*, New York, St.Martin's Press; Peristianis, N. (1998) 'A Federal Cyprus in a Federal Europe', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1; Gagnon, A. and Erk, C. (1998) 'A Compact Theory of Federalism: Can the Canadian Federal Experience Provide Lessons for Cyprus?', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1; Joseph, J. (1999) 'Cyprus and the EU: Searching for a Settlement in the Light of Accession', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1; Heraclides, A. (2002) *To Kypriako: Syngrousi kai epilysi* [The Cyprus Problem: Conflict and Resolution], Athens: I.Sideris, pp. 336-67.
4. See Heraclides, A. (2002) op.cit.
5. Kitromilides, P. (1977) 'From Coexistence to Confrontation: The Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict in Cyprus', in Attalides, M. (ed.), *Cyprus Reviewed*, Nicosia, Jus Cypri Association; Nairn, T. (1979), 'Cyprus and the Theory of Nationalism', in Worsley, P. and Kitromilides, P. (eds.), *Small States in the Modern World*, Nicosia, Zavallis Press.
6. Loizos, P. (1974) 'The Progress of Greek Nationalism in Cyprus, 1878-1970', in Davis, J. (ed.), *Choice and Change: Essays in Honour of Lucy Mair*, London, University of London, The Athlone Press, pp. 116-18; Markides, K. (1977) *The Rise and Fall of the Cyprus Republic*, New Haven, Yale University Press, pp. 3-12, 17; Pollis, A. (1973) 'Intergroup Conflict and British Colonial Policy: The Case of Cyprus', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 579, 582-87; Kitromilides, P. (1990) 'Greek Irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1; McHenry, J. (1987) *The Uneasy Partnership on Cyprus, 1919-1939*, New York, Garland, pp. 30, 38, 95, 125-154.
7. It is also worth noting that on several occasions in the course of four decades, from 1912 until 1945 Whitehall flirted with the idea of ceding the island to Greece. See for a summary Heraclides, A. (2002) op.cit., pp. 241-4.
8. For the far-fetched view that an all-Cypriot identity stood a chance even as late as the early 1950s, see Pollis, A. (1996) 'The Social Construction of Ethnicity and Nationality: The Case of Cyprus', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 69-78. For a similar though more qualified rendition see Attalides, A. (1977) 'The Turkish Cypriots: Their Relations to the Greek Cypriots in Perspective', in Attalides, A. (ed.), op.cit., pp. 74-7.
9. Markides, K. (1995) 'I Kypros kai oi prospathies gia omospondia' [Cyprus and the Attempts at Federation], in Peristianis, N. and Tsangaras, G. (eds.), *I Anatomia mias metamorfosis: I Kypros meta to 1974* [The Anatomy of a Metamorphosis: Cyprus after 1974], Nicosia, Intercollege Press, p. 340.
10. See Makarios statements in Greek Cabinet Meetings, in Papageorgiou, S. (1980) *Apo tin Zyrichi eis ton Attilan* [From Zurich to Attila], Athens, Ladias, Vol. III, pp. 8-9. And in

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Kranidiotis, Y. (1984) *Diethnopoiosi kai apodiethnopoioi tou Kypriakou provlimatos* [Internationalisation and De-Internationalisation of the Cyprus Problem], Athens, pp. 374-5. Equally see Makarios to Clerides in Clerides, G. (1988) *I katathesi mou* [My Deposition], Nicosia, Alithia, Vol. 8, pp. 286-7.

11. This appraisal is based on election results and gallops, see Heraclides, A. (2002) op.cit., pp. 343-46.

12. Volkan, V. (1988) *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*, Northvale, Jason Aronson.

13. This was one of the seminal findings in the first ever problem-solving workshop on the Cyprus problem in 1966 (known then as "controlled communication") under John Burton.

14. Papadakis, Y. (1998) 'Enosis and Turkish Expansionism: Real Myths or Mythic Realities?', in Calothychos (ed.), op.cit., p. 70.

15. Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, M. (1998-1999) 'Epanaproseggisi: I skepsi pera apo ti dichotomisi' [A Second Rapprochement: Thinking Beyond Partition], *Sychrona Themata*, No.s 68-69-70, p. 90.

16. Broome, B. (1998) 'Overview of Conflict Resolution Activities in Cyprus: Their Contribution to the Peace Process', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 54-56.

17. See Heraclides, A. (2002) op.cit., pp. 330-1. See also on this issue Papadakis, Y. (1998) 'Greek Cypriot Narratives of History and Collective Identity: Nationalism as a Contested Process', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1998). Constantinou, C. and Papadakis, Y. (2001) 'The Cypriot State(s) *in situ*: Cross-ethnic Contact and the Discourse of Recognition', *Global Society*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 125-48.

18. Groom, A. J. R. (1986) 'Cyprus, Greece and Turkey: A Treadmill for Diplomacy', in Koumoulides, J. (ed.), *Cyprus in Transition, 1960-1985*, London, Trigraph; Fisher, R. (1990) 'Introduction: Understanding the Tragedy of Cyprus', in Salem (ed.), op.cit.

19. Bahcheli, T. and Rizopoulos, N. (1996/1997) 'The Cyprus Impasse: What Next?', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 28.

20. See Peristianis, N. (1995) 'Dexia-aristera, ellinokentrismos-kypriokentrismos: to ekkremes ton syllogikon taftiseon meta to 1974' [Right-Left, Greek-centrism-Cyprus-centrism: the Pendulum of Collective Identifications after 1974], in Peristianis, N. and Tsangaras, G. (eds.), op.cit., pp. 146-50.

21. For one of the few detached studies on the normative aspects of the conflict see Richmond, O. (1999) 'Ethno-Nationalism, Sovereignty and Negotiating Positions in the Cyprus Conflict: Obstacles to a Settlement', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 42- 63.

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22. Clerides, op.cit., Vol. A, p. 187.
23. See Heraclides, A. (1997) "The Ending of Unending Conflicts: Separatist Wars", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3.
24. See Heraclides, A. (1997) 'Ethnicity, Secessionist Conflict and the International Society: Towards Normative Paradigm Shift', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 493-520.
25. For an early assessment along these lines see in particular Burton, J. W. (1972) 'Resolution of Conflict', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1; and the works of P. Kitromilides on Cyprus, e.g. Kitromilides, P. (1983) 'Political Community in Plural Societies', in Fried, C. (ed.), *Minorities: Community and Identity*, Berlin, Springer-Verlag.
26. See for details and for the relevant scholarly bibliography which proves this point Heraclides, A. (2002) op.cit., pp. 39-198, 230-318.
27. See for the useful distinction into "pull" and "push" involvement Mitchell, C. R. (1970) 'Civil Strife and the Involvement of External Parties', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 166-94.