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Ethnic Nationalism and Identity Formation in Cyprus, 1571 to 1974

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Abstract

The island of Cyprus has been split in two for more than four decades. In 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied the northern third of the country, which it still controls today. Prior to the occupation, the two main ethnic communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, coexisted in peace, often living side by side for generations under various occupations, most notably the Ottoman Turkish and British periods. The conflict displaced about 160,000 Greek Cypriots from the north and 50,000 Turkish Cypriots from the south, most of whom had to flee their homes with nothing more than the clothes on their back. Fueled by nationalism rather than religious tensions, these events permanently shaped Cyprus, and the country remains divided to this day.

Existing research on the conflict focuses on intercommunal violence, rebellion against occupying powers, and intervention by foreign powers but does not explore the motivations behind the conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. This research explores the Cyprus problem through theories of ethnic nationalism, identity formation, and leadership styles of community members.

All external proposals to bring peace to Cyprus have failed. Foreign powers, particularly the United Nations and the guarantor powers of Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain, have continually attempted to exert their influence on Cyprus for their own ends. Any solution must come from the people of Cyprus.

This significance of this research is that it may enhance awareness of the Cyprus problem as a whole and provide a different angle in which to study the conflict with hope for a potential solution.
Ethnic Nationalism and Identity Formation in Cyprus, 1571 to 1974

The island of Cyprus occupies a geographic and cultural crossroads straddling both Europe and the Middle East, existing as a gateway to both regions. The vast differences exhibited by the island’s two main ethnic communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, have been the source of both alienating conflict and shocking violence. The concept of ethnic nationalism is essential to the understanding of modern Cyprus and must be expanded upon to understand the dispute as a whole, as well as any developments in the future of the island. In addition, the emergence of self-categorization in the island’s two main communities would eventually lead to the drive towards ethnic nationalist concepts. The establishment of extremist organizations with the willingness and ability to carry out bloody attacks on the people of Cyprus as well as the various occupying powers served to instill widespread terror. The violence and division wrought by ethnic nationalism has permanently shaped the island of Cyprus, leading to generations of hatred and a political stalemate from which there seems to be no end in sight. In effect, the Turkish and British occupations existed as foils between Cypriot aspirations and self-determination efforts. While the jurisdiction of the Turkish and British reigned supreme, these powers did little to benefit the island. As such, in the eyes of the world, Cyprus was viewed as either a backwater to an immense empire or a strategic military location to an uninterested colonial authority. Regardless, it is important to develop the historical background and proceedings that occurred within the pre-independence period of 1571 to 1960 as well as the post-independence period of 1960 to 1974 to fully understand and appreciate the events that have unfolded throughout Cypriot history. Existing research on Cyprus focuses on the historical context of the conflict but does not explore the leadership styles practiced by community
members, the motivations behind the establishment of ethnic nationalist groups, nor the sense of group identity among Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. This little understood and largely forgotten dispute is a case study in social movements, which has far-reaching implications in future conflict resolution efforts in similar situations. Cyprus has been a continuous thorn in the side of the United Nations and calls the efficacy of the entire organization into question due to the lack of a settlement. Without a solution that is acceptable to both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, the island will never know peace and will exist as a fractured byproduct of its violent history.

**Analysis of Existing Research**

**The Ottoman Occupation, 1571 to 1878**

The battle for Cyprus between the Ottoman Turks and the Venetians signaled the downfall of a legacy of European domination and the emergence of a completely alien power for the first time. The Venetians first sought to improve the defenses of Cyprus by fortifying strategic cities such as Limassol and Nicosia. In 1570, the Ottoman Sultan, Selim II, dispatched a powerful army and navy under the command of Lala Mustafa Pasha and captured Nicosia in September after a determined resistance by the Venetians. Famagusta, defended by 8,000 Venetians, Greek Cypriots, and Albanian mercenaries, fought under a great disadvantage until the city fell to the Turks in August 1571 (Boatswain, 2005). Famagusta, which held an important strategic position, due to its possession of the deepest harbor on the island, fell too in 1571 (Boatswain, 2005). The Turks completed their conquest of Cyprus by capturing Kyrenia, long considered the key to the whole island due to the north shore position of the city and
seemingly impenetrable castle first built by the Byzantines, modified by the Crusaders, and improved again by the Venetians (Spyridakis, 1974).

The Turkish conquest brought with it many radical changes to the island. Regardless of the initial bloodbath in capturing the island from the Venetians, the Ottoman presence would prove to have surprisingly little effect over the next 300 years in terms of administration and infrastructure (Boatswain, 2005). The transition from a familiar and mostly harmless western power to a completely strange and foreign culture led to the establishment of two distinct ethnic and religious communities who largely ignored one another and kept to themselves. The Turkish occupiers supported the aims of the Greek Orthodox Church, which they used as a means to control the Greek population. During the Turkish occupation, the Church became a community leader and acted as a tax collection agency on behalf of the Turks (Boatswain, 2005). Due to how the census was administered at the time, the Turkish population during the occupation was recorded to consist of the remnants of the occupation forces and any others who had converted to Islam. Orthodox Bishops became de facto leaders of their people, a practice that made civil administration simple for the Turks. The newfound authority awarded to the Orthodox Church became a fundamental political concept throughout the Ottoman occupation (Coufoudakis, 1976). Soon the island came under the jurisdiction of the Grand Vizier, who appointed a Pasha (governor). In the 19th century, the Turks reorganized local governments into the millet system by the establishment of councils made up of local leaders and elites, who exercised duties approximating those of mayor (Coufoudakis, 1976). Implementation of the millet system led to the cultivation of a Greek Cypriot political identity and led the Greeks to look to their own people for guidance, rather than their occupiers. In 1670, the island came under the authority of
the Admiral of the Ottoman navy, Kara Musa Pasha, and in 1703, authority reverted to the Grand Vizier (Spyridakis, 1974).

The eventual corruption and mismanagement of Cyprus by the Turks was lessened to some degree by the role that the Church played but led to sporadic revolts by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots (Bryant, 2004). In addition, natural disasters such as plague, drought, famine, and earthquakes only worsened conditions on the island. However, the tireless effort by Church leaders such as Philotheos, Paisios, Chrysanthos, Panaretos, and Makarios I alleviated only the worst miseries of the people. Frequently, these leaders would travel to Constantinople to air their grievances but these attempts would usually only result in persecution, exile, or status loss. The Turks paid little attention to matters such as education and culture; instead, these duties fell to concerned Church leaders. In addition to the aforementioned natural disasters, the Turks exploited the peasants via a system of heavy taxation; requiring religious taxes, land taxes, and head taxes. Because of these hardships, the population of Cyprus began to diminish over time. In 1571, there were 850 villages and towns, which gradually reduced to 605 by 1862. Of these villages and towns, Greek Cypriots inhabited 248 and Turkish Cypriots inhabited 118 (Bryant, 2004). This period of heavy taxation led to an increasing feeling of alienation among the Greek Cypriot population and led to a trend of self-categorization and collusion with their own people. In 1660, the Turks placed the responsibility of collecting taxes from the Turkish Cypriot population on the same Church leaders who already collected taxes from the Greek Cypriot population (Boatswain, 2005). Despite their newfound level of authority, Church leaders often became victims of intrigue, plots, and rebellion, as Turkish Cypriots would occasionally rebel against both the Orthodox Church as well as their own
Turkish authorities, both of whom they held responsible for the intolerable conditions in their own community. Perhaps the first Greek Cypriot community leader of note, Archbishop Chrysanthos, was exiled to Euboea by the Turks after being caught between the two authorities, where he died in 1810 (Spyridakis, 1974). Another characteristic of Turkish administration in the 18th century was the establishment of a *dragoman* position. The *dragoman* served as a liaison between the Greek Cypriot population and the Ottoman government in Constantinople, the most well known *dragoman* being Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios. Hadjigeorgakis became the island’s main benefactor—he built Churches, donated land, and advanced educational opportunities. However, while he was on a trip to Constantinople to discuss regional affairs, the Turks accused Hadjigeorgakis of corruption and summarily executed him in 1809 (Boatswain, 2005). The leadership displayed by Archbishop Chrysanthos and Hadjigeorgakis represents the strengthening of a Greek national and ethnic identity, and both of them were revered as heroes (Spyridakis, 1974, pp 155-160).

Following the exile of Archbishop Chrysanthos, Archbishop Kyprianos took his place and soon concerned himself primarily with the education of the youth (Bryant, 2004). In 1812, Kyprianos established the *Hellenic School* in Nicosia, which eventually evolved into the *Pancyprian Gymnasium* and became a model for similar institutions (Spyridakis, 1974). Kyprianos also began to involve himself in revolutionary activities, such as supporting a secret Greek organization called the *Filiki Eteria* aimed at overthrowing Ottoman rule (Spyridakis, 1974). Kyprianos pledged to offer economic support to the cause but did not want to alarm the Turkish authorities; therefore, he was only able to contribute in a limited capacity. In 1821, while the Greek Revolution raged on, Kyprianos assured the Turkish authorities of his non-
involvement and loyalty (Hitchens, 1997). However, Turkish suspicions were confirmed when revolutionary leaflets were discovered and Kyprianos, along with Bishops, Abbots, and hundreds of others were executed on 9 July 1821 (Boatswain, 2005). The mass killing was soon followed by the seizure of the Church as well as Greek Cypriot private property by Turkish authorities. By 1826, a large number of Greek Cypriots had escaped Cyprus to fight as volunteers in the Greek Revolution as volunteers, increasing community cohesion and identification (Boatswain, 2005). The disillusioned people of Cyprus, who had been left out of the Greek Revolution and remained under Ottoman control, looked to their Archbishop for guidance. Archbishop Panaretos reopened the all-boys Hellenic School, which had been closed since 9 July 1821, and Archbishop Makarios I provided further aid to the educational system by establishing a similar school for girls in 1859 (Spyridakis, 1974, pp 161-165).

The roles that influential figures such as these have played throughout the Ottoman occupation are crucial; their leadership encouraged education and helped to cultivate an independent Greek identity seemingly unaffected by Turkish rule. During Ottoman rule, Cyprus became somewhat of an undeveloped backwater of the empire that was only saved by local and religious leaders (Bryant, 2004). Since the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, Greek Cypriots had continually fought for their own independence as well by union with Greece, or enosis (Bryant, 2004). The demand for enosis only increased when Cyprus was transferred to Britain in 1878 following the Ottoman defeat in the Crimean War (Boatswain, 2005). Orthodox Church authorities in the Greek Cypriot community practiced servant leadership in their role as a liaison (Greenleaf, 2011). The idea that a great leader is seen as a servant first is evident in the emphasis on ensuring that Greek Cypriot youth were provided with a solid educational
foundation as well as solidarity with various subversive undercurrents during the Ottoman occupation. Church leaders continued to grow in popularity as the Greek Cypriot community responded to their message and were viewed as martyrs upon their inglorious deaths at the hands of the Ottomans. While power was conferred on Church leaders by the occupation, they continually searched for ways to serve their constituents and improve their lives during this period. Servant leaders are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted first as servants (Greenleaf, 2011). As many generations of Cypriots suffered under the at times brutal Ottoman occupation, servant leaders were forced to accept their fate and work under its imperfections as a foundation upon which the Church authorities could build up their communities as best they could (Greenleaf, 2011). This servant-first approach to leadership meant that making sure that the community’s needs were met was the highest priority for Church authorities (Greenleaf, 2011).

**Ethnic Nationalism**

The basis of ethnic nationalism is a political mobilization of a group of people, and the readiness to categorize oneself as a certain ethnicity (Hobsbawm, 1989). This eagerness on behalf of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots to identify with their respective mother country, either Greece or Turkey, resulted in a sustained division that led to widespread violence and distrust. An irredentist concept called the *megalı idea*, or great idea has possible roots in the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453; this traumatic event eventually culminated four centuries later with the Greek Revolution of 1821. Constantinople represented the last vestige of a once great Greek empire, whose people were unwilling to come to terms with their loss of self (Volkan, 2006). The *megalı idea* expressed the desire to bring all Greek-speaking peoples into
the new state, which ended up leaving out ethnic Greeks in areas like Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, the Aegean Islands, Crete, Cyprus, parts of Anatolia, and the city of Constantinople itself, which would replace Athens as the capital of Greek ethnicity and culture.

While the concept of enosis had emerged much earlier, the campaign for enosis dates back only to the Greek Revolution of 1821 and shortly thereafter with the leadership of John Kapodistria. Kapodistria, a revolutionary and president of the new state, called for the union of all Greek-speaking peoples and their incorporation into the fledgling state. During British rule, demand for enosis among Greek Cypriots was consistent and determined but remained in the background due to the occupation.

In opposition to enosis were the Turkish Cypriots, who felt disenfranchised and alone. Turkish Cypriots initially expressed a desire for the continuation of British rule, only later demanding partition of the island. The Turks felt that the British would be better able to serve their interests and protect them as a minority group (Papadakis, 2006). The Turkish call for taksim, or partition, became the rallying cry for supporters who felt that partition was the only way to bring about peace to the island. The goal of taksim was to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority and prevent their assimilation into the majority Greek population. The eventual realization of taksim was achieved following the de facto partition of the island after the Turkish invasion of 1974.

The theory of toxic leadership, while difficult to define, is applicable to the emergence of nationalist movements and extremist organizations in both communities. Toxic leaders inflict harm on their constituents by engaging in destructive behaviors in order to advance their own selfish goals. The desperation felt by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots made each
community susceptible to the allure of toxic leaders, and thus they became willing followers (Reed, 2015). While the goals of each community were different, they were similar in their call for division. Whether intentional or not, the toxic leaders that would eventually head extremist organizations only served to undermine the legitimacy of their causes. Toxic leaders deified themselves as the only ones able to solve their respective community’s problems and disregarded standards of diplomacy through their actions (Reed, 2015). As extremist organizations typically operate in a militaristic fashion, followers are expected to perform duties without question, often in a moral grey area. For the situation to qualify as leadership, followers and leaders engage in a mutual agreement that constitutes a relationship (Reed, 2015). Both leader and follower are committed to a cause, in this instance represented by the division of their communities. Followers are drawn to toxic leaders and extremist organizations in an effort to be part of something bigger than they are. They have a fundamental need to associate with and contribute to an organization that will leave a legacy or make a difference in their view. Followers seek a sense of purpose and belonging, at times highly motivating, which are factors in their self-justification for joining in the first place. They perceive their service to be looked at as a noble endeavor by their own community and its members, including friends and family (Reed, 2015). The refusal by occupying powers to recognize the seriousness of these continuous calls for enosis and taksim contributed to the assembly of nationalist movements in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. The stubbornness of the British, most notably, is a critical factor in the formation of extremist organizations and consolidation of power by toxic leaders.

**Cyprus under the British, 1878 to 1960**
The underlying motive behind seizing control of Cyprus for Britain was the attempt to halt Russian expansion into Asia Minor. Britain did not want to compete with the Russians over the declining Ottoman Empire, known then as the sick man of Europe. Throughout the British occupation, Cyprus continued to be claimed by the Ottoman Sultan, regardless of the empire’s decline and eventual dissolution. The British occupation would also bring the island back under European control for the first time in centuries. The success of the British occupation was largely due to the diplomacy of Prime Minister Disraeli, who viewed Cyprus as a strategic stepping-stone to the rest of the region (Boatswain, 2005). The issue of improving and developing the island arose as soon the British took control and would remain a dominant issue for the people of Cyprus. A systematic effort to secure the aims of the people came in the form of a memorandum to the British officials, led by Archbishop Sophronios in 1889. The British soon established a legislative council, headed by a High Commissioner, General Wolseley. Wolseley’s council constituted a majority with the combined votes of British and Turkish Cypriot members (Boatswain, 2005). Thus, the demand for enosis by Greek Cypriots was largely refused or ignored by the British, but was brought up at every council session regardless (Boatswain, 2005). In 1914, Britain formally annexed Cyprus, essentially terminating any vestiges of sovereignty the Ottoman Sultan held over the island (Boatswain, 2005). Chances for enosis greatly improved during World War I, when Britain offered Cyprus to Greece in exchange for Greece’s involvement in the war on the side of the Allies and opposition to the Central Powers, to which the new nation of Turkey was allied. Following the conclusion of the war, Britain reneged on its promise and once again the people of Cyprus renewed their demands for enosis under Archbishop Cyril III, who went to London in 1919 (Boatswain, 2005). The
Archbishop’s mission was not accomplished, regardless of promises made by Prime Minister Lloyd George and members of the British government to the Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos (Spyridakis, 1974).

Prior to the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 to 1922, Greece had been promised many other territorial gains by the British such as eastern Thrace, the islands of Imbros and Tenedos, as well as an enclave in Ionia around the city of Smyrna. These promises again appealed to the Greeks as they represented a continuation of the megalı idea, which sought to incorporate all ethnic Greeks into the Greek state (Coufoudakis, 1976). The defeat of Greece in 1922 would prove to be a major blow to this end, resulting in the return to pre-war borders and a population exchange between Greece and Turkey in which countless people were displaced from their homes (Mallinson, 2005). In the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, between Greece and Turkey, the latter gave up all claims to Cyprus, which remained under British rule (Volkan, 2006). This act drove a wedge further between the Greek Cypriots and British, only worsening with the British declaring Cyprus a Crown colony in 1925; the lowest rung in the colonial ladder and something of an insult to the people of Cyprus. British changes to the aforementioned legislative council included increasing the number of Greek Cypriots to 12, the British from six to nine, and Turkish Cypriots remaining with three (Boatswain, 2005). The High Commissioner, now called the Governor, also retained the right of veto powers. Following the death of Archbishop Cyril III, the British prohibited the election of a new Archbishop, leaving the position vacant for the time being. Bishop Leonitios of Paphos undertook the duties of Archbishop, but he too became alienated due to his pro-Greek stance on the future of Cyprus. The British then imposed limitations on the operation of Greek schools by placing them under their immediate control as
well as undertaking the education of teachers themselves (Coufoudakis, 1976). In addition, medical doctors and lawyers had limitations imposed upon their professions in a further attempt to de-Hellenize the Greek Cypriots (Spyridakis, 1974).

The advent of World War II lessened the tensions between the British authorities and Greek Cypriots—unpopular laws and limitations were overturned, and those exiled were allowed to return (Boatswain, 2005). Cyprus became yet another victim of British imperialism, with the colonial government making no serious improvements to cultural development. At the end of the war, Greek Cypriots once again brought the issue of their political future to the attention of the British rulers—the demand for enosis, in accordance with the principle of self-determination as stressed by leaders such as Roosevelt and Churchill during the war. The British could no longer ignore this insistence and Bishop Leontios traveled to London in 1946 to submit a formal demand but, once again, the mission failed. The Greek Cypriots then elected Archbishop Makarios II in 1947, following the removal of restrictions on the election of Archbishops imposed by the British (Boatswain, 2005). In 1947, the British convened a conference to consider proposals on constitutional changes in Cyprus. However, among the Greek Cypriots, only communists and pro-British individuals participated, as the Church leaders rejected any participation in such a conference. The Turkish Cypriot community was wary of the proposal to unify with Greece but continued to live in peace and harmony with their Greek neighbors. A plebiscite conducted on 15 January 1950 revealed the true wishes of Greek Cypriots as 96% of the population voted for enosis with Greece (Boatswain, 2005). The resulting political implications were felt both locally and internationally in spite of continued attempts to keep a lid on the situation by the British. The political and diplomatic pressure kept up by the Greek
Cypriots only continued with Alexander Papagos, the Greek Prime Minister’s, undertaking of support for *enosis* at the United Nations (Spyridakis, 1974).

Subsequently, the Greek government in 1954 and 1955 requested self-determination in Cyprus. On both occasions, the United Nations failed to satisfy this expectation due to speculation that the request would undermine British sovereignty. In spite of an insufficient number of votes at the United Nations favoring Cyprus, the debates brought the situation to the attention of the international community and quickly gained support by anti-colonialist activists. As the struggle for *enosis* began to grow in intensity, the British put into effect anti-sedition laws in an attempt to bring about the complacency of the Greek Cypriots. These laws did nothing more than to further invoke the drive for *enosis*, the leadership of which coming under Archbishop Makarios III in 1950. Makarios III acted to organize Greek Cypriots and made continuous efforts to resolve the issue through diplomacy (Boatswain, 2005). The British Government in London declared that self-determination would never be granted to the Cypriots and instead offered various constitutional proposals that were rejected by the Greek Cypriots (Boatswain, 2005, p. 173).

**Identity Formation**

Identification and connection to a respective mother country, in this case represented by Greece and Turkey, served to open a rift between the two communities, and eventually led to the establishment of nationalist organizations on both sides. The ambition of these organizations from roughly 1955 to 1974 was that of either union with the mother country (*enosis*) or complete partition and separateness (*taksim*).
Regardless of whichever authority controlled the island at a given time, these goals came to the forefront of social and political movements. George Grivas, leader of the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), met with Makarios III in July 1951 for the first time in order to discuss the issue of *enosis* (Boatswain, 2005, p.126). Grivas committed himself to a campaign of violence, convinced that only an armed struggle would force Britain to concede. Makarios III, however, rejected the idea of violence. Grivas and Makarios III met in Athens a few more times throughout the year, with Grivas only becoming more convinced that violence was the only option. He returned to Cyprus in October 1951 and spent the rest of the year surveying the island in preparation for his imminent campaign. During this time, Grivas realized that such an operation might not defeat the British militarily but would attract the attention of the international community, thereby forcing the British to capitulate. Grivas returned to Athens in February 1953 and began to draw up plans. In 1955, Grivas informed Makarios III of the Greek government’s support of his campaign. EOKA was established on 1 April 1955 under the leadership of George Grivas known by the *nom de guerre* Digenis, who declared that the revolution had begun. EOKA was soon declared illegal and the British undertook measures to destroy the organization. When police and military measures failed to extinguish the sentiment of Greek Cypriots, many students, teachers, and others were detained in camps without trial. The British soon began to collaborate with the Turkish Cypriots, who had always been cautious of the Greek drive for *enosis* and were successful in turning them against their Greek neighbors (Boatswain, 2005). While the main targets of EOKA attacks were British, the organization also went after pro-British Cypriots, informants, communists such as those in the Progressive Party of
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Working People (AKEL), Turkish Cypriot supporters of *taksim*, and members of the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT).

Rauf Denktaş formed TMT in 1958 in order to counter EOKA in the liberation struggle and bring about *taksim*, the permanent partition of the island. TMT played a role in the creation of Turkish Cypriot enclaves, into which most Turkish Cypriots were forcibly concentrated (Hitchens, 1997). TMT was also largely considered a terrorist organization, which attacked mostly civilian targets in order to instill fear in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. This formation of a counter resistance organization on behalf of Turkish Cypriots, while important to the defense of their interests, only served to alienate the two communities further and bring more violence and death to the island.

Social identity and self-categorization are the main themes of the new psychology of leadership theory. Leadership is not just a relationship between leaders and followers; it is an exchange between leaders and followers within a social group. As such, in order to be effective the leaders and members of EOKA and TMT needed to be bound together by both representing a common identity. Grivas and Denkteş would have gained their status and influence over their organizations by purporting to represent their respective communities and distance themselves from their opponents. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots felt a sense of internalized group membership associated with their own sense of self. They identified with the community they grew up in and the social groups formed therein (Haslam, 2011). Greek Cypriots felt that they were inherently Greek and Turkish Cypriots felt that they were simply Turkish. Neither side identified as purely Cypriot due to centuries of occupation by various powers. What is most important in this construct is the fact that social identity allows its members to both lead and to
be led. This shared sense of belonging is central to the idea that influence lies at the heart of effective leadership (Haslam, 2011). For the disenfranchised Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, Grivas and Denktaş represented heroic figures but they were only viewed as such by their followers while addressing community goals. The idea that either man was simply born with leadership abilities is a poor explanation of the phenomena as they were simply opportunists who latched onto a collective feeling of despair and filled a vacuum (Haslam, 2011).

**The Liberation Struggle, 1955 to 1959**

In 1956, Turkey claimed that Cyprus was an extension of the Turkish mainland and latent tensions began to rise once again. Negotiations between the island’s new British Governor, Sir John Harding, and Makarios III took place in an attempt to find a solution to this increasingly complicated issue. Nevertheless, these negotiations soon collapsed (Hitchens, 1997). Because of this, Makarios III and other notable Greek Cypriot leaders were exiled to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. Following the exile, the British undertook an extensive campaign to exterminate EOKA. However, the organization had become so strong that attempts were made to assassinate the Governor of the island. The British called on Lord Radcliffe, an authority on constitutional law, to prepare a draft for Cyprus to be considered by both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This draft was rejected by the Greek Cypriots and favored by Turkish Cypriots, driving yet another wedge between the two populations (Hitchens, 1997). The United Nations soon adopted a resolution in the hopes of renewed negotiations that persuaded George Grivas to agree to suspend operations if Makarios III was allowed to return to the island, as the Greek Cypriots recognized Makarios III as the only representative in negotiations with the British. Makarios III was allowed to travel to Athens on 17 April 1957 but was not allowed to return to Cyprus at this
time. The British approached Greece with a proposal that the Cyprus issue would be presented to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for a solution since both Britain and Greece were members, however the Greek government was opposed to NATO intervention and insisted on the return of Makarios III to Cyprus. Greece submitted a counter proposal, reiterating that Makarios III was to be the sole representative recognized by the Greek Cypriots. This proposal was refused by the British and soon led to more violence in Cyprus. Greece then submitted its proposal to the United Nations on 15 July 1957, requesting the right to self-determination of the Greek Cypriots (Hitchens, 1997). Britain’s subsequent rejection would prove to have grave consequences for Cyprus, Greece, and the stability of the region as a whole. With encouragement from the British, the Turkish Cypriots, who constituted roughly 18% of the population at that time, became more aggressive towards the Greek Cypriots and several engagements resulted in many deaths on both sides (Spyridakis, 1974).

This renewed violence forced the United Nations to search for a peaceful solution and the General Assembly recommended a democratic resolution proposed by the British; the Macmillan Plan, which sought to invite both Greece and Turkey to participate in the island’s administration (Boatswain, 2005). Greece rejected this plan, while Turkey favored it. Early in 1959, negotiations were held between Greece and Turkey in Zurich to find a solution acceptable to the British. On 19 February 1959, an agreement was reached between the Prime Ministers of Britain, Greece, and Turkey, Macmillan, Karamanlis, and Menderes respectively (Boatswain, 2005). Makarios III represented the Greek Cypriot community and Dr. Fazıl Küçük represented the Turkish Cypriot community of Cyprus. Küçük had already voiced his nationalist ideas in 1954 with a column in his own newspaper citing that the island was Ottoman and thus Turkish
territory until it was ceded to the British in 1878, and that Turkey had the right of first refusal in the case of Cyprus’ political place in the world (Hitchens, 1997).

These agreements declared Cyprus an independent nation whose territorial integrity was guaranteed by Britain, Greece, and Turkey. Britain retained two large areas as military bases, one at Dhekelia, and one at Akrotiri. In addition, Britain retained the right to use the island’s roads and air space for military forces. The fledgling Republic of Cyprus recognized the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as representing two separate communities. As a result, a proportion of 70:30 in the Cypriot parliament was imposed along with separate municipal systems, separate court systems, the right of veto for the Turkish Vice President (Küçük), and a 60:40 proportion in the police and army (Boatswain, 2005). In order to guarantee the application of these agreements, military forces from Greece and Turkey, constituting roughly 950 Greek troops and 650 Turkish troops, were stationed on the island (Boatswain, 2005) At this time, the population consisted of 80% Greek Cypriots, and 18% Turkish Cypriots. The declaration of Cyprus as an independent state, the Republic of Cyprus, took place on 16 August 1960. The last British Governor of Cyprus, Sir Hugh Foot, left the island the same day and the Union Jack flag was lowered for the last time (Spyridakis, 1974).

**The Republic of Cyprus, 1960 to 1974**

Following the election of the Republic of Cyprus to the United Nations, the country was admitted to the British Commonwealth, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations (Boatswain, 2005). From the early days of constitutional application, it became evident that the basis of the Republic was quite fragile; the constitution could not be put into force and constitutional reform soon became imperative (Boatswain, 2005). An uneasy truce
remained between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots for a short time, but each side soon found reasons to distrust the other again. Greek Cypriots continued to look to Greece as their mother country, while Turkish Cypriots looked to Turkey. During the British occupation, the Turkish Cypriots had not wanted to see the island’s political status altered, and they generally cooperated with the British. Once the Republic was established, Turkish Cypriots began to exploit the privileges granted by the British-drafted constitution. Because of this, President Makarios III submitted a memorandum to Vice President Küçük on 30 November 1963 in which he recommended amending the constitution (Boatswain, 2005). The aims of the amendments were to remove partitionist elements of the constitution and bring about a unified state.

Makarios III also submitted his proposals to the guaranteeing countries of Britain, Greece, and Turkey. Of these countries, Turkey immediately rejected the proposal, threatening military intervention (Boatswain, 2005).

Heavy fighting from 20 to 25 December 1963 erupted north of the capital city of Nicosia. Eventually, government forces were able to overcome Turkish Cypriot rebels, who sought to occupy the whole of Nicosia. Fighting also took place in Paphos, Limassol, and rural areas such as Ayios Sozomenos in which there were many casualties. Worried that the escalation would spread further, the British were called upon to restore order using their military forces stationed on the island. During this time, Turkish Cypriots established an autonomous zone in the Turkish district of Nicosia with the help of illegal military aid by Turkey. This state within a state was augmented by the transportation of rural Turkish Cypriots into the urban area; effectively creating a Turkish canton. Turkish Cypriots also began to occupy areas vital to the operation of the state such as the key road intersections at Kofinou (linking Limassol, Nicosia, and Larnaca).
and Limnitis (Boatswain, 2005). Turkish Cypriot rebels also occupied the harbors of Famagusta and Limassol with the help of Turkey, one of the nations supposedly guaranteeing the sovereignty and independence of Cyprus, which provided the rebels with military aid and violated Cypriot territory, territorial waters, and airspace (Spyridakis, 1974).

A conference was called in London on 15 January 1964 between the three guaranteeing powers along with the government of the Republic of Cyprus and representatives of both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities (Boatswain, 2005). The aim of the conference was to put an end to the violence and avoid any new clashes that could emerge by putting forth a solution satisfactory to both parties. The result of the conference was a proposal submitted by Britain on 31 January 1964 calling for a temporary three-month military occupation of the island by NATO forces. In the meantime, there would be a search for a definite political solution. Turkey quickly accepted the proposal while Greece reluctantly agreed as well. The Republic of Cyprus, on the other hand, rejected the proposal due to the implication that it would acknowledge the partition of the island into two separate communities. Instead, the representatives of Cyprus proposed a plan that would dispatch an international United Nations force and a guarantee by all parties for the territorial integrity of Cyprus as a sovereign, independent nation. No such agreement was reached, however, and the issue was taken to the United Nations Security Council in February 1964. During the debate, Turkish Cypriot leaders sought to question the existence of a legal government in the Republic of Cyprus and insisted on the recognition of two separate communities on the island. This attempt failed because of the Security Council’s recognition of the Cypriot government on 4 March 1964. To restore order, a United Nations peacekeeping force was dispatched under the command of the Secretary General,
who would stay for three months. In addition, a mediator appointed by the Secretary General would undertake an effort to bring about consultation with the government of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and Britain. Turkey reaffirmed the Security Council’s resolution in a vote on 13 March 1964 due to another threat of military action. Faced with this menace from Turkey, the government of Cyprus did not attempt to restore law and order to those areas occupied by Turkish Cypriot rebels as the resolution had stipulated it could. Secretary General U Thant appointed General Giyani as commander of the United Nations peacekeeping force. Sakari Tuomioja was appointed as mediator but died shortly after and was succeeded by Galo Plaza, who submitted a proposal to the Secretary General that did not prevent *enosis* under certain conditions. (Boatswain, 2005). The Turks immediately rejected this report, causing Plaza to resign as mediator (Boatswain, 2005).

The Turkish Cypriot rebellion, with support from Turkey, caused a revived the Greek Cypriot call for *enosis*. The government of Greece, under Prime Minister George Papandreou, sent army units to Cyprus with instructions to defend the island against a Turkish invasion. Simultaneously, Turkey as well sent army units to Turkish Cypriot-held enclaves in Cyprus. Fighting also broke out between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in the northwest of the island, near Mansoura and Kokkina. Turkey then carried out napalm air raids against the Tillyria region in August 1964, killing dozens of civilian targets. In 1967, new clashes broke out in the Larnaca district’s villages of Ayios Theodoros and Kofinou (Boatswain, 2005). Meanwhile, a military *coup d’état* in Greece brought a group of army officers to power under Colonel George Papadopoulos. Soon, an agreement was made between Greece and Turkey to withdraw all forces presently on the island, not counting those guaranteed by the Zurich and London agreements of
1959 (Boatswain, 2005). The new government of Greece withdrew its units, but Turkey did not. Greece, however, did maintain some volunteer army officers on the island in order to instruct the newly constituted National Guard of Cyprus. The government of Cyprus rejected Turkey’s demand that the National Guard be disbanded (Boatswain, 2005).

Tensions continued throughout 1967 as Turkish Cypriots established a temporary administration while still utilizing government services such as labor exchange offices, the licensing of motor vehicles, the pension system, the post office, customs, as well as water and electricity, none of which were paid for by the Turkish Cypriots. Areas controlled by Turkish Cypriot rebels were also off-limits to Greek Cypriots at this time. The government of Cyprus then submitted a plan for revision and reformation of the constitution, specifically, the formation of a unified, independent state, guarantees for the legal rights of the Turkish minority, and the granting of a large degree of local autonomy in the fields of education, culture, and religion. This plan applied the principle of the achievable goal as a way of resolving the stalemate and temporarily abandoned the original and fundamental goal of the Greek Cypriots, that of enosis. In 1968, negotiations between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots convened but produced no results after five years. The failure of these negotiations caused the United Nations Secretary General to bring in two specialists in constitutional law, one representing Greece and one representing Turkey, with the main purpose being to remove any obstacles in the way that might hinder the development of a harmonious, functioning of the Republic of Cyprus. The foundation of the Cypriot government’s policy at this time was that of an independent, unitary, sovereign state and the recognition of Turkish Cypriot autonomy in matters of education, culture, and
religion as previously mentioned. The creation of a state within a state was unacceptable to the government of Cyprus, which refused to yield to Turkish threats or international pressure.

During the talks, EOKA leader George Grivas returned secretly to Cyprus in August 1971 (Boatswain, 2005). Shortly thereafter, Grivas established a secret organization known as EOKA-B, which was to be a continuation of the aim of Greek Cypriot self-determination and enosis. The government of Cyprus, however, stayed true to the spirit of negotiation and sought to discourage the activities of such an organization. Parallel to the activities of Grivas, an effort was made by the island’s three Bishops in Paphos, Larnaca, and Kyrenia who cooperated with Grivas and called on Makarios III to step down as President, as the Bishops claimed his political office was incompatible with his position as Archbishop (Boatswain, 2005). However, both sides were unwilling to compromise and in 1973, the three Bishops stripped Makarios III of his title as Archbishop of Cyprus and appointed the Bishop of Paphos in his place. Makarios III called a council of 13 Bishops and declared that the three Bishops be removed from office. Makarios III then replaced the Bishops and created two new positions. The death of Grivas on 27 January 1974 was to have a great effect on the government and people of Cyprus; Makarios III declared a general amnesty for all EOKA-B members as well as a three-day period of mourning. EOKA-B then fell under the control of Dimitrios Ioannides, the new head of the military junta in Greece, who was determined to bring about enosis as soon as possible. Makarios III ordered all Greek army officers to be removed from the island. Ioannides replied by calling for the overthrow of Makarios III on 15 July 1974, which was carried out by the National Guard of Cyprus led by Greek army officers in the subsequent coup d’état (Bryant, 2004). At this time, Nikos Sampson became the provisional President of the Republic of Cyprus.
Joseph Luns, then Secretary General of NATO allegedly sent a secret letter in July 1974 indicting American responsibility for the overthrow of Makarios III (O’Malley, 2001). Immediately, Turkey began planning an invasion of Cyprus after failing to garner support from Britain in the form of a joint intervention as guarantee powers (Spyridakis, 1974).

The Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, decided to act unilaterally, and on 20 July 1974, a military invasion was launched on the island of Cyprus, codenamed Operation Attila (Stearns, 1992). The Turkish pretext for the invasion was the protection of the Turkish Cypriot community as a result of the Greek junta and following EOKA-B coup d’état that brought Sampson to power. Turkey used its status as a guaranteed power, which allowed the prescribed countries to intervene in order to protect the 1960 constitution, as justification for the assault. On 22 July 1974, the Greek military junta called for a ceasefire and relinquished power in Greece, giving way for a democratic election of a new government. The extension of the operation into a second stage, following the replacement of Sampson with Glafkos Klerides on 23 July 1974, displayed ulterior motives on the Turkish side. A conference called in Geneva two days later, on 25 July 1974, resulted in the confirmation of the ceasefire and an agreement that there would be no extension of territory now controlled by both sides. On 9 August 1974, another conference in Geneva demanded that Turkish forces return to the ceasefire line of 30 July 1974, as well as the withdrawal of Greek Cypriots from Turkish Cypriot enclaves (Boatswain, 2005). The Turkish Prime Minister, Ecevit, accepted the ceasefire and welcomed the return of democracy in Greece. However, a second wave of the invasion, launched on 14 August 1974, resulted in a rapid and obviously well planned advance; Turkish forces moved to occupy 34% of the island and displaced over 180,000 Greek Cypriots. The Turkish advance eventually halted almost exactly
on the Attila line, proposed by Turkey as the demarcation of partition in 1965, but rejected by previously mentioned United Nations mediator Galo Plaza. This line put three of the island’s ports (Famagusta, Karavostassi, and Kyrenia) under Turkish control, as well as the important town of Morphou (an entirely Greek Cypriot community first established by the Spartans), the northern half of the capital Nicosia, and the fertile Mesaoria agricultural plain. These areas represented more than just a percentage of lost territory; they constituted a significant portion of population, tourism, cultivated lands, water resources, mining, and industrial interests (Hitchens, 1997). The invasion soon led to the consolidation of these newly acquired possessions and on 22 August 1974, Rauf Denktaş, founder of TMT proclaimed the establishment of an autonomous Turkish Cypriot administration (Hitchens, 1997). What had been an issue of inter-communal strife had been transformed into one of foreign occupation.

**Conclusions and Implications on Future Research**

The opposed aims of the two major ethnic groups of Cyprus, as well as Ottoman and later British policies exacerbating divisions eventually led to violent interethnic confrontation and an impossible situation of permanent partition. The division of the island into two competing autonomous authorities only serves to enhance the instability of the region, resulting in the continuation of hatred and distrust among Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as well as proving to be a disaster in peace making for the international community (Martin, 2006). The dispute over Cyprus is no doubt one of the most complex and long-lasting divisions between people, and it is unfeasible to attempt an understanding of this conflict without prior knowledge of the historical background or essential concepts and community leaders fueling the clash. Cyprus remains a victim of occupation, colonialism, and self-inflicted wounds due to ethnic
tension (Hannay, 2005). There can be no foreseeable solution to the conflict without peaceful coexistence and an end to antagonism on both sides. The people of Cyprus must drop their preconceived notions of superiority and paranoia by dealing directly with their counterparts. A situation of winners and losers is not acceptable; both peoples must make a conscious effort to work together in order to assess the state of affairs presented to them. Any hope for a lasting and stable peace must involve a cathartic airing of grievances from both sides and a subsequent effort to remedy these issues. Many attempts have been made, on behalf of foreign powers, to settle the Cyprus dispute but all have failed. No external solution can be imposed on the people of Cyprus; it must be for the people and by the people.
References


