

CHAPTER 07

**Post-war Cyprus, 1945-1960:  
social, political and economic  
development**

E v a n t h i s   H a t z i v a s s i l i o u

## Aims

This chapter aims to discuss internal developments, political, economic and social, in Cyprus from the end of the Second World War until the establishment of the Cyprus Republic in 1960. The analysis will also include the demographic reality in the island, education, and the effect of the anti-colonial movement on social structures.

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the effect of demographic realities in the island's history and in the course of the Cyprus question
- Understand the impact of education in Cypriot society
- Follow the development of Greek- and Turkish Cypriot politics
- Understand the process of polarization in Greek Cypriot politics in the 1940s
- Evaluate the economic basis of the relations between the two major communities
- Appreciate the development of the labour movement in Cyprus and understand the response of the British authorities
- Discuss the attitude of the British toward the major Cypriot political forces
- Evaluate the impact of the anti-colonial struggle on society

## Keywords

- AKEL
- Labour movement
- Elections for the Archbishop
- Education
- Ethnarchy
- Municipal elections
- Greek civil war (impact of – in Cyprus)

# Background

## Cyprus' demography, 1945-60

Cypriot demographic realities did not change after the Second World War. Two censuses, one by the colonial authorities in November 1946 and another immediately after independence in December 1960, showed that population grew spectacularly in the early post-war period. In 1946 the population was estimated at 450,114 and in 1960 at 573,566, with **the Greek Cypriots forming about 78 percent and the Turkish Cypriots about 18 percent of the total**. A degree of urbanization had already become evident. However, the most important aspect of Cypriot demographic realities involved the **extremely mixed character of the population**: although social intercourse and inter-marriage had never been extensive between members of the two major communities, they were living side by side. There was no area with a Turkish Cypriot majority. This would prove important after the mid-1950s, when Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots demanded partition: the implementation of this solution would necessarily involve forcible transfer of people in order to build a Turkish majority somewhere in the island.

In territorial disputes of the Eastern Mediterranean, it was usual for the contesting parties to present demographic data favourable to their positions. **This did not happen in Cyprus until much later, as the high-quality British and later Cypriot administrations provided indisputable statistics**. On the other hand, it is interesting that the British, at least at an initial stage, provided mistaken data regarding the past: In summer 1954, the Colonial Office supported its restrictive constitutional offer by claiming that the population of the Greeks and the Turks of the island was almost equal at the time of the arrival of the British in 1878. The Colonial Office recognized its mistake a month after the presentation of the proposal; this was an example of the use of statistics with the aim of supporting current political aims.

## The Cypriot economy

In the early post-war period Cyprus remained a **predominantly rural society**: according to the 1946 census the largest part of the population lived in the countryside. The move of Cypriot economy from agriculture to services was accelerated only after independence. In 1960 **almost half of the population was working in agriculture, forestry or fishing**.

Despite frequent criticism against the colonial administration for its lack of interest in Cyprus' economic development, **the British improved the infrastructure of the island, aided sanitation and encouraged the modernization of agriculture**. This process was accelerated in the early post-war period. By the late 1940s the industrial sector of the economy, mostly mines or light industry, had recovered. The crisis of prices brought about by the Great Depression had been overcome, and earnings from the **export of minerals** were again substantial. However, Cyprus exported untreated minerals, which were processed elsewhere – a characteristic of an **underdeveloped economy**.

In 1946 the British authorities announced a ten-year development plan for the island, but did not encourage a radical restructuring of the Cypriot economy from agriculture to industry; still, the plan lay emphasis on **electrification**, a sector in which Cyprus was markedly underdeveloped. The **eradication of malaria** by 1950, another aim of the development plan, is a major achievement of British colonial administration. A new plan for economic development, announced by the British in 1955, mainly complemented the British effort to crush the Greek Cypriot armed revolt, and achieved little success.

The Cypriot economy grew despite the political turmoil of the early 1950s, but understandably stagnated during the armed confrontation of 1955-59. **Construction** boomed in 1950-56, both because there were urgent needs for housing, but also because of the British **construction of military installations** after the decision to develop Cyprus as a major base. The biggest growth was recorded in Nicosia, Limmasol and Larnaca.

When the island became independent, the Cypriots enjoyed one of the highest per capita incomes in the Eastern Mediterranean, second only to that of Israel. However, a constant pattern involved the **concentration of wealth mostly to the Greek Cypriot community**: Greek Cypriot contribution to the GDP and to taxation was far larger than their share in population, while the Turkish Cypriot was lower.

## Education

Education was a crucial aspect of Cypriot society, reflecting the dynamism of specific social groups, the rise of nationalism, and finally the potential for social mobility.

Greek Cypriot education had gone through painful ordeals since 1931, but the restrictions had relaxed during the war. The colonial authorities had managed largely to control primary, but not secondary education. **The number of students boomed in the early post-war period.** In primary education, the number of pupils rose from 38,562 in 1938-39 to 67,591 in 1961-62; by 1961 half the pupils were women. In secondary education the rise was more impressive: the number spiralled from 4,692 in 1938-39 to 21,301 in 1959-50, while the percentage of women students rose from 19.5 to 37 percent. **This reflected new demands for knowledge and social mobility as well as for a new place of women in Greek Cypriot society.**

Teachers were politically active. In the 1940s, the Pancyprian Organization of Teachers came under the influence of AKEL; later on, when Greek Cypriot politics became polarized, the union split, first in 1945 and then again in 1948, when the majority of teachers condemned the communist revolution in Greece and set up a rival organization. In 1953 a unified body, the Pancyprian Organization of Greek Teachers (**POED**), was formed, and was followed by the **Organization of Greek Functionaries of Secondary Education (OELMEK).**

Turkish Cypriot education was less developed: according to the 1960 census, 26.2 percent of Turkish Cypriots never attended school, whereas the figure for the Greek Cypriots was 18.6. However, the

percentages of Turkish Cypriots attending secondary education or universities were similar to those of the Greeks. In the Turkish Cypriot side a number of younger people who were educated in Turkey became prominent by the second half of the 1940s and played an important role in the development of Turkish nationalism.

# The social and political polarization of the 1940s

## Cyprus in 1945

The Cypriot experience during the Second World War was significant on many levels. The mobilization of Cypriot society, the participation of many Cypriots in the war and the renewal of political activity ended a period of repressive rule following the 1931 revolt, and created a completely new setting.

After 1945 the Greek Cypriots expected that their old aspiration for Enosis would be met. However this did not take place because British strategic interests were now transferred to the Middle East, in which the island held an important position. **This steadily led to a constant confrontation between the Greek Cypriots and the colonial authorities, and then (in the 1950s) with the Turkish Cypriots.** The primacy of the Greek Cypriot demand for Enosis turned the question of the island's future status into the major issue of Cypriot public life, and meant that **political and social developments, as well as political cleavages were developed in interrelation with this emerging conflict.** This is why it is difficult to treat Cypriot internal political or social developments, and the evolution of the Cyprus question as completely watertight departments.

The road to the Greek Cypriots' disillusionment about British intentions was painful and bitter. On 25 March 1945, during the celebrations for Greek independence, two Greek Cypriots were killed in clashes with the police. In October 1945, the Greek Cypriot demand for the demobilization of Cypriot troops led to further clashes, in which a Greek Cypriot soldier was killed. At the same time, the presence in Cyprus of many Jewish immigrants whom the British strove to prevent from moving to Palestine, also created tension between the colonial authorities and the majority community, who suspected that London aimed to keep these people in Cyprus in order to alter its demographic reality.

## AKEL's dominance in Greek Cypriot politics, 1945-47

The communist-led AKEL (Rehabilitation Party of the Working People) was the major Greek Cypriot political force. Founded in 1941, its political support grew rapidly thanks to the able leaderships of Ploutis Servas and then of Fifis Ioannou, but mostly because of its **organizational structure and its ability to mobilize social forces and develop trade unionism.**

AKEL caused significant discomfort to the colonial authorities: it was a communist-led party which in 1946 proclaimed as its aim the building of a socialist society; at the same time, in the climate

of Enosis expectations, it also made clear that it would work for the union of Cyprus with Greece. **Thus, the British were faced with a movement that, apart from well-organized, was both communist and Enosist.** AKEL's lead in trade unionism and in the projection of the demand for the demobilization of Cypriot soldiers also disturbed the colonial authorities. In July 1945 the AKEL-dominated Pancyprian Trade Union Committee (**PSE**) was banned; its leader, Andreas Ziartides, and 17 members were convicted for conspiracy to overthrow the regime in December 1945. PSE was replaced by the more dynamic Pancyprian Federation of Labour (**PEO**) in 1946. These AKEL-dominated organizations were by far the strongest in the Cypriot trade union movement. They also were one of the few social activities where **Greek - and Turkish Cypriots worked together:** by 1958 and despite the communal strife, about 3,500 Turkish Cypriots were members of PEO.

**AKEL's major political victory came in the municipal elections of May 1946.** The party's candidates prevailed in all major cities, including Limassol, Famagusta, Larnaca and even Nicosia, where the major figure of the Greek Cypriot Right, Themistocles Dervis (the leader of KEK) was defeated by the independent Ioannis Clerides who was supported by AKEL.

## The polarization of Greek Cypriot politics, 1945-47

AKEL's predominance alarmed the Greek Cypriot Right, at the same time when the eruption of the Greek civil war increased tensions in the island (**see below**). In rural Cyprus the Greek Cypriot Right remained stronger than the Left. However, the Right, divided between many (often antagonistic) parties and organizations, seemed unable to assume the initiative.

By autumn 1946 this balance was disturbed by the British decision to retain the sovereignty of Cyprus. Following this decision, the British announced their intention to introduce a colonial Constitution in Cyprus. In the road to a liberalization of Cypriot public life, the colonial authorities abolished the 1937 legislation which prohibited the holding of elections for a new Archbishop of Cyprus. The exiles of 1931 were allowed to return, and Bishop Makarios Myriantheos of Kyrenia thus came back to Cyprus (Bishop Nicodemos of Kition had died in exile). In June 1947 Bishop Leontios of Pafos was elected Archbishop, with the support of AKEL. Immediately afterwards, Leontios came into a difficult position, when AKEL announced its participation in the Consultative Conference which the new Governor, Lord Winster, called; this was strongly renounced by the Greek Cypriot Right. However, Leontios died a month later; his successor was the Bishop of Kyrenia, who became Archbishop Makarios II; he was elected mainly with the support of the Right. In the following months, **the Ethnarchy and the Church took the lead in resisting participation in the Consultative Assembly and in denouncing AKEL for its decision to participate.** In the Ethnarchic Council of Makarios II AKEL was not represented. At the same time, new Bishops were elected, the more prominent among them being the young Bishop of Kition, Makarios (later Archbishop Makarios III). By late 1947 **the polarization of Greek Cypriot society between Left and Right was complete.**

## Social unrest, 1948

By 1947-48 the internal Cypriot conflict occurred on many levels – political, social and within the Greek Cypriot community. AKEL participated in the Consultative Assembly, and was denounced by the Right for its “co-operation” with the British. However, AKEL strongly asked for the introduction of self-government, which the British were not prepared to concede.

This covert AKEL-British confrontation was also reflected in industrial relations. **1948 was a year of large strikes**, first the long strike of the miners of the Cyprus Mines Corporation (the workers were both Greek- and Turkish Cypriots), then of Cyprus Asbestos and finally of construction workers in the main cities. AKEL-led workers sought, among others, wage increases, an eight-hour working day and fourteen days’ holiday per year. **This AKEL campaign caused the reaction of the colonial authorities, who responded with police action and repression, but also of the Right:** at a moment when the effects of the Greek civil war were mirrored in Greek Cypriot society (**see below**), the Right, the Church and the right-wing SEK trade unions also confronted the strikers. Disturbances lasted for several days and clashes were frequent between strikers and their Greek Cypriot opponents.

The strikes of 1948 have remained in the memory of left-wing Greek Cypriots as an indication of a de facto and “unholy” alliance between the British and their right-wing opponents, who, ironically, at the same time were denouncing AKEL for its readiness to discuss the British constitutional offer.

## Cyprus and the Greek civil war: the peak of the political polarization of the Greek Cypriot community

The polarization of Greek Cypriot politics, the strong disagreements over the British constitutional offer and the social tension of these years interplayed with the effects of the Greek civil war. At a time when Greece’s fate seemed to hang in the balance, in a conflict between communist and non-communist forces, **Greek Cypriot politics mirrored this cleavage**. Indeed, the confrontation during the strikes of 1948 became even more tense and relentless because it was seen as a Cypriot reflection of the Greek internal conflict.

The Greek Cypriot Right, already alarmed by AKEL’s ascendancy, rallied to the support of the anti-communist Greek regime. While denouncing the British effort to introduce a colonial Constitution, **the Greek Cypriot Right also gave its priority to the “anti-communist struggle” both in Greece and in Cyprus**. Small numbers of Cypriot volunteers joined the two camps of the civil war. On its part, AKEL undertook to print Greek Communist Party (KKE) publications and campaigned in favour of the release of political prisoners in Greece.

These led to a deep social cleavage, especially after the declaration of an **“economic war” between**



**the Right and the Left in 1948.** Supporters of either coalition avoided to purchase goods or employ the services produced or offered by the “other” side, while social and athletic clubs were split between right- and left-wingers. Right- and left-wing Greek Cypriots went to their “own” shops, coffee-houses or taverns, thus creating a social divide which went far beyond the political sphere. In a small society such as that of Cyprus, this relentless everyday confrontation had long-term divisive consequences.

Another unfortunate incident involved the **effort to transplant patterns of anti-communist violence from Greece to Cyprus.** In Greece, the Cypriot-born former Colonel of the Greek army, Georgios Grivas, had led an anticommunist organization, X, during the occupation; after 1945 he tried to organize a political “Party of X”, which became notorious for its anti-communist paramilitary groups. In 1948 members of the X Party made their appearance in Cyprus and tried to organize similar anti-communist violence. This effort was resented by the British authorities who managed to neutralize it, but left even more bitter memories in the minds of the Greek Cypriot leftists, which would prove important in later stages, when Grivas assumed other roles in the island.

## AKEL at a cross-fire, 1948-49

The centre of political activity in 1948 was the British constitutional offer: this would largely determine the patterns of the future. AKEL tried to facilitate a major change in Cypriot public life, by asking for a Constitution which would provide for a measure of Cypriot self-government, namely, the creation of a sector of the government under Cypriot control. On their part, the British offered a Greek Cypriot elected majority in the Assembly but refused to concede self-government; thus the Greek Cypriot left was obliged to reject the offer. They had discussed the British proposal (and were denounced by the Right for doing so) and had been let down by the British. In turn, the British, who had been challenged by AKEL-led strikes and had faced the party’s rejection of their constitutional proposals, now **had the pretext for adopting harsh measures against it**, mostly under a new Governor, Sir Andrew Wright.

Moreover, the Greek Cypriot leftists were let down by their Greek comrades as well. In December 1948 AKEL leaders (Fifis Ioannou and Andreas Ziartides) visited the Greek Communist Party (KKE) leader, Nicos Zachariades, in war-torn Northern Greece, and asked for advice. Zachariades **severely criticized the Cypriot leaders for their readiness to discuss constitutional development under British “imperialist” auspices.**

Following this, AKEL reverted to the “Enosis only” line. This already was a major defeat for AKEL, which **appeared to succumb to the line of the Ethnarchy and the Right.** In March 1949 Fifis Ioannou was replaced as Secretary-General by Ezekias Papaioannou. However, this change of policy led to a severe internal crisis in AKEL which also contributed to its relative decline in the following years.

AKEL was facing multiple dead-ends: its moderate stance in the Consultative Assembly had been rebuffed by the British (who were now pressing the party), had caused strong attacks by the Ethnarchy for “betrayal” of the national cause, and had been criticized by its brother party in Greece.

## The resurgence of the Greek Cypriot Right, 1948-49

AKEL's problems allowed the Right to step forward. The Greek Cypriot Right benefited from the British anti-communist repression, as well as from the fact that its own line of rejecting the British constitutional offer had prevailed.

In the May 1949 municipal elections, **AKEL lost ground for the first time since its foundation** in 1941. The elections were marked by violence between supporters of the Left and the Right. The largest cities were evenly divided between Left and Right, contrary to 1946, when AKEL had prevailed in all of them. Most importantly, Nicosia reverted to the control of the Right: KEK leader Themistocles Dervis won the municipality, whereas his old opponent, Ioannis Clerides, who had disagreed with AKEL's change of policy, was not supported by the left-wing party which preferred to put forward the candidacy of trade unionist Ziartides.

The resurgence of the Greek Cypriot Right was completed later in the year. The victory of the anti-communist camp in the Greek civil war was an important psychological boost for the pro-western forces in Cyprus, and a big disappointment for AKEL supporters. Furthermore, the Right now managed to impose its line of "Enosis and only Enosis" on the national issue, and to assume the initiative in promoting this policy by organizing the Greek Cypriot plebiscite of January 1950. Further developments in the early 1950s would contribute in the Right's domination of Greek Cypriot politics.

## Developments in the Turkish Cypriot community

The development of Kemalist modern Turkish nationalism had started in Cyprus in the inter-war years, but was accelerated in the 1940s. In 1943 **the Turkish Cypriot community became organized, through the setting up of KATAK**, an organization for the projection of Turkish Cypriot views, and then of a Turkish Cypriot party (**KMTHP**) under Fazil Kuchuk.

The development of modern Turkish nationalism among the Turkish Cypriots was a slow process, and reflected the vigour of the Enosis campaign of their Greek compatriots: the Turkish Cypriots were economically weak; they did not wish to confront the British administration; and they lacked a leading group of intellectuals to cultivate a nationalist agenda.

In the late 1940 younger people, educated in Turkey, filled the gap of a new intellectual-political leadership, and assumed a role in Turkish Cypriot public life; Rauf Denktash is the most prominent of these new men, and came onto the Cyprus scene when he was appointed as one of the Turkish Cypriot representatives in the Consultative Assembly of 1947-48. At the same time, the apparent strengthening of the Greek Cypriot claim for Enosis after 1945 led to a Turkish Cypriot reaction. The Turkish Cypriot community participated in the 1947-48 Consultative Assembly, and (despite their discomfort at the provision which gave the Greek Cypriots an elected majority in Assembly) preferred not to confront the British authorities. However, they also rallied to the British rejection

of self-government: the Turkish Cypriot leadership believed that this would place them under Greek Cypriot rule.

This “loyal” attitude was duly rewarded by the British after the Greek Cypriot rejection of the constitutional offer. The British again saw the Turkish Cypriots as allies in the internal Cypriot context, and tried to approach them. A committee on Turkish Cypriot affairs was set up, with the object of examining Turkish Cypriot demands such as the reorganization of Evkaf, restructuring of education etc. The Turkish Cypriots also approached Ankara asking for support against Enosis.

# Internal Developments in the 1950s

## Makarios III

Following the death of Archbishop Makarios II, the Bishop of Kition was elected to replace him as Makarios III, on 20 October 1950. In the following decades his charismatic personality would dominate Cypriot history and would make a strong impact internationally. The Enosis movement now had a young and dynamic leader.

Makarios had spent the war years in Athens, studying theology and then law. He had engaged in resistance activities, in centrist (anti-communist) organizations such as the National League of Higher Schools. Contrary to a widespread myth, Makarios was not a member of Grivas' extreme X organization or of the post-war Party of X. After Greece's liberation Makarios went to the US for postgraduate studies, but was elected Bishop of Kition and returned to Cyprus in 1947.

As one of the young leaders of the Church of Cyprus, he became active in Enosis as well as in anti-communist activities. He toured north-western Greece during the civil war, providing support for the Greek army in its struggle against the KKE. In early 1950, as Secretary of the Ethnarchic Bureau, he also became the driving force behind the organization of the Ethnarchy plebiscite in 1950. A charismatic personality and extremely popular, he was elected as Archbishop at a time when the Ethnarchy had started its ascendancy, AKEL was in crisis and the Enosis agenda had dominated Greek Cypriot politics. As Archbishop of Cyprus, he was elected by popular male suffrage. Thus, he combined a strong personality, the Ethnarchic functions and power, and a popular mandate. He emerged as the strongest challenger of British rule and as the main standard-bearer of the Enosis cause. He also pressed the Greek governments to proceed to the internationalization of the Cyprus question through an appeal to the UN, asking for the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Cypriots.

## Makarios' Ethnarchy

Makarios actively **restructured the Ethnarchy**, expanded its organizations, and improved its potential for mass mobilization, especially among younger people. By 1953 the Ethnarchy was a **rising force** in Greek Cypriot society.

Under Makarios, the organs of the Ethnarchy (the Ethnarchic Council, as a kind of assembly and the Ethnarchic Bureau as an executive body) became more active in the pursuit of Enosis; Makarios' Council and Bureau consisted almost exclusively of laymen. Makarios also called the Pancyprian

National Assembly, another institution which pointed to the popularity and impetus of the Enosis movement. New youth organizations were formed, **OHEN** (Christian Youth) and the Pancyprian National Organization of Youth (**PEON**). At the same time, Makarios remained a “nationalist” (namely, non-communist) leader, deeply committed to the West. At a press conference in London, in February 1953, he stated that “Cyprus belongs to the West”. He also rebuffed AKEL’s offers of cooperation in the pursuit of the goal of Enosis. Last but not least, the new Archbishop defied the sedition laws which the colonial administration enacted early in 1951; this also increased his standing in Greek Cypriot society. Thus, Makarios managed to bring his Ethnarchy to dominate the Enosis movement. Yet, his Ethnarchy was not the declining group of leading personalities of the 1932-47 years. It was **a modern, mass movement, able to draw strength from society**. It was by far the most popular institution of Greek Cypriot society.

## AKEL’s internal crisis, early 1950s

As its opponents were regaining the initiative under a strong new leadership, AKEL was entering a deep internal crisis. The party’s defeat in the political processes of 1948 (when the British had ignored its moderate proposals, the Right had accused it of “treason”, and the KKE had criticized it for co-operation with the colonialists) had caused a change of policy in favour of the “Enosis only” line. Early in 1949 a new leadership under Ezekias Papaioannou took over, and supported the goal of a free Cyprus within a free (i.e. communist) Greece. The new leadership denounced the existence of “bourgeois elements” within the party. Ezekias Papaioannou, a veteran of the Spanish civil war, remained Secretary-General until 1988 and left his mark on Cypriot politics.

The 1949 change of policy caused strong disagreements within the party. Ioannis Clerides, AKEL’s most important non-communist ally, disagreed with the new policy. At the same time, a group of AKEL members under the former Secretary-General Ploutis Servas also disagreed and were forced to leave the party early in the 1950s. This split in AKEL also facilitated Makarios’ efforts to dominate the Enosis claim, which was now the central theme of Greek Cypriot politics.

Thus, the resurgence of the Right in 1949, Makarios’ ascendancy and last but not least AKEL’s internal crisis in the early 1950s effected a profound change in Greek Cypriot politics. For the first time since 1941 AKEL found itself clearly in the second place; the banner of the Enosis claim was now at the hands of Makarios and of his new Ethnarchy.

## Cypriot politics, 1950-1955

The primacy of the Enosis claim and the successful introduction of mass mobilization politics by Makarios’ Ethnarchy meant that the Right became the dominant force in the Greek Cypriot political scene. Makarios was in a position to ignore AKEL’s pleas for co-operation in the pursuit of Enosis; by doing so, he also provided an “assurance” to the western powers that he remained an ardent anti-communist.

The 1953 municipal elections confirmed the 1949 balance between Right and Left. However, once more Ioannis Clerides was defeated by Dervis at Nicosia; Clerides, with his support for constitutional evolution towards Enosis, was the alternative to the “Enosis only” bid which now was a common aim of both the Ethnarchy and AKEL.

By 1953, the popular protest of the Greek Cypriots against British rule was gaining strength. The British reaction against the Enosis movement also helped Makarios retain the initiative in Greek Cypriot politics by appearing as the main challenger of colonial rule. Moreover, this British reaction proved ineffective, as it rather tended simply to increase Makarios’ standing, while the adoption of stronger sedition laws in August 1954 allowed him to defy them with the British failing to respond.

In the early 1950s the Turkish Cypriots strongly supported the continuation of British rule. The Turkish Cypriot leadership, mainly Fazil Kuchuk, kept their pressure on Ankara to step onto the Cyprus scene and protect their rights. The Turkish Cypriot leadership resented any move towards majority rule, in the form of either self-government or self-determination, and preferred arrangements which would safeguard their position as a strategic ally of the colonial administration.

## Greek Cypriot politics in the years of the armed struggle

The start of the armed struggle by EOKA under Georgios Grivas created a new setting in Greek Cypriot politics. AKEL had completely lost the initiative. Moreover, the prospect of armed action under the leadership of the Right frightened the Greek Cypriot leftists, whereas the personality of the EOKA leader and his well-known combatant anti-communism made things worse. Last but not least, AKEL was in favour of the continuation of a peaceful Enosis struggle through mass mobilization, but did not appear to condone an armed confrontation. AKEL leadership denounced “terrorism” in April 1955, but this, in turn, seemed to vindicate Makarios’ refusal to co-operate with the Left in the anti-colonial struggle.

During the Cyprus Emergency (after 26 November 1955) all Greek Cypriot political forces suffered. AKEL was banned in mid-December 1955, its newspaper was closed down, and many of its members were arrested. Makarios’ deportation in March 1956, the arrest of the Acting Ethnarch, the Bishop of Kition and of the Secretary of the Ethnarchy, Nicos Kranidiotis, later in the year, display the strength of British reaction to the challenge. The ban on AKEL, the removal of Makarios and the British all-out campaign against EOKA meant that the Greek Cypriot political process was effectively frozen. In this context, traditional Greek Cypriot representation, such as the elected mayors of the large cities, was marginalized by the ongoing conflict.

Relations between the Ethnarchy and AKEL remained strained, but relations between EOKA and AKEL steadily deteriorated, until they reached a level of crisis in 1958. This referred to the possibility of civil war among Greek Cypriots.

## The social impact of the Enosis Struggle – the place of women in Greek Cypriot society

The Greek Cypriot mobilization, mostly of young people (including school students), effected profound changes in society. In the context of an all-out effort to achieve the elusive Enosis, “older” generations, especially people who advocated caution, were put on the margins and were even denounced as friendly to the British. In most cases this was unjust, for these people were not against Enosis; they were simply afraid of the repercussions of a frontal confrontation with London. However, the period of the armed struggle caused a radical renewal of the Greek Cypriot political personnel, bringing to the fore a new generation of leaders, who had assumed important roles in the liberation struggle. Many of Makarios’ close associates in the post-independence period came from the ranks of the Ethnarchy and of EOKA (mostly of its political organizations): Spyros Kyprianou, Glafkos Clerides, Tassos Papadopoulos, Polykarpos Giorkadjis, Vassos Lyssarides, Nicos Kranidiotis. On the contrary, the older political class, including the two “major” political opponents of previous years, Themistocles Dervis and Ioannis Clerides (Glafkos’ father) were marginalized, especially after independence.

The anti-colonial struggle also became a turning point for the position of women in Greek Cypriot society. Some Greek Cypriot women (mainly of the upper class) had enlisted during the war; but now women participated in the liberation struggle in a scale of mass mobilization. In February 1956 a “women’s department” was organized in EOKA. Their role in the organization and support of the EOKA struggle was a strong statement of their demand for full participation in post-colonial public life. In Makarios’ first government after independence, Stella Soulioti assumed the Ministry of Justice, while other Greek Cypriot women assumed positions of influence and power in the following decades.

## Education and the anti-colonial struggle



Student uprisings: the Battle of the Pancyprian Gymnasium

During the Cyprus revolt in 1954-59, **the schools became a hotbed of the Enosis struggle**; Greek Cypriot students of secondary education took part in demonstrations against the colonial regime, manned the EOKA organizations and some of them lost their lives, such as Petros Yiallouros in February 1956. Teachers were arrested or dismissed from their employment by the colonial administration. The British authorities also responded by closing down many gymnasia. A constant aim in British constitutional planning in those years

(though it was not made public) was to assume control over secondary education; the 1956 Radcliffe constitutional proposals provided for sectors for inter-communal education, and in 1957 the Colonial Office drafted a plan for the control of secondary education.

Under the 1959 Zurich-London agreements, which also outlined the basic principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, **education was a communal affair**, and was subjected to the competence of the communal Chambers. No inter-communal educational structure was established. In 1959 a Greek Educational Council was set up, with the object of reorganizing Greek Cypriot education. As a cultural issue, education in both communities continued to be influenced by developments, respectively, in Greece and Turkey.

## Turkish Cypriot demands, 1955-59

If the resurgence of the Enosis claim after 1945 led to a nationalist reaction among the Turkish Cypriots, the emergence of EOKA and the start of the Greek Cypriot armed struggle led them to mobilize even further and in specific directions.

The Turkish Cypriots were instrumental in pressing Ankara to step onto the Cyprus scene, but during the 1950s they followed consistently Ankara's lead (contrary to the Greek Cypriots who repeatedly confronted Athens). In 1954 a British report noted that the Turkish Cypriots were lacking social and economic dynamism; economic might had concentrated in Greek Cypriot hands, and the Turkish Cypriots were finding it difficult to compete with the Greek community in the post-Ottoman context of a western administration and a free economy.

Thus, the Turkish Cypriots resented any move towards majority rule and opted to follow Ankara's lead. EOKA's emergence alarmed the Turkish Cypriots: regardless of EOKA's assurances that they would not be harmed, they were convinced that the Greek Cypriots were out to expel them from the island. The Turkish Cypriot leaders embraced the Turkish position in 1955 that the status quo should be upheld and that the island should "revert" to Turkey in case of a change of status. In 1956 they accepted Ankara's preference for partition, despite the fact that this solution would entail extreme hardships for them as well. In 1957 they also followed Ankara's lead in demanding the setting up of separate Turkish municipalities in the major cities. Early in 1958 they revolted against the British under the instructions of Ankara, and in mid-1958 they initiated communal strife again following orders by Turkey.

## Turkish Cypriot armed organizations and the 1958 communal strife

Turkish Cypriots were recruited by the British in the police and the "Auxilliary Police", and this contributed in increasing tensions between the two Cypriot communities. However, in the second half of the 1950s, initially as a response to EOKA but later as a tool for the attainment of partition, a new paramilitary organization of the Turkish Cypriot community emerged. By late 1955 a Turkish Cypriot clandestine organization, "Volkan" appeared and was active in 1956. In 1957 the TMT (Turkish Resistance Organization) emerged, organized by Turkish army officers. TMT was the spearhead of the Turkish Cypriot violence in 1958. The all-out effort to attain partition also signalled the ascent of



the new nationalist Turkish Cypriot leaders, such as Denktash.

The Turkish Cypriot violence of early 1957 was extremely effective and alarmed the British, who realized that they had become dependent on Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots regarding the internal security of Cyprus. Mostly, the communal strife of 1958 was a landmark in inter-communal relations. Confidence was shaken and mutual insecurity prevailed. These would prove important in the road to the post-independence crisis of 1963.

## Cypriot politics during the transitory period, 1959-60

The conclusion of the Zurich-London agreements in February 1959 set Cyprus on the road to independence. In April 1959 Makarios and Kuchuk appointed the Cypriot members of the Transitional Committee, a kind of provisional government. In summer a Makarios-Grivas dispute over the implementation of the agreements was contained, also thanks to the support that the Greek government offered to the Archbishop.

AKEL denounced the 1959 agreements as an imposition of a settlement by the imperialists, but appeared ready to work under the new independence regime. The party was legalized at the insistence of Makarios early in December. The Turks were in favour of keeping AKEL illegal, but Makarios and the Greek government stressed that the Karamanlis-Menderes “gentlemen’s agreement” provided that the “Communist party” would remain banned: this was the KKK which had been banned in the 1930s; technically, AKEL was not the “Communist Party”.



Signing of the London-Zurich Agreements

In December 1959 presidential elections were held. Kuchuk was proclaimed Vice-President unopposed. On 13 December Makarios was elected, receiving almost two-thirds of votes. He prevailed over Ioannis Clerides, a figure of the old political class, who was supported both by AKEL and Grivas’ followers. Following its defeat at the presidential elections, AKEL changed course and sought to cooperate with the Archbishop and President-elect.

The first elections for the House of Representatives were held on 31 July 1960. Makarios’ “Patriotic Front”, which now included AKEL candidates, easily prevailed in the Greek Cypriot side.

## Challenges in the implementation of the new regime

By 1959-60 the new Cypriot independence regime had to be prepared in a background of multiple

anxieties and mistrust between many of the protagonists of the Cypriot scene. The most important obstacle was the apparent lack of mutual confidence and the prevalence of mutual insecurity between the two major communities in the island. The Greek drive for Enosis and the Turkish drive for partition had divided them, while the Turkish Cypriot communal violence of 1958, which had claimed many lives, had resulted in creating a huge rift between them. Things became even more difficult after the Deniz incident in autumn 1959 and following the failure of the Turkish Cypriots to obey Kuchuk's appeal for the surrender of illegal arms. The apparent strengthening of Rauf Denktaş within the Turkish Cypriot community also pointed to a potentially disruptive tactic on his part after independence. Denktaş slowly emerged as a potential challenger, within the Turkish Cypriot community, of the "older" people like Kuchuk. Last but not least, there were important questions to be settled between Greek- and Turkish Cypriots regarding the implementation of the new Constitution, such as the provisions for the quotas in the civil service and the army, or separate municipalities.

However, previous Greek Cypriot cleavages had not disappeared during the anti-colonial struggle; in a sense, they became even deeper. The mistrust between Left and Right, and the legacy of the EOKA-AKEL conflict in 1958 remained. These were also complemented with the resentment of many older political figures who saw EOKA's "youngsters" by-passing them and posing as Makarios' Ministers. Last but not least, a new cleavage appeared in 1959, between the supporters of Makarios (including most of the prominent EOKA leaders) and of Grivas, regarding the 1959 settlement and its implementation. The dawn of independence was for Cyprus an era of hope and of great challenges.

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