

CHAPTER 06

**Cyprus in the national and  
international arenas,  
1945-1960**

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 the Cyprus question, from the end of the Second World War until the establishment of the Cyprus Republic in 1960. Analysis will involve three levels: international, regional and Cypriot developments, which affected the course of the Cyprus question.

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the influence of international and of Middle Eastern developments on the course of the Cyprus question
- Understand the process by which Cyprus became an international dispute in 1950-55
- Evaluate the different proposals on the future of Cyprus in 1947-59
- Interpret the Cyprus revolt of the 1950s
- Evaluate the importance of specific personalities, Greeks, Turks and British in the course of the Cyprus question

## Keywords

- Internationalization
- Decolonization
- Self-government
- Enosis
- “Double self-determination”
- Internationalization
- Self-determination
- Guaranteed independence
- Partition
- Zurich-London agreements (1959)

# Cyprus' entry in the post-war era, 1945-49

## A new context, 1945-48

The end of the Second World War opened a new era for Cyprus as well. Greek Cypriot society had been mobilized during the war, while the common Anglo-Greek struggle against fascism raised the hopes of the Greek Cypriots for Enosis. In this context, it was doubtful whether the majority community could be content with anything less than **full exercise of its right for self-determination**.

However, by late 1947 the British had decided to **retain sovereignty** over Cyprus, mainly because the island was important to British policy in the Middle East. The granting of independence to India in 1947 meant that the Middle East was **the only strategically important region of the globe under exclusive British responsibility**. The control of such a region was indispensable in Britain's effort to remain a Great Power. **Cyprus was the only territory under full British sovereignty in the region**. Thus, Britain opted to retain Cyprus, as a part of its Middle Eastern strategy, believing that this was necessary in order to protect its own status as a Great Power. At the same time the Greek civil war rendered Athens incapable of claiming the island from one of its major Western allies. Consequently, **the aims of the British and the Greek Cypriots were becoming increasingly incompatible**.

Thus, at the moment when **decolonization** had started in other parts of the globe, in Cyprus the British were determined to resist it.

## The British decision to retain Cyprus, 1945-47

In September 1945 the Greek Regent, Archbishop Damaskinos, visited London and, among others, **asked for the union of Cyprus with Greece**. Although initially the British Foreign Office appeared willing to discuss the idea, the Colonial Office soon came forward against it, and was supported by the Chiefs of Staff (COS). Thus, the unionist claim was rejected. The eruption of the Greek civil war in the following year, and the intensification of Greek dependence to Britain meant that Athens was in no position to claim Cyprus from its major ally. Thus the road now opened for a British initiative in Cyprus. On 23 October 1946, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones, announced that the island would **remain under British rule**; he also referred to a development plan for Cyprus and to the calling of a **Consultative Assembly** which would discuss a new Constitution. In March 1947 a new Governor, Lord Winster, arrived in Cyprus.

The British initiative brought the Greek Cypriot community at a crossroads. The **polarization of the Greek Cypriots** between the communist-led AKEL (Rehabilitation Party of the Working People) and the Ethnarchy was speeded up after the two elections for Archbishop in 1947 and the final ascent of Archbishop Makarios II. These two poles would clash over the issue of the Consultative Assembly.

Early in 1947 a Greek Cypriot Embassy to London asked for Enosis, but the British rejected the request. At the same time, **the Turkish Cypriots came out against Enosis.**

## The Winster proposals, 1947-48

In summer 1947, Governor Winster invited Cypriot representatives to the Consultative Assembly. The Turkish Cypriots accepted the invitation, but the Greek Cypriots appeared divided: AKEL nominated delegates, while the Ethnarchy refused to discuss a “pseudoconstitution”. The Assembly was convened on 1 November. The Greek Cypriot members asked for the establishment of **self-government**: this meant that Cypriots would head ministries in the government, with the exception of foreign affairs, defence and probably economics, which would be reserved for the British colonial authorities. The British refused to grant this, preferring to retain full control of the government. Indeed, in December 1947, when the British government debated the issue, the growing difficulties that it faced in the Middle East were mentioned as the main reason why it needed to retain full control in Cyprus. In May 1948 the British tabled fresh proposals. These provided for the setting up of an **Assembly with an elected Greek Cypriot majority**; however, the Assembly would not have the right to discuss the question of Enosis. The British also **rejected the request of the Greek Cypriots the creation of a self-governing sector**; instead they noted that Cypriots would be “connected” with government departments, but not as Ministers.

These British proposals fell short of Greek Cypriot expectations. The Left’s request for self-government was denied, at a time when London was granting such rights to other colonies. This meant that the position of the left-wing Greek Cypriot members of the Consultative Assembly had become untenable, and they finally rejected the offer.

The Consultative Assembly also became the testing ground for **a new mobilization of the Turkish Cypriot community**. In April 1948 a committee for the presentation of Turkish Cypriot views was set up: this committee visited Turkey and presented its case to the President of the Republic, Ismet Inonu. Rauf Denktash slowly emerged as its most dynamic member.

## The aftermath of the failure of the British proposals

The rejection of the Winster proposals left Cyprus at an impasse. The Ethnarchy insisted on the “Enosis and only Enosis” line, refusing to discuss the introduction of a colonial Constitution. At the same time, AKEL’s rejection of the proposals made the British turn against the party. In autumn 1948 AKEL leaders (Fifis Ioannou and Andreas Ziartides) visited the Greek Communist Party (KKE) leader, Nicos Zachariades, and asked for advice. Zachariades, who at that moment was fighting the civil war, severely criticized the Cypriot comrades for their readiness to discuss constitutional development under British “imperialist” auspices. Following this, AKEL reverted to the “Enosis only” line. In the May 1949 municipal elections AKEL managed to retain only three large cities.

AKEL was pressed from many different directions: 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.

Meanwhile, the Greek government proved unable to influence developments. Early in 1947 the Greek Parliament passed a Resolution for Enosis, which the British ignored. In summer 1948 King Paul of the Hellenes referred to the possibility of Enosis in an interview to the US press. This time the British Embassy made representations to Athens. In December 1949, a few months after the victory of the pro-Western forces in the Greek civil war, these representations were repeated. **In both cases Athens gave in to British pressure.**

# Makarios and the internationalization of the Cyprus Question, 1950-55

## Britain, Cyprus and the Middle East, 1950-54

In the early 1950s a major British priority was to retain the strategic control of the Middle East. This was seen as imperative if Britain were to remain among the Great Powers. However, since the first Arab-Israeli war (1948-9) British influence in the Middle East was rapidly declining. The British had already withdrawn from Palestine in 1948. Moreover, defeat at the hands of the Israelis in 1948-9 led many Arabs to consider that the British were responsible for their humiliation. Egypt became more apprehensive about British influence: Cairo appeared impatient regarding the large British military base in Suez, and in the early 1950s claimed the Sudan from the British. Egyptian hostility towards London became more intense after the Arab nationalists overthrew the Egyptian monarchy in 1952: Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser now emerged as the major enemy of Britain in the crucial region of the Middle East.



Archbishop Makarios III (1913-1977)

In 1951-3 another crisis was unfolding in Iran, where the government of Muhammad Mussadiq nationalized British oil interests. London proved unable to react against this challenge. Mussadiq was finally overthrown by a joint Anglo-American covert operation, but the episode exposed British weakness.

The major problem for London was its lack of material resources to continue to play the role of the dominant power in the Middle East. Britain proved unable to bring Egypt into line, or to organize a large regional coalition under its auspices. Cyprus was the only land in the Eastern Mediterranean under full British sovereignty, and thus the British regarded its retention necessary, both as a last bastion and as a statement of their intention to remain in the region. Thus, **at the moment when**

**the Enosis movement in Cyprus was gaining impetus, London moved towards the opposite direction and ruled out any possibility of a withdrawal from Cyprus.** This was a major reason why Cypriot decolonization finally came through violence.

## The 1950 plebiscite and the ascent of Makarios III

In November 1949 AKEL suggested that the Greek Cypriots ask the UN to organize a plebiscite to decide the future status of Cyprus. Soon afterwards, the Ethnarchy assumed the initiative. In December 1949, the Ethnarchy asked Governor Wright to organize such a plebiscite. After Wright's refusal to do so, the Ethnarchy, and mostly the active Bishop of Kition, Makarios, called the Greek Cypriot people to vote in favour of union with Greece; AKEL also joined this effort, abandoning its own campaign. The **plebiscite** was held between 15 and 22 January 1950: 95.7 percent of the Greek Cypriots, as well as some Turks, signed the petition in favour of Enosis. When the colonial authorities indicated that there was no prospect for a change of status, AKEL invited the Ethnarchy to a joint effort for the "internationalization" of the Cyprus question through the UN. The Ethnarchy rejected cooperation with the Left, but pursued the idea itself.

By "internationalization", the Greek Cypriot leadership meant an appeal to the UN, asking for the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Cypriots. Since Cyprus was not an independent member-state of the UN, this appeal should be tabled by Greece. In spring 1950 an Ethnarchy delegation, led by the Bishop of Kyrenia, Kyprianos, visited the Greek capital. However, the Prime Minister, Nicolaos Plastiras, and the Deputy Prime Minister, George Papandreou, made clear that **Greece lacked the power to raise the issue at the UN and confront Britain**. Following this, the Ethnarchy delegation left for New York, to visit the UN. Another delegation, from AKEL, left for New York independently of the Ethnarchy Embassy.

In June 1950, Archbishop Makarios II died. On 16 October, the Bishop of Kition was elected as **Makarios III**.

## Greece, Makarios and the Cyprus question, 1950-52

Following the end of the civil war, Greek society remained deeply divided, while economic and social conditions were appalling. However, many Greeks felt that the retention of Cyprus under the colonial rule of an ally was insulting. These groups were seized by Makarios' dynamism and mobilized against the government's "prudence". **In the early 1950s, Cyprus emerged as a foreign policy dilemma, but also as an internal political issue in Greece.**

In summer 1950 the Panhellenic Committee for the Struggle of Union of Cyprus (**PEAEK**) was formed, under the Archbishop of Athens, Spyridon; after 1954 the term "Union" was replaced by "self-determination". PEAEK organized rallies in Athens, and twice in 1951 demonstrations led to clashes with the police.

Makarios traveled frequently, mostly to Greece, where **he pressed the governments for an appeal to the UN**. Makarios pointed out that decolonization had already started throughout the globe, and

the Greek Cypriots could not accept colonial rule. Although the Centre governments, under Nicolaos Plastiras or Sophocles Venizelos, refused to confront the British, the Archbishop influenced and mobilized large parts of Greek society. In the face of Athens' refusal to appeal to the UN, Makarios hinted that he might accept an appeal from an Eastern bloc country or Syria.

In May 1951, under pressure from Makarios, the Greek government convened a council of political leaders. The Greek leaders suggested to the British that in exchange for Enosis within a "reasonable" period, Greece would ensure that London would retain a base in Cyprus and receive another one in Greece; in case this was not possible, London should indicate that it might discuss the issue in the future. The British ignored the proposal. In October 1951, the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden rebuffed the Greek Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza, who tried to raise Cyprus.

Thus, the Centre governments rejected Makarios' demand for an appeal to the UN, tried to avoid this appeal by approaching the British and faced successive British rebuffs, and ended up beating their own people who were demonstrating for a cause which the Centre leaders themselves regarded as noble. The climax of this schizophrenic situation was recorded during Makarios' visit to Athens in the summer of 1952: the government refused once more to appeal to the UN, Makarios publicly denounced them, and PEAEK organized a successful national strike.

In the November 1952 elections the Greek Rally under Alexandros Papagos, crushed the Centre and assumed the government.

## The start of the popular uprising in Cyprus, 1953-54

**In 1953 a frontal confrontation started between the colonial government and the Ethnarchy.**

In April Makarios wrote to the Governor asking for a plebiscite through which the Cypriots would exercise their right for self-determination. When the British authorities rejected this, the Greek Cypriots boycotted the celebrations for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. In response, the colonial government banned the youth organization PEON. Makarios was also refused permission to organize a rally in favour of PEON. Then, he called the Greek Cypriots "for prayer" in Nicosia's Phaneromeni Church, and delivered a strong speech against the colonial regime. He also wrote to the Secretary-General of the UN asking for the application of the principle of self-determination in Cyprus, and indicated to Athens, once more, that if Greece failed to appeal to the UN another country might do it.

These events mark the start of **mass protest** of the Greek Cypriots against the colonial regime. In 1954, as Greece was moving to accept the idea of an appeal to the UN (and especially after the British statement that Cyprus would "never" become independent), Cypriot cities were shaken by popular demonstrations. When, in August 1954, the British adopted stronger sedition laws, Makarios defied them with a new **speech at Phaneromeni Church (the "oath of Phaneromeni")**, where he pledged that he would not stop his struggle until the coming of Enosis. The British did not arrest or deport the Archbishop. During the autumn, popular demonstrations against the colonial regime became a frequent occurrence in Cyprus.

## Greece's road to internationalization, 1953-54

The new Greek government, under Field-Marshal Alexandros Papagos did not share the doubts of its predecessors regarding Cyprus. Papagos aimed to confirm Greek independence in foreign affairs, and believed that the British would be ready to negotiate a settlement with him. On 22 September 1953 he met Eden in Athens, but the latter refused to discuss Cyprus. In autumn 1953 Papagos and the Foreign Minister, Stefanos Stephanopoulos, raised the issue in discussions with the British Ambassador, Sir Charles Peake: they asked for the introduction of a liberal constitution, to be followed in 2-5 years by a referendum on the future status of Cyprus. However, the British failed to understand that the Greeks were now meaning their words. London continued to state that there was “no Cyprus question”.

In January 1954, Papagos' major advisor on foreign affairs, the Cypriot-born Ambassador **Alexis Kyrou** became Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry. Kyrou was a supporter of an appeal to the UN, **hoping that international pressure would compel the British to negotiate Enosis**. In February 1954 new British statements were made refusing to acknowledge the existence of a Cyprus problem, while Makarios renewed his pressure to the government for recourse to the international organization. On 15 April Papagos, Kyrou and a small group of advisers decided to proceed with the appeal. In doing so, **they ignored a US demarche advising against internationalization** (the Americans were not against Enosis in principle, but did not want an infra-NATO dispute to be discussed in New York, with Soviet participation). Moreover, **the Greeks ignored the possible interference of Turkey** in such a debate.

Internationalization was severely criticized by later scholars: as was proved, Greece was in no position to secure a favourable Resolution of the UN General Assembly, which required a majority of two-thirds. Furthermore, the appeal to the UN was the start of internationalization which also opened the road to the involvement of Turkey in the Cyprus question.

## The Suez Base Agreement and its impact on Cyprus, July 1954

Britain was facing important problems in Egypt. The Anglo-Egyptian treaty which provided for the existence of the large British base in the Suez Canal Zone was going to expire in 1956. Nasser's hostility meant that the British had to give way: on 28 July 1954 the British Foreign Secretary, Eden, announced in the House of Commons the conclusion of a new treaty, according to which the British would withdraw from the Suez Zone by 1956. This was taken as a severe defeat for London: the government came under strong attacks from the “Suez rebels”, a group of Conservative MPs who accused the government for “selling out” the Empire.

**The Suez Base agreement had important repercussions in Cyprus.** In September 1954 the COS stressed that since leased bases had proved unreliable, Cyprus was indispensable for Britain's position in the Middle East. **Cyprus now became the seat of Britain's Middle East HQ, and was developed**

as a **major air base**, capable of supporting British forces in the Middle East or of threatening the southern Soviet Union in case of a world war.

The Anglo-Egyptian dispute and the Suez Base Agreement were misunderstood in the Greek world. Many believed that following the demise of Britain's position in Egypt, London would be more ready to discuss Enosis. In fact, the opposite was the case: having lost its large base in Suez, Britain tended to consider its sovereignty over Cyprus as absolutely necessary for the retention of its Middle Eastern position.

## The constitutional offer and the “never” statement, July 1954

As the Suez base dispute with Egypt was entering its final phase, the British tried to counter a possible Greek appeal to the UN by presenting new constitutional proposals for Cyprus. These were presented in July 1954, and proved extremely restrictive: although the new plan provided for Cypriot Ministers (which the British had refused in 1948), **it set up a majority of official and appointed members in the Assembly**; this meant that the majority of the population would be permanently turned into a minority of votes in the parliament.

Moreover, this plan was accompanied by another unfortunate initiative. On 28 July 1954, in the House of Commons debate which dealt with the Suez Base Agreement, **the Minister of State for the Colonies, Henry Hopkinson, came under the attack of the “Suez rebels” for British policy in Cyprus, and responded by declaring that “there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent”.**

This statement caused an outcry in the Greek world and internationally, and finally became a focal point of the Anglo-Greek confrontation on Cyprus. The Greek government submitted its appeal to the UN in August, in the aftermath of this statement. However, the statement was an accurate description of the British position, as London had not yet decided whether small and strategically placed colonies would be granted independence. On the other hand, the Greek government had already decided to appeal to the UN. Thus, the statement became a convenient pretext for the Greeks to appeal to the international organization, but did not by itself cause the submission of the appeal.

## Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, early 1950s

Turkey had relinquished all rights on Cyprus in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. This led the Greeks to believe that Ankara would be a disinterested party in the post-war Cyprus question. This belief soon proved mistaken.

**Turkish interest was aroused by the Turkish Cypriots.** The latter became politically organized in the 1940s, while a new generation of Turkish Cypriot leaders, oriented towards Turkey became active – Rauf Denktash became the most prominent among them. The 1947-48 Consultative Assembly

became the ground where they tested their abilities.

At the same time developments in Turkey contributed to Ankara's increased interest in Cyprus. The rise to power of Adnan Menderes and the Democratic Party in 1950 brought the Turkish government under the control of a new group of leaders who did not belong to the traditional Kemalist establishment and were **more ready to interfere outside Turkish borders**. Turkish interest in Cyprus was dual: Ankara mainly was interested in the island's **strategic value** for Turkey's southern coastline; secondly, Ankara was interested for the **position of the Turkish Cypriots**.

Thus, by the early 1950s, the Turkish Cypriots were asking Turkey to protect their position, whereas the new Turkish rulers were prepared to intervene in the Cyprus question. In the following decades, the Turkish Cypriots consistently followed the lead of the Turkish state, contrary to the Greek Cypriots who often confronted Athens.

## The first manifestations of Turkish interest in Cyprus, 1950-54

Since the early 1950s, the Turkish press often reported on Cyprus and suggested that Turkey should not give Greece a free hand. **In 1951 the Turkish official position hardened**: the Foreign Minister, Fuat Koprulu, made statements on these lines, and Ankara suggested to the British and the Americans that **no decision on the future of Cyprus should be taken without Turkish participation**. By mid-1952, the Greek Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Averoff, in his report following his official visit to Turkey, suggested that Cyprus should be handled carefully, as it could endanger Greek-Turkish relations.

The next Greek government under Papagos, seemed to believe that it could secure Turkish acquiescence to Enosis. However, the Turks refused to discuss Cyprus with the Greeks, even in June 1954, when the two states were discussing their common participation in the Balkan alliance, together with Yugoslavia. **The Papagos government made the decision to appeal to the UN without having fully evaluated the Turkish response**.

Indeed, immediately after the submission of the Greek appeal in August 1954, the Turkish leadership, including Prime Minister Menderes, stepped forward to counter the Greek claim. **In autumn 1954 a de facto diplomatic front was created between Britain and Turkey**, pending discussion of the Greek appeal in the UN General Assembly.

## The first appeal to the UN, December 1954

In autumn 1954 the Greeks tried to rally international support for their appeal to the UN, asking for the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Cypriots. Athens hoped to secure the votes of the Arab countries and the countries of Latin America and Asia; the communist states were certain to vote in favour of the Greek item and against Britain. Soon however, the Greeks found out that their

diplomatic standing could not balance the coordinated efforts of Britain and Turkey. Regardless of the “right” of the Greek position, most countries had more interests, political and economic, with Britain and Turkey, rather than with Greece. **The UN General Assembly was a political forum, not a court of justice.** Moreover, the Americans had already indicated that they did not object to Enosis as such, but did not want an infra-NATO issue to be discussed at New York.

In the face of such difficulties, **the Greeks were defeated at the UN:** although their appeal was inscribed in the UN General Assembly agenda (September 1954), in December the General Assembly decided not to discuss it “for the time being”, a formula inserted at the insistence of the Americans, to ameliorate the sense of Greece’s defeat.

Following the December 1954 UN debate, Alexis Kyrou resigned from the post of Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry. At the same time, the first signs of anti-western disposition became evident in Greece, where public feeling turned against the British and the other NATO allies who had failed to support the Greek appeal. Last but not least, in Cyprus a feeling of desperation prevailed: the Greek Cypriots felt that they had been rebuffed by the international organization. Greek Cypriots were now more ready to consider other options.

## Britain, Turkey and the Baghdad Pact, 1954-55

Britain’s difficulties in the Middle East tended to increase the value of Cyprus for London’s effort to retain a dominant position in the region. However, **early in 1955 other developments underlined the importance of Turkey for British Middle Eastern policy and linked Britain’s strategic interests in the Middle East and Cyprus with the state of Anglo-Turkish relations.**

In February 1955 Turkey and the pro-British regime of Iraq concluded an alliance, the **Baghdad Pact**, to which Britain acceded in April, to be followed later by Iran and Pakistan. Thus, Turkey became instrumental in building a large regional alliance under British leadership: this was something which London had been striving to accomplish since the early 1950s. **Turkey now became a pivotal ally for Britain in a region of prime British interests.** Moreover, Turkey was a strong enemy of Nasser, with whom Britain also was at odds (whereas Greece was pursuing a pro-Arab policy). The reluctance of London in the following years to displease Turkey over Cyprus, had its roots in this state of affairs.

Last but not least, Cyprus’ new strategic role complemented the creation of the Baghdad Pact as a major vehicle of British influence in the Middle East. The new air bases in Cyprus were designed to support the Baghdad Pact forces, and thus Britain’s continuing sovereignty over the island was seen as essential for the success of the Baghdad Pact. At the same time, the British did not want to antagonize Turkey which claimed a stake in the island’s future. These strategic needs would dominate British policy in Cyprus in the following years.

## British plans for Cyprus, spring 1955

Britain's victory in the December 1955 UN debate posed for Whitehall the challenge of formulating a new initiative, aiming to contain the Greeks in case the latter appealed again to the international organization. In February and March 1955, the Colonial Office examined various schemes for Cyprus, including an idea of recognising "special" cultural rights of Greece and Turkey on the island. In early April, a new plan for Cyprus was submitted to the Cabinet.

This new scheme implicitly abandoned the "never" position and proposed a new Constitution for colonial Cyprus. Contrary to the illiberal proposal of 1954, an elected majority of Cypriot members was envisaged in the Assembly: the Greek- and the Turkish Cypriot elected members would outnumber the official and the nominated ones. However, **the official and the nominated members, together with the Turkish Cypriot elected deputies, would have a majority over the Greek Cypriot elected ones.** Once more, the Greek Cypriot majority of the population was turned into a parliamentary minority.

Similarly to the 1954 offer, the plan was based on the assumption that there was a large body of Greek Cypriots who would accept nomination in the Assembly. Both in the July 1954 and the April 1955 plans, **these "nominated" members acquired a pivotal role as a bulwark against the Greek Cypriot elected representatives and consequently the Enosis ideal.** The British failed to realize that there were no Greek Cypriots who would accept such a role. British hopes for this imaginary group of influential "pro-British" Greek Cypriots were dashed after the outbreak of the armed rebellion.

The April 1955 plan was not presented officially. In early April Winston Churchill resigned and was replaced as Prime Minister by Anthony Eden; Harold Macmillan became Foreign Secretary and projected his own views for a Cyprus solution which were very different than the ideas examined until then. Moreover on 1 April the armed revolt started in Cyprus, creating a new political context.

# Cyprus' anti-colonial struggle, 1955-59

## Preparing the armed struggle: the decision

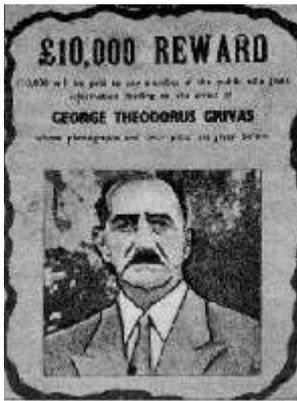
Since the early 1950s Makarios organized and coordinated the Ethnarchy's Enosis campaign. His strategy involved the creation of a mass movement, which, combined with international pressure through the UN, would bring the British to the negotiating table. However, at the same time, he was pressed by prominent Greeks and Greek Cypriots to accept the prospect of an armed struggle. This was compatible with the tradition of Greek liberation struggles of the 19th and the 20th centuries. Initially Makarios rejected the idea: both as a clergyman and as a national leader he preferred to avoid the violent path. However, in the face of British intransigence in 1951-52, he finally agreed to the start of an armed campaign, provided that it would be undertaken for a short period and would be directed against British installations, without loss of life. **He hoped that this would press the British without creating an unbridgeable gap between the colonial authorities and the Greek Cypriots: his aim still was to negotiate a settlement with Britain.**

On 7 March 1953, at a meeting of 12 prominent personalities in Athens the decision was made to proceed to an armed struggle. Among the people present were Makarios, former Minister George Stratos, General (rtd) N. Papadopoulos, Professors Gerasimos Konidaris and Dimitrios Vezeanis, Savvas and Socrates Loizides, and the Cypriot-born former Colonel of the Greek army George Grivas. The committee appointed Grivas as the head of the armed action. This meant that throughout the end of the Cyprus revolt, **Grivas was the leader of the armed wing, under the overall leadership of Makarios.** However, Grivas tended to be a divisive element: he had become known for heading the strongly anticommunist "X" organization during the German occupation, and after the war he led a similar "Party of X" which became notorious for its anticommunist paramilitary groups. He had participated in the Greek elections of 1946 and 1950, but both times had failed to secure more than one percent of the votes and to elect MPs in the Greek Parliament.

The 7 March 1953 decision led to the organization of a Greek Cypriot armed struggle, clandestinely, without support from the Greek government. Indeed, the members took care to keep their meetings secret from Greek intelligence, **believing that the Greek state was subservient to the British and the Americans.** However, it is clear that people working in government agencies gave to the committee support and material. Greek Prime Minister Papagos is reported to have warned Grivas not to proceed with these plans; Papagos even ordered Grivas' arrest in November 1954, but the latter had already left for Cyprus.

## The start of the armed struggle

The preparation of the armed rebellion involved shipments of arms from Greece to Cyprus with the use of small boats (caiques). One of these, the *Ayios Georgios* was captured by the British at Chloraka on 25 January 1955. The British seized ammunition as well as proclamations by a clandestine organization named National Front for the Liberation of Cyprus (EMAK). Following the capture of the boat, Grivas changed the title of his organization to **National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA)**.



Grivas Wanted

On 1 April 1955 EOKA made its first bombing attacks, distributed leaflets and had its first casualty, Modestos Panteli. EOKA's proclamations, signed by Grivas under his war-name, "Dighenis" (a medieval Byzantine hero), called for a struggle aiming to secure the union of Cyprus with Greece. EOKA made clear that it would not turn against the Turkish Cypriots and indeed its attacks were not directed against them; yet, it asked them not to become involved in the Anglo-Greek confrontation in Cyprus.

According to the original planning and the decisions of March 1953, **EOKA's aim was not to defeat the British: it intended to arouse international interest for Cyprus and to press the British, allowing Makarios to negotiate an acceptable settlement which would lead to Enosis.**

## EOKA: organization and early action

EOKA's action was **part of the wider Cyprus revolt** – indeed, its supporters tended to refer at that time to a "revolution". The armed action complemented a popular uprising which continued in the main cities, through demonstrations or political resistance.

EOKA's action involved **three different forms of attacks** against the colonial authorities: small guerrilla groups in the mountains, sabotage, and small groups for political assassinations in the cities. Later on, in 1956-57, political organizations also emerged such as the EOKA youth (**ANE**) and the Political Committee of the Cypriot Struggle (**PEKA**). EOKA's armed sections were never numerous: it is doubtful if the armed men exceeded the number of three hundred at any specific moment. However, these were supported by a wide network of civilians who aided the organization, by a network of informants, and mostly by the popular uprising which was simultaneously unfolding. The organization's targets were mainly the British, the members of the security forces and those Greek Cypriots who collaborated with the British (the "traitors"). The organization was constantly under the strict control of Grivas who remained in the island until March 1959, hiding from the British.

EOKA's victims throughout 1955-59 included 218 Greek Cypriots, 142 British and 29 Turkish Cypriots; of the latter, 22 were policemen, and were hit in this capacity, not as members of the Turkish minority.

The first target of EOKA was the police which was systematically attacked in the summer of 1955, when the first police casualties occurred. **The Cyprus police was effectively neutralized**, and this raised for the British the question of fighting the revolt in other ways, including the use of the army.

## Reactions to the emergence of EOKA, spring 1955

The start of the armed revolt had important repercussions. The British termed EOKA as a “**terrorist**” organization and pledged to destroy it. However, they soon realized that the EOKA fighters were not isolated extremists, but had the support of the Greek Cypriot population – although the British never admitted this publicly.

At the same time, **EOKA’s emergence alarmed Turkey**, which perceived the armed revolt as a systematic move by Greece to force Enosis. In mid-April 1955 Prime Minister Menderes suggested to the British Ambassador to Ankara that Britain and Turkey cooperate in fighting the clandestine organization. Thus the armed struggle tended to bring Britain and Turkey closer, at a time when their general Middle Eastern interests converged.

In Greece, the government was practically leaderless, since Prime Minister Papagos fell ill in March 1955 and a succession struggle started in his party between the two Deputy Prime Ministers, Stefanos Stefanopoulos and Panayiotis Kanellopoulos. However, the beginning of the Greek Cypriot armed revolt moved the Greek public.

The Greek Cypriot Left, **AKEL, came out strongly against the idea of the armed struggle and denounced “terrorism”**. EOKA always treated the Greek Cypriot communists with suspicion. Relations between EOKA and AKEL would deteriorate severely in 1958.

Last but not least, the Greek communist party denounced EOKA. Indeed, Grivas’ identity was disclosed through a radio broadcast by Zachariades. However, after Khrushchev’s “destalinization” speech at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (early 1956) and the removal of Zachariades from the leadership of the KKE, **the Greek Left changed course and strongly supported the Greek Cypriot anti-colonial revolt**, criticizing the Greek governments for their lack of support to it.

## The calling of the London Tripartite Conference, April-June 1955

The advent of a new British government led to a change of London’s policy. The new Foreign Secretary, **Harold Macmillan**, took a special interest in Cyprus and aspired to effect an **international solution**. This was a dramatic departure from the previous line that Cyprus was an “internal affair” of the British Empire, but Macmillan managed to establish the Foreign Office’s competence over the traditional

Colonial Office prerogative of dealing with Cyprus.

Macmillan and the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, favoured an **“association” of Greece and Turkey with the administration of Cyprus**: Kirkpatrick expressly suggested that it was better to include the Turks in order to balance the Greeks. This new plan should be presented at a conference where Athens and Ankara would also be invited. Macmillan preferred to allow the two other states to declare their positions, which would probably prove incompatible; then Britain would step in and propose its plan as a compromise. Prime Minister Eden agreed with the idea of a conference, mentioning that this was important to prevent a new Greek appeal to the UN; he did not mention EOKA's challenge as a factor leading to this change of policy.

The British invitation was conveyed to Athens and Ankara in late June. Turkey accepted it immediately, and **this is considered as Ankara's formal entry on the Cyprus scene**. Greece appeared indecisive: Papagos was ill, the government was badly coordinated, and **Makarios had denounced the British proposal as a “trap”**. However, in the end Athens decided that a rejection of the British invitation would prejudice the international community against a new Greek appeal to the UN. Greece finally accepted the invitation, but also simultaneously submitted its appeal to the international organization.

Before the conference, the British government sought to coordinate its tactics with the Turks, and asked them to state their position strongly. However, the Turks intended to do so with an intensity which the British obviously did not expect.

## The collapse of the Tripartite Conference, August-September 1955

As the Conference came nearer, the positions of the interested parties hardened. In late August the Turkish Press accused the Greek Cypriots of planning a “massacre” of the Turkish Cypriots and the “Cyprus is Turkish” organization received official support for demonstrating the strength of Turkish feelings over the future of the island.

The Conference started on the 29 of August. On the 31st Greek Foreign Minister Stephanopoulos asked for the introduction of a liberal Constitution and for a British promise for the exercise of the right of self-determination in the future. On the following day Turkish Foreign Minister Fatin Rustu Zorlu asked for the retention of the status quo, opposed the introduction of constitutional government and said that in the case of a change of status the island should “revert” to Turkey. On 6 September, Macmillan presented his plan which provided for the introduction of a Constitution, envisaging **an Assembly with a small Greek Cypriot elected majority**. However, Greece and Turkey would be “associated” with the British sovereign administration of Cyprus. Greece and Turkey would appoint special representatives to the British Governor of Cyprus. **This meant that a tripartite directorate of Cypriot affairs would be created, in which the Greeks and Greek Cypriots would be overruled by a combination of Britain, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.**

However, the Conference received a fatal blow because of the **anti-Greek pogrom in Istanbul**

**and in Izmir on the night of 6-7 September.** Zorlu, from London, had asked for the holding of a demonstration in Istanbul which would show the strength of Turkish feelings on the matter. The affair started with the explosion of a bomb in the Turkish Consulate of Thessaloniki; this building was the family house of Kemal Ataturk himself, but it was later proved that the bomb had been planted by Turkish agents to provide a pretext for what was to follow, namely the demonstration in Istanbul. According to British reports, the Turkish government expected that “a few windows” [of property of the Greek minority] would be broken, but the demonstration got much more violent, and the police did nothing to restrain the rioters. The properties of the Greeks of Istanbul and of the Oecumenical Patriarchate, Churches and even cemeteries were destroyed, while the Greek officers serving in the NATO HQ at Izmir were also attacked. In 1961, following their overthrow by a military coup, Menderes and Zorlu were convicted for their involvement in this affair (they were executed on other charges).

The pogrom destroyed Greek-Turkish relations as well as the Conference. Both countries rejected the British proposals. Cyprus was again at a dead-end.

## The aftermath of the Tripartite Conference: Harding takes over in Cyprus

Following the Conference, the Greek government tried to inscribe its item at the agenda of the UN General Assembly. However, on 22 September the Greek delegation, headed by Stefanopoulos, failed to do this, with the Americans voting against inscription. A few days earlier, the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles had sent identical messages to Papagos and Menderes urging restraint; this was strongly denounced by the Greek Press for putting the culprit and the victim of the anti-Greek pogrom in the same place. Thus anti-Americanism was boosted in Greece. Early in October Papagos died and the King decided to by-pass the discredited Stefanopoulos, by appointing a popular Minister, Constantinos Karamanlis, as Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, in Cyprus **the confrontation between the colonial authorities and EOKA peaked**, at the same time when large demonstrations continued in Nicosia. Since August the Governor of Cyprus, Sir Robert Armitage seemed to lose his nerve. He was asking for special powers to deport Bishops, even Makarios himself; the collapse of the Cyprus police under EOKA's pressure made things even more difficult for him. The British government decided to replace him with **Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, the former chief of the Imperial General Staff**. The choice of a soldier was indicative of London's decision to suppress the Cyprus revolt militarily. However, Harding was also to exploit ways to reach a settlement with the Cypriots themselves.

## The start of the Harding-Grivas duel, autumn 1955

As the Cyprus police had been neutralized, Harding received army reinforcements and set out to

destroy EOKA. **In the autumn of 1955 the conflict between EOKA and British troops became much more intense:** the first deaths of British soldiers occurred, while a pivotal moment for EOKA was **the death of Charalambos Mouskos**, a cousin of Makarios, on 15 December, during an operation in which Charilaos Michael and Andreas Zakos were also arrested. Two Greek Cypriots, **Andreas Dimitriou** and **Michalis Karaolis**, were arrested and condemned to death, but their sentences for the moment were not carried out. In the new phase of conflict, **Grigoris Afxentiou** and **Markos Drakos** emerged as the most capable commanders of EOKA. At the same time, agitation continued among the students of the schools, many of which were closed down by the colonial authorities.



Governor Harding

**On 26 November Harding proclaimed a state of Emergency**, which allowed the British authorities and the army to arrest and imprison citizens without trial, to impose curfews, to search properties, to impose collective fines to communities or to condemn young people to flogging. The possession of arms became a capital offense.

**In December, Harding also banned AKEL:** he hoped that the removal of the communist party from the scene would make it easier for Makarios to settle, but as often happened in the Cyprus question this was a British miscalculation. Makarios felt even more obliged to continue his hard negotiating tactics. Simultaneously, Harding launched a new operation to destroy EOKA which did not produce results. Last but not least, the death of a Turkish Cypriot policeman by EOKA fire was followed in January 1956 by Turkish Cypriot demonstrations against EOKA. This referred to the possibility of a conflict between the two major communities of the island.

## The Makarios-Harding negotiations: autumn-winter, 1955-56

Despite his drive to defeat EOKA, Harding did not aim to solve the Cyprus question through military means alone. He also sought to negotiate a settlement with Makarios, or (as the British put it) to divide Makarios from EOKA. On 4 October 1955 the new Governor saw the Archbishop who insisted that Britain recognise the principle of self-determination for Cyprus and introduce a liberal constitution. The prospect of an agreement with Makarios and the apparent weakening of the Turkish position after the September Istanbul riots convinced Eden that London should satisfy some of Makarios' conditions. Simultaneously, the new Greek government under Karamanlis encouraged Britain to explore the possibilities of an Anglo-Cypriot settlement, and the US took a similar line.

On 21 November Harding presented to Makarios a formula which constituted an **indirect yet clear abandonment of the "never" position**. It stated that "it is not their [the British government's] position that the principle of self-determination can never be applicable to Cyprus". **The exercise of self-determination, however, was subjected to many preconditions, including the obligations of Britain to allied powers in the Eastern Mediterranean.** Makarios was anxious that this wording gave Turkey a veto on Cyprus.

Despite US and British pressure, Karamanlis refused to press Makarios to agree to the formula. On 5 December the Greek government gave the British a memorandum which had been prepared after consulting Nicos Kranidiotis, the Secretary of the Ethnarchy. In late December, a Greek diplomatic envoy to Cyprus, Alexis Liatis, did not press the Archbishop to accept the formula.

The British made various alterations to the formula which Makarios finally accepted on 2 February. The Archbishop then asked for negotiations regarding the “transitory regime”.

## The collapse of the Makarios-Harding negotiations, January-February 1956

In February Makarios asked that the British undertake specific obligations regarding the internal government of colonial Cyprus: he demanded a **Greek Cypriot elected majority in the Assembly**; after a short period the control of **internal security** should be transferred to the responsibility of a Cypriot Minister (the British wanted to retain it indefinitely); and an **amnesty** would be declared for EOKA fighters. Makarios had also met Grivas, who appeared reserved about the prospects for a settlement. At the same time, the British MP Francis Noel-Baker unsuccessfully tried to effect a compromise.

Meanwhile, the Greek government had turned its attention to the general election of 19 February. On the 17th Makarios asked Karamanlis’ opinion, but the Greek Prime Minister replied that he would support any decision of the Archbishop. However, the Greek election played a role in the negotiations: trying to help Karamanlis’ position (as he clashed with a coalition of all other political parties including the communists), the Americans pressed London not to terminate the negotiations. However, after 19 February and Karamanlis’ victory in the elections, this restraint was removed from British policy.

On 29 February, the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, visited Cyprus and held talks with Makarios. The Archbishop probably did not realize that this was the last chance for an agreement: he rejected the British proposals hoping to secure more advantages. However, this was followed on 1 March by the Jordan crisis, during which King Hussein dismissed General Sir John Glubb as commander of the Arab Legion. Jordan seemed to be lost for Britain, and this led to renewed attacks against Eden’s Middle Eastern policy. Feeling that he had been rebuffed by Makarios, and needing a show of strength in the Middle East, **the British arrested Makarios on 9 March (shortly before his departure for Athens) and deported him to the Seychelles.**

## The aftermath of Makarios’ deportation: spring-summer 1956

Makarios’ deportation had severe destabilizing effects. Despite British hopes, **no Greek Cypriot emerged to negotiate in the Archbishop’s place.** The British Constitutional Commissioner, Lord Radcliffe, found no interlocutor in the Greek Cypriot side.

Greece also faced the prospect of destabilization: after Makarios' deportation Athens was shaken by large demonstrations, dominated by anti-Western and anti-NATO slogans, and the government came close to resign. The Greeks withdrew their Ambassador from London, and relations of the government with the British Embassy became extremely difficult.

In Cyprus itself, **a full-scale war erupted between EOKA and the British security forces and the army.** In April there even was an attempt by EOKA to assassinate Harding. **On 10 May, Andreas Dimitriou and Michael Karaolis were hanged.** This was followed by new anti-Western demonstrations in Greece, in which four people were killed (three demonstrators and a policeman). In late May, the Greek Foreign Minister, Spyros Theotokis, who had supported the Makarios-Harding negotiations, came under strong attacks by the opposition and the Cypriot Ethnarchy for being friendly to the British, and resigned. He was replaced by Averoff.

The British intensified their effort to suppress EOKA. Curfews and collective fines became usual measures in Cyprus, while concentration camps were set up for those suspected for collaboration with EOKA. Early in June Harding launched a major offensive to destroy EOKA, but failed once more; and the Auxilliary Police was created, manned by Turkish Cypriots. The latter initiative also **raised tension between the two communities**; in late May minor clashes were recorded between Greek- and Turkish Cypriots following the murder of a Turkish Cypriot policeman by EOKA members. On 9 August three more EOKA members were executed (**Andreas Zakos, Charilaos Michael and Iakovos Patatsos**).

## The first EOKA truce and the renewal of violence, August-autumn 1956

On 16 August 1956 **EOKA proclaimed a truce in Cyprus.** This took place at the suggestion of the new Greek Foreign Minister, Averoff, who had now taken contact with Grivas and tried to ensure that tensions would be lowered. However, the British allowed themselves to believe that they had defeated EOKA and responded by offering terms of surrender to its members.

After that, Grivas resumed his action. In late August and in early September the Acting Ethnarch, Bishop **Anthimos** of Kition and the Secretary of the Ethnarchy, **Nicos Kranidiotis**, were arrested. On 21 September three more EOKA members were hanged: **Michalis Koutsoftas, Andreas Panagidis and Stelios Mavromatis.** Autumn 1956 was a period of renewed conflict: many British troops were now in Cyprus preparing for the invasion of Egypt (which took place in November) and EOKA launched successive attacks against them.

## British plans, summer 1956

**The British decision to deport Makarios also transferred the centre of discussions to the international level.** Since the British now had no Greek Cypriot leader with whom to negotiate, they

needed to seek an agreement with the interested states, Greece and Turkey. During a year of Middle Eastern crisis which would also lead to an Anglo-Egyptian war over Suez, **the British felt that they could not displease Turkey.**

In June 1956 London put forward a new plan. The impact of Makarios' deportation is vividly shown by two elements of the plan: first it gave a virtual veto to Turkey on the issue of Cypriot self-determination; second the plan was presented only to Turkey (not to Greece) and was immediately withdrawn after Ankara's initial adverse reaction to it.

The British plan envisaged the introduction of a colonial Constitution, the drafting of which had been entrusted to Lord Radcliffe. On the issue of self-determination, the plan provided that 10 years after the introduction of the Constitution, the question of the exercise of self-determination would be submitted to NATO; if a two-thirds majority of the NATO members agreed that this right should be exercised, deliberations would begin for the conclusion of two tripartite Treaties between Britain Greece and Turkey, for the protection of minorities and for the military use of the island. **Since the conclusion of these Treaties was a precondition for self-determination, Turkey was given a virtual veto on the process.**

The Turks rejected the plan. Indeed, **the Turkish Ambassador to London, Suat Hayri Urguplu counterproposed the partition of the island.** After Turkey's adverse reaction, the British abandoned their scheme. In July the Permanent Under-Secretary of the FO, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, suggested to examine the possibility of partition. At the moment, however, the idea was not taken further.

## Greek proposals, summer-autumn 1956

After Makarios' deportation, Greece was searching for a scheme which could satisfy British requirements and Turkish sensitivities, while leading to Enosis. Part of this search was Averoff's initiative to press Grivas for a truce, which was proclaimed by EOKA on 16 August but was practically ignored by Britain.

In July the Greek government tried to communicate its ideas to London and to Washington through the Labour MP Philip Noel-Baker and the Greek-American businessman Spyros Scouras, who aimed to mediate in the dispute. The Greek government also secured the agreement of the Bishop of Kition, Anthimos, who was now the acting Ethnarch in Cyprus. Athens proposed the introduction of a Constitution with a Greek Cypriot elected majority; internal security would remain in British hands for one year. After a period of three to five years, the NATO Council would decide the application of the right of self-determination; this should take place between five and eight years after the NATO Council's decision. Thus Britain would retain Cyprus for the following 8-13 years; the NATO Council would not decide whether, but when self-determination would be applied to Cyprus. In case of Enosis, Britain would retain a base in Cyprus and would receive another in Greece; in Cyprus two or three free ports would be established, so that Turkish trade would not pass through Greek customs; the Turkish Cypriots would be guaranteed minority rights, would not serve in the Greek army, and would have the right to opt for dual nationality. Cyprus would be partially demilitarized.

At the same time, the Greeks intensified their efforts to convince the American to mediate in the dispute. In September and October a special representative of President Eisenhower, Julius C. Holmes, was appointed, to whom the Greeks repeated their proposal. However, the prospects of US mediation were destroyed by the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, which finally led to a conflict between the British and the Americans.

## Britain, Cyprus and the Suez crisis, summer-autumn 1956

In summer 1956 the Suez crisis erupted following Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal company. **The British leaders, especially Eden, now felt that they were facing the ultimate challenge in their Middle Eastern policy:** if they failed to react, their prestige throughout the region would be destroyed. However, initially they refrained from armed action as the Americans were clearly against it. Thus in August Britain called a conference of the maritime powers which used the Suez Canal.

Turkey sided with Britain, but Greece refused to participate in the conference. Athens needed to protect the large **Greek community in Egypt**, while it also counted on **Arab support for Cyprus at the UN**. Moreover, the Greeks found it impossible to side with colonialist Britain which was keeping Cyprus under its rule. This, however, convinced the British that the Greeks were siding with their worst enemy and **widened the gap between London and Athens**.

The Suez crisis led to the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in November (the French suspected Nasser of aiding the anti-colonial rebellion in Algeria). The Anglo-French invasion was finally dwarfed by Soviet and US pressure. This meant that a crisis of confidence had now occurred between the British and the Americans; consequently the US mediation on Cyprus was practically destroyed. Furthermore, the British regarded Turkey as a faithful ally and Greece as an enemy. This would prove important in the decisions regarding Cyprus.

## Britain accepts the principle of partition, October-December 1956

Following the Anglo-Turkish exchanges in the summer, **the Turkish government came out in favour of the partition of Cyprus**. The suggestion was made on 12 October 1956 during a meeting between the Secretary-General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Nuri Birgi, and the British Ambassador to Ankara. Throughout the autumn the Turks continued to press the British to accept such a solution.

By that time, its growing difficulties in the Middle East made it impossible for London to reject the Turkish suggestion. However, it was not easy to make such a decision, and there were powerful figures within the British establishment, including Harding, who had severe doubts whether it was wise to provide for the partition of a Crown Colony. The Colonial Office also was against the idea. Finally, the Foreign Office's view prevailed. The British government decided to recognise the principle of "double

self-determination” in Cyprus. This meant that Greek- and Turkish Cypriots would vote separately; a majority of the Turkish Cypriot vote (9 per cent of the population) would thus be enough to impose partition. There also was another problem in this scheme: the Turkish Cypriots were not a majority in any Cypriot district. Thus their vote would not be cast in terms of an electoral district, but would in fact decide a territorial question.

It is important to note that according to the British decision of autumn 1956, this “double self-determination” pledge would be presented as a threat; it was not given to be implemented. The British hoped that this pledge would scare the Greeks and the Greek Cypriots into accepting the continuation of British rule, and at the same time assure Turkey that Britain would not agree to Enosis. However, as would be proved, this pledge legitimized the Turkish claim for the partition of Cyprus,

Later on, the Turks claimed that the Greek Foreign Minister, Averoff, had proposed partition to the Turkish Ambassador to Athens. The Greek record of this conversation has been published and does not support the allegation.

## The Radcliffe Plan and the partition statement, December 1956

The Radcliffe proposals were submitted in November 1956 and were **the most liberal British constitutional plan of the 1950s**. Radcliffe suggested the setting up of a **self-governing and a retained sector of government**; the latter would also include internal security. There was going to be a clear majority of Greek Cypriot elected members in the Assembly. Turkish Cypriot rights would be protected by a Ministry of Turkish Cypriot Affairs; legislation regarding this Ministry would require a two-thirds majority of the Turkish members of the Assembly. **Radcliffe also examined and rejected the Turkish Cypriot claim for a federal system in Cyprus. He noted that Cypriot population was mixed and it was impossible to separate the two communities.**

However, the British government had decided otherwise. Before presenting the proposals to the House of Commons, Lennox-Boyd visited Athens and Ankara. In Athens he suggested that his statement would recognise the principle of self-determination, and would make it clear that partition would be among the options; the Greek leaders did not object to this, as they were certain that there would not be a majority of the Cypriot voters in favour of partition; but Lennox-Boyd did not make it clear that this would require a majority of the Turkish Cypriot voters only. In Ankara, on the contrary, the British Foreign Secretary told the Turks that British would not present Turkey with a united Cyprus under Greek rule.

On 19 December 1956 Lennox-Boyd presented the Radcliffe constitution, and also stated that **Britain now accepted the principle of “double self-determination”, namely, partition**. It was this statement that led Greece to reject the plan, and Turkey to accept it. However, this statement would now become the Greeks’ worst nightmare.

## Reactions to the partition statement: Greece and Turkey

Turkey accepted the Radcliffe plan, but the British knew that Ankara hoped in time to drop constitutional government and go straight to partition. **Throughout 1957 the Turks insisted that partition was the only solution for Cyprus.** The creation of a Turkish military organization, (**Turkish Resistance Organization – TMT**) in 1957, under the control of Turkish army officers, was meant to support this claim, but making clear that co-existence of Greeks and Turks was impossible in Cyprus.

Greece was found in an extremely difficult position, and now needed to formulate a response to the danger of partition. The Greek government, especially Averoff, lobbied the Americans and the NATO allies against this eventuality, pointing out that **partition with the vote of a part of the minority was incompatible with western political culture, that it would result in forced population transfers (in order to create a Turkish majority somewhere in the island) and would destroy Cyprus' social and economic life.** At the same time, the Greeks knew that they needed a fall back position. This was the concept of **guaranteed (namely permanent) independence**, which Averoff presented to the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, in February 1957 during the UN General Assembly session. The Greeks also lobbied the Americans to secure the release of Makarios from exile and his return to Cyprus: Athens noted that it was impossible to reach a settlement when the leader of the majority community was captive and in exile.

# Enosis, partition, independence, 1957-59

## The new UN debate, February 1957

Following the Greek failure to inscribe an item on Cyprus at the UN General Assembly agenda in September 1955, the focus had moved away from the international organization. The Greeks submitted another appeal after Makarios' deportation, and in autumn 1956 Prime Minister Karamanlis himself went to New York to lobby for it. The actual debate was delayed until early 1957.

That debate ended with a "colourless" resolution, which **called for new negotiations between the "interested parties"**. Yet, interpretations of this resolution varied considerably. According to the Greeks, the "interested parties" were Britain and the Cypriots; this way the Greeks suggested once more that Makarios be released. According to the British and the Turks the term "interested parties" meant the three states, Britain, Greece and Turkey. Thus, there was no agreement even on the meaning of the resolution. **This was the first time that the Greeks had not been defeated at the UN**, but the whole affair showed once more that it was unlikely that a solution would come from the international organization.

## Makarios' release

Since March 1956 the Greeks kept insisting that Makarios' return on to the scene was necessary in any attempt to break the impasse. In mid-March 1957 Karamanlis sent a message to US President Dwight D. Eisenhower asking him to secure the Archbishop's release. Eisenhower made this point to the new British Prime Minister, Macmillan, during the Anglo-American Bermuda conference on 23 March.

Macmillan intended to improve Anglo-American relations and welcomed this opportunity to show that he took into account US advice. He also believed that Makarios was a liability in exile. Last but not least, the British hoped to secure a statement by Makarios condemning EOKA, which the Archbishop refused to provide. Nevertheless, Macmillan decided to proceed with the release, despite the objections raised in his Cabinet; indeed, Lord Salisbury, the Lord President, resigned over this decision. Thus, in late March 1957 the British announced the release of Makarios, but **refused to allow him back to Cyprus**, and consistently in the following years avoided another round of negotiations with him.

Makarios arrived in Athens on 17 April and remained in Greece until March 1959. His repeated efforts to initiate discussions with the British failed. The Ethnarchy also publicized the many incidents of British torture of Greek Cypriots which became known during this period. **His presence in Athens, however, contributed to a much better coordination between the Greek government and the Ethnarchy.**

## Developments in Cyprus and the second EOKA truce, spring 1957

In Cyprus the confrontation between EOKA and the British authorities continued. Early in 1957 **the British scored some important successes**. The two major commanders of EOKA, **Markos Drakos** and **Grigoris Afxentiou** were killed in mid-January and early March respectively; indeed, Afxentiou's lone and long fight, which ended with the British burning him alive in his hide-out, has remained as a symbol of resistance in Greek Cypriot memory. In mid-February an EOKA group lost three men in action against the British.

In March 1957 the British decided to execute **Evagoras Pallikarides**, a young man of 19 years, who had been arrested and condemned to death for possession of arms. At that time, Averoff was trying to persuade Grivas to call a second truce, and an execution could turn the EOKA leader against the idea. Averoff frantically tried to prevent the execution, while a US Congressman offered to adopt Pallikarides in order to save him. The British however proceeded with the execution on 14 March. Only a few hours later Grivas declared that he could call another truce if London released Makarios. This was announced on 28 March; then, the EOKA truce came into effect.

Greek Foreign Minister Averoff had by now established contact with Grivas and **had started sending arms and ammunition to EOKA**; this was the first time that EOKA had an official contact with the Greek government. Averoff believed that this could allow him to exercise a **restraining influence** over Grivas.

The Greek government believed that the spectre of partition had brought a major change in the Cypriot setting: further action by EOKA could be used as a pretext by the Turks to cause inter-communal violence trying to prove that coexistence was impossible and thus that partition was the only solution. Grivas finally called a **second truce**, but in April he refused a proposal by the Greek government and Makarios to end EOKA's action. The organization remained essentially inactive for the next months.

## Britain examines partition, spring 1957

The December 1956 partition pledge was given by the British, but at that time they did not intend to implement it; it was meant to function as a threat to the Greek Cypriots, which could force them to accept the continuation of British rule. However, early in 1957 Eden resigned from the premiership and was replaced by Harold Macmillan. The new leader intended to improve Anglo-American relations and to ensure that Britain would still remain a major power in the Middle East. Thus, **he still needed the cooperation of Turkey**, and indeed during the Bermuda conference he made it clear to Eisenhower that the Turks were Britain's major ally in the region, and no solution on Cyprus which offended them was acceptable.

Thus, **the Macmillan government examined the possibility to implement partition**. To this end,

the British encouraged the NATO Secretary-General, Lord Ismay (a former British general) to propose mediation; after Greece's certain refusal to accept the proposal, the road to partition would open. The British also initiated studies for bringing partition about.

This policy was resisted both by the Colonial Office (who did not want to lose another territory) and by the Chiefs of Staff (COS), who argued that British military requirements could not be met in a divided island. However, Macmillan imposed his line.

**Studies of partition, however, revealed the impracticality of the idea.** Two scenarios were examined: **gradual partition**, which would require many years, and **“outright” partition**, which would need the employment of British troops in order to move people forcibly and create a region with a Turkish majority; even “outright” partition would require some years. The practical difficulties of the idea, and the realization that the NATO allies would not favour partition led Macmillan to abandon the scheme.

## The attitude of the US and of NATO members

Following the December 1957 British “double self-determination” (or partition) statement, the Greeks intensely lobbied the Americans and other NATO members against partition. Although initially unfavourable to the concept of guaranteed independence (as they believed that a Cypriot state would not be economically viable) the Americans realized that partition threatened also to spark a Greek-Turkish war and endanger NATO cohesion; thus they **accepted the arguments against this solution**. By April the US appeared favourable to guaranteed independence and in late May gave a paper to the British arguing against partition. However, they did not step on to the scene more strongly. **Their objections to partition played a major role in Macmillan's decision to abandon the idea of implementing this solution.**

In spring 1957 Lord Ismay was also replaced as NATO Secretary-General by Paul-Henri Spaak. An ardent supporter of European unification, Spaak disliked the concept of partition and of the forced transfers of population that it entailed. Moreover, as a Belgian he was favourable to the idea of guaranteed independence. Averoff quickly established contact with Spaak, who in autumn 1957 offered to mediate; however, the British and the Turks discouraged him.

In 1957 other NATO powers, such as West Germany and Italy, also came out against partition. This meant that the Greeks had managed to create an international climate in favour of avoiding this solution; but the question remained what would be done with Cyprus.

## The proposal for a new Tripartite Conference, summer 1957

For Macmillan, the practical difficulties for the implementation of partition opened the road for the revival of his older ideas involving tripartite cooperation in the government of Cyprus. Britain

examined and rejected the idea of guaranteed independence in July 1957: the British officials stressed that a Cypriot state would be unstable, vulnerable to communist infiltration and its greatest flaw was that it would be ruled by Makarios.

Macmillan now put forward his own preference for a **tripartite (British-Greek-Turkish) condominium on Cyprus**. This would again run counter to the Greek Cypriot claim for self-determination, and would additionally create a regime in which the Greeks would be permanently overruled by the British and the Turks. Still, Macmillan decided to proceed, and suggested the calling of a new Tripartite conference.

The proposal for a new conference was rejected by the Greek government. Athens had bitter memories from the similar conference of 1955, and realized that a new one could bring the Greek government into an extremely embarrassing position. Averoff indicated to the British Ambassador to Athens that Greece preferred to reach a solution prior to any official meeting; Greece was prepared to agree to the introduction of liberal self-government, leading to guaranteed independence; this regime would not change, save by a decision of the UN or NATO. By autumn it became clear that there was little prospect for an agreement on tridominium or guaranteed independence, and thus Macmillan examined other possibilities.

## The new UN debate, November-December 1957

The new debate on Cyprus at the UN General Assembly was **the closest that the Greeks came to securing a favourable Resolution**. The Greek item asked for the application of the principle of self-determination in the island, and Makarios was a member of the Greek delegation. The Greek tactic, throughout 1957, of maintaining a moderate attitude paid off, as many UN members were prepared to examine Greek suggestions.

For the first time during UN debates, the Greek item secured a majority in the Political Committee and moved to the General Assembly. This raised a new question: it was clear that the Greek draft resolution might not get the required two-thirds majority to be approved by the General Assembly. Thus the Greeks examined the possibility of dropping the reference to self-determination, and change their item to ask for independence. The Indian Foreign Minister, Krishna Menon, encouraged the Greek delegation to ask for independence, as this would secure the necessary two-thirds majority. Averoff was receptive but Makarios insisted on self-determination; the Archbishop already realized that independence might be the realistic goal, but he evidently did not want to drop the Enosis/self-determination claim at the UN, without securing some more advantages. Thus the Greeks insisted in their claim for self-determination. Their item secured 31 votes, while 23 countries voted against and 24 abstained. Thus the Greeks got a relative majority, not a two-thirds one, and their item was not approved as a Resolution.

## International developments affecting Cyprus, 1957

In 1957 **Macmillan managed to improve Anglo-American relations**. At the same time, a series of crisis in the Middle East and elsewhere brought the US and Britain closer, and convinced the Americans about the need **not to displease Turkey over Cyprus**. **The Turco-Syrian war scare in late summer and early autumn convinced the Americans about the importance of Turkey in blocking Soviet penetration of the Middle East**. The Sputnik flight raised the spectre of Soviet supremacy in the new technology of inter-continental nuclear missiles and alarmed the US public. The NATO powers responded by installing US intermediate range nuclear missiles (IRBM) in European countries and Turkey, to balance the perceived Soviet capabilities in inter-continental missiles. This decision was reached at the December 1957 NATO summit in Paris. Turkey accepted the US IRBMs, whereas Greece effectively declined: the Greek government was afraid that the arrival of US missiles would fuel neutralist feelings in the country, which were already strong because the Greek public perceived that their allies had let them down regarding Cyprus.

Thus, a series of international developments seemed to point to an increased strategic importance of Turkey. By late 1957 the Americans were not prepared to accept Turkish views and the prospect of partition, but had come to appreciate the old British argument about the need not to displease Turkey over Cyprus. This meant that the two major western powers were about to find some common ground on Cyprus, mainly their priority to keep Turkey satisfied.

## A new British Governor in Cyprus: the Foot plan

Trying to break the impasse, Macmillan replaced Harding, and Sir Hugh Foot, the liberal former Governor of Jamaica became Governor. Foot travelled in Cyprus with minimal guard, and **attempted to restore some confidence** between the colonial authorities and the population, Greeks and Turks.

Foot came to endorse a new approach: liberal self-government would be introduced for seven years; **the partition pledge would remain in force, but no decision on the future status would be implemented without the consent of both communities**. This practically gave a veto to the Turkish minority on the future of Cyprus, but the provision caused Turkey's mistrust. Ankara believed that the British tried to extract themselves from the partition pledge. This was why Foot examined the possibility of **offering to Turkey a base in Cyprus, in exchange for dropping partition**.

In January Foot and the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, visited Turkey to present the new proposal. The behaviour of the Turks was insulting to the British officials. The Foreign Minister, Fatin Rustu Zorlu even indicated that the government would not receive Foot; in fact, Selwyn Lloyd went to Ankara and then invited Foot to participate at the talks, making it impossible for Turks to refuse to accept him. Ankara asked for the cession of a Turkish base immediately. The Turks demanded that the partition pledge be incorporated in an Anglo-Turkish treaty – thus making it an arrangement from which Britain would not be able to disengage.

Simultaneously with the Ankara talks, the Turkish Cypriots revolted against the British authorities and started attacking the Greek Cypriots. The British officials knew that this had taken place at the instructions of Ankara. However, the British by now had become dependent on Ankara and the Turkish Cypriots for the internal security of Cyprus. **The Turkish Cypriot violence exposed Britain's dependence to Turkey on Cyprus.**

## The discussion of Enosis minus a Turkish base, February-April 1958

After Ankara, Foot and Selwyn Lloyd visited Athens and aired the idea of giving Turkey a base in exchange for dropping partition. The Greek government cautiously suggested that it could not accept this vague idea. However, **Averoff indicated that Greece would discuss the scheme, provided that Enosis would be the quid-pro-quo for the Turkish base, and that the base would be given simultaneously with the proclamation of Enosis** (not before). Averoff also instructed the Greek Consul-General to Cyprus, Angelos Vlacos to find an area which could be ceded to Turkey with the minimal transfer of population.

Immediately afterwards, in late February, the Greek government fell over electoral reform and new elections were proclaimed for May. The Greeks were left with the impression that the scheme of Enosis minus a Turkish base remained on the table and would be discussed again after the election, which Karamanlis won easily.

However, in March **the Turks indicated to the British that they demanded two bases, in Larnaca and in Famagusta, while they also wanted virtual military occupation of Nicosia airport.** Facing such demands, but also being aware of the degree of their dependence on Turkey regarding internal security, the British abandoned their idea.

## The EOKA-AKEL conflict, early 1958

Grivas' anti-communism was a well-known fact, and EOKA did not recruit members of the Cypriot communist party. However, by the end of 1957 and early in 1958 **relations between them took a turn for the worse.** Both organizations were banned by the British. However, EOKA accused some leftists for cooperating with the British and helping the arrest of EOKA fighters. **This led to the execution of some AKEL members as "traitors", which until today remain highly symbolic and cause considerable tension in Cypriot society.** AKEL reacted strongly to these incidents. The Karamanlis government and Makarios urged Grivas to stop these attacks and avoid splitting the Greek Cypriot front in these crucial moments, but the EOKA leader did not follow their advice. On its part the Greek Left-wing Party, EDA advised AKEL to play down its complaints, since EOKA's struggle "objectively aided the democratic forces" in Greece.

In the spring of 1958 EOKA also launched a campaign for passive resistance, which does not appear to have yielded the expected results.

## The Macmillan Plan, summer 1958

In spring 1958 the diplomatic impasse and the realization of British dependence to Ankara allowed Macmillan once more to step forward and impose his own preference. The Macmillan Plan was an alternative to the condominium proposal of 1957. According to this plan, **Cyprus would remain under British sovereignty for seven years, while a “partnership” of Greece and Turkey with the British administration would be set up**; Athens and Ankara would appoint two governmental representatives to assist the governor. The constitution would be based on **“maximum communal autonomy”** and would provide for their **total institutional separation**; two Communal Chambers (a Greek- and a Turkish Cypriot) would be set up, but **there would be no common Assembly**. Furthermore, the plan provided for dual nationality for the Cypriots (British-Greek and British-Turkish); the Governor’s Council would consist of four Greek Cypriot and two Turkish Cypriot ministers, as well as the two governmental representatives of Greece and Turkey. After the implementation of the plan for seven years, the prospect of establishing a tridominium would be examined. As Macmillan announced in the House of Commons on 26 June, in case the scheme failed, **the previous British pledges remained in force**; thus the Greeks had either the option of accepting this plan, which opened the way to partition, or to accept partition itself (which was the “previous British pledge”).

Most importantly, **the Macmillan plan could be implemented partially, without the concurrence of either Greece or Turkey**: the degree of institutional separation meant that the Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber could be set up independently of the Greek Cypriot one; the Turkish governmental representative could be appointed independently of the Greek one. This meant that it was not enough for the Greeks merely to reject the plan, since its partial implementation would anyway create *faits accomplis* for the Turks; the Greeks needed to block the plan by the adoption of another, acceptable solution.

## TMT’s attack on the Greek Cypriots, and the first inter-communal clashes, summer 1958

Simultaneously with the presentation of the Macmillan Plan, the Turks made an all-out and determined effort to prejudice developments towards partition. On 8 June an explosion took place in the Turkish Consulate; exactly as had happened in the similar case of the explosion in the Turkish consulate in Thessaloniki in 1955 (which had been the pretext for the anti-Greek pogrom at Istanbul), **this bomb was also planted by Turks in order to lead to communal violence** which would prove that co-existence was impossible.

Immediately after the explosion, **the Turkish Cypriots, headed by the TMT, attacked the Greek Cypriots throughout the island**. This violence lasted almost two months and claimed many lives. Of these incidents the most famous is the massacre of eight Greek Cypriots at the village of **Kioneli** on 12 June: indeed, the Greek Cypriots were arrested by the British and were released close to a Turkish

Cypriot village; the result was the death of all of them. EOKA remained inactive during this violence, at the insistence of the Greek government and Makarios, who realized that retaliation by EOKA would merely confirm the Turkish argument that coexistence was impossible, and would make partition appear as the only solution. Grivas reacted to the Turkish violence shortly at the end of July, but on 4 August proclaimed EOKA's **third truce**.

The British responded to the Turkish Cypriot violence by large scale arrests in late June. However, the colonial authorities arrested more than 1,200 Greek Cypriots and only 60 Turkish Cypriots, despite the fact that it was the latter who were causing the violence. The Greek Cypriots found themselves killed by the Turkish Cypriots and arrested by the British; their position was desperate.

## Diplomatic developments of summer 1958

Greece and Makarios immediately rejected the Macmillan Plan. Indeed, Makarios even appeared ready to accept the introduction of a liberal Constitution without provision for self-determination; this was an indication of the sense of emergency that the plan created in the Greek side. Turkey also rejected the plan.

The Greeks tried to rally international support for their position, and NATO Secretary-General Spaak appeared ready to mediate; his views involved the introduction of a Constitution based on communal autonomy, but also the elimination of the governmental representatives of Greece and Turkey; this could lead to Cypriot independence rather than partition or condominium.

At that point, Macmillan, afraid that he would lose the initiative, visited Athens and Ankara and on 14 August presented a **revised version of his plan**. This time there was a vague reference to the desirability of setting up a common Legislature in the future (a Greek preference), but also a further tangible concession to the Turks: **the new plan provided for the setting up of separate municipalities, Greek and Turkish, in the major cities of the island**. This had been a demand of the Turkish side since 1957: the Turks regarded these municipalities as a territorial foundation of Turkish Cypriot power in the island.

Greece again rejected the plan, but Turkey now accepted it. This time, **the US also endorsed it, believing that this was the minimum that Ankara would accept to drop its claim for immediate partition**. Britain now prepared to implement the plan with the cooperation of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots only. Separate electoral rolls were prepared, a study for the separation of municipalities got under way and the appointment of the Turkish governmental representative was scheduled for 1 October.

## The NATO mediation and Greece's defeat, autumn 1958

Following the presentation of the revised Macmillan Plan and the British decision to implement

it, the last resort of the Greeks was to try to involve Spaak in the process; Spaak was the last international leader who remained sceptical about this plan. Furthermore, the Greek government now faced the prospect of its resignation if the plan were implemented, and since there was no governmental alternative of the Centre (which had been crushed by the Left in the May elections) there was the danger of a military dictatorship or of a drift of Greece from NATO. On 9 September **Karamanlis wrote to Spaak that the implementation of the plan could endanger “the cohesion of the alliance” in the Eastern Mediterranean.** This was a clear reference to the danger of Greece’s disengagement from the alliance, and Spaak visited Athens on the 23rd trying to help the Greeks. After that, he suggested a NATO conference on Cyprus, causing the wrath of both the British and the Turks. However, on 1 October, the Turkish Consul-General in Nicosia took up the post of Turkish governmental representative, according to the Macmillan Plan. **Turkish state authority had returned to Cyprus for the first time since 1878.**

The Greeks had to decide whether to accept Spaak’s invitation for a NATO conference. Averoff was against acceptance, predicting that the British and the Turks would be in a position to steer the process to directions unacceptable to Athens. However, Makarios insisted that Greece should participate. During the deliberations the NATO Council, it indeed became clear that the British and the Turks were able to impose their views on the membership and the agenda of the conference. Makarios now changed his mind and forced the Greek government to decline the invitation; but this meant that Athens had now let down Spaak, its only remaining friend. By late October 1958 it appeared that the Greeks had been defeated on all possible levels.

## The Makarios-Castle interview: the Archbishop drops Enosis

In August and September 1958 the Greek side was alarmed that the British were going to implement the Macmillan Plan regardless of consequences for Cyprus or Greece. The Greek side (both the government and Makarios) had already shown that they were favourable to the idea of guaranteed independence, but had refrained from proposing it officially: they believed that the proposal should come from a third party and they should “accept” it as a concession at an opportune moment; Makarios himself refused to endorse it at the UN debate in December 1957, considering that even a favourable UN Resolution was not enough as a gain from such a concession.

However, as the date (1 October) for the appointment of the Turkish governmental representative was coming closer, Makarios tried to stop the process by offering this concession. On 23 September 1958, at an interview with the British Labour MP Barbara Castle, **he said that he was ready to accept independence in perpetuity.** The gesture did not impress the British government who decided to go on implementing the Macmillan Plan.

**Makarios’ initiative created some strain in his relations with the Greek government.** The Greek officials accepted the prospect of guaranteed independence, but disagreed over Makarios’ tactics. They were upset that the Archbishop proceeded with the interview without informing them in

advance; they also criticized Makarios for using a British opposition MP for his move, which made it easier for the British government to ignore it.

In November Makarios went to New York for the UN debate, and stated that the US had encouraged him to drop Enosis and accept independence. This was disclaimed by the State Department and brought the Greek side once more in an embarrassing position.

## The situation in Cyprus, autumn 1958

By late August, as Britain was moving towards the implementation of the Macmillan plan, EOKA resumed its action. **Autumn 1958 was a period of tense conflict in Cyprus.** Early in September four EOKA members were killed at **Liopetri** after a long battle. In early October a British citizen, Mrs. **Cutliffe** was killed in cold blood, allegedly by EOKA. The resulting British army search for the murderers (Cutliffe was the wife of a British soldier) resulted in two Greek Cypriot dead and 256 wounded. Later Grivas refused that the EOKA was responsible for the murder, but the affair made significant damage to the Greek Cypriot organization internationally. On 19 November 1958 EOKA lost another of its able leaders, **Kyriakos Matsis**, who was trapped in house at Dikomo. When the British soldiers asked him to come out and surrender, Matsis replied that if he came out, he would do so shooting.

Despite the many losses and many successes of EOKA, it became clear that it could inflict damage to the British, but could not stop the implementation of the Macmillan Plan. **EOKA had been devised as an instrument of pressure, not as an “army” which could win a war.** Autumn 1958, with all its acts of incredible bravery, sacrifice or violence, showed that EOKA's limits had been reached.

## The last UN debate and the search for a solution, November-December 1958

In November and early December a new UN debate on Cyprus took place. The Greeks had now (after the Makarios-Castle interview) asked for **independence** for Cyprus. But things had changed compared to one year ago: the situation in Cyprus seemed desperate, the British and the Turks had assumed the initiative, and the Americans themselves intervened against the Greek item. This debate, the longest until then in the UN General Assembly history, ended with a Greek defeat.

It was at New York, that Averoff and Zorlu had their first exchange of views, from which it appeared that there could be ground for a solution on **guaranteed independence**. The two Ministers agreed to continue the exchange through the diplomatic channel. **In mid-December they met Selwyn Lloyd in Paris: the British reluctantly agreed that they would accept a Greek-Turkish agreement on Cyprus** (Macmillan was upset that his plan was going to be set aside). New exchanges took place through diplomatic channels in late December and in January.

In these deliberations it became clear that **the Turks wanted to set up a state which would**

**only nominally be independent, but would in fact constitute a Greek-Turkish condominium;** according to their proposals, this “state” would not have the right to join the UN (an unmistakable sign of statehood) and would be a federation, governed by the Greek- and the Turkish Cypriots on a 50-50 basis. The Greeks insisted on the sovereign character of the new state and on its unitary and democratic structure; the Greeks were prepared to accept communal autonomy, but not a federation or an exclusion of Cyprus from the UN.

**Both Greece and Turkey had motives for accepting a compromise.** Greece needed to block the implementation of the Macmillan Plan. But Turkey also needed to improve its relations with Athens. After the **Iraqi revolution** of summer 1958, the loss of Iraq for the West threatened Turkey with regional isolation. Ankara needed to re-establish its cooperation with Athens, and this could only be done through a Cyprus settlement.

## The Zurich-London agreements, February 1959

By late January 1959 the Greek and the Turkish governments had reached agreement on the basic outline of a settlement. At a meeting with the Greek government leaders on 29 January, **Makarios accepted the principles of the agreement**, insisted that the Turkish claim for separate municipalities in the major cities should be accepted, and agreed that in order to reject the Turkish claim for a military base in Cyprus, the Greek government could accept a common HQ with the stationing of Turkish troops.

On 5-11 February, at Zurich, the Greek and the Turkish governments reached an agreement for guaranteed independence. On 17-19 February, at a new conference at London, in which the Greek- and the Turkish Cypriots leaderships also participated, the British accepted the Greek-Turkish agreement, provided that they would retain sovereign bases in the island.

According to the agreement for the “Basic Structure of the Republic of Cyprus”, a presidential regime would be established; the President would always be a Greek Cypriot and the Vice-President a Turkish Cypriot. They would be elected by their respective communities, and would have a right of veto on foreign affairs, defense and internal security. The Council of Ministers would consist of seven Greek Cypriots and three Turkish Cypriots, while one of the Ministries of Defense, Finance or Foreign Affairs would always be given to a Turkish Cypriot. Two Communal Chambers would be established to deal with communal affairs. Legislative power rested mainly with the common House of Representatives, consisting of 70 percent Greek- and 30 percent Turkish Cypriot members. However, the electoral Law, tax Bills and municipal legislation, would need the approval of the majority of both the Greek- and the Turkish Cypriot members of the House. Conflicts of competence would be settled by the Supreme Constitutional Court, consisting of one Greek Cypriot, one Turkish Cypriot and a neutral member. The civil service, the police and the gendarmerie would consist of 70 percent Greek Cypriots and 30 percent Turkish Cypriots, while the ratio in the army was 60:40. The Supreme Court of Justice would consist of two Greek Cypriots, one Turkish Cypriot and a neutral member who would have two votes. Separate municipalities would be set up in the major cities.

A Treaty of Guarantee, to be signed by Britain, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus was to provide for the safeguarding of the independence, the Constitution and territorial integrity of the Cyprus Republic. In case of a violation of the regime or of the territorial integrity of Cyprus, the three guarantor powers would consult with the aim of restoring the status quo; in case agreed common action proved impossible, each guarantor power could act independently, with the “sole aim” of restoring the status quo. According to the UN Legal Department, this provision did not create a right of armed intervention: all signatories of the Treaty became members of the UN, and the Charter of the United Nations (which is compulsory International Law) prohibits the use of force even as a preventive measure.

Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey would also form an alliance. The three countries would set up a joint HQ in the island, where a Greek contingent of 950 men and a Turkish of 650 men, including officers, would be stationed.

In Zurich Karamanlis and Menderes also concluded a “gentlemen’s agreement”. It provided that Greece and Turkey would support the entry of Cyprus into NATO, and that Athens and Ankara would make representations to the President and the Vice-president of the Cyprus Republic respectively, to ban the “Communist Party” and prohibit “Communist action”.

## Makarios’ doubts at London

At the London Conference Archbishop Makarios asked for some changes in the text. He stressed that he did not reject the agreements, but wanted to bring some “improvements” to them. When pressed to sign immediately he replied that “if it is now it is no”. That night the Greek government pressed Makarios’ advisers to accept the settlement, and the Archbishop signed the agreements on the next day, 19 February.

Makarios’ attitude in London has been presented as proof of the “imposition” of the agreements on him. This impression is mistaken, since he had accepted them both before and after the Zurich conference. Others portrayed Makarios as a Machiavellian figure who wanted to be seen to sign under pressure and thus avoid the blame that he had accepted the agreements in his own free will. This is also inaccurate. According to the available evidence, Makarios knew that he had to sign, but seemed to go through a personal crisis: it was very difficult for the Ethnarch of Cyprus to sign a settlement which, however necessary, was not ideal and excluded Enosis in perpetuity. At any rate, in the following years Makarios strongly defended his decision to accept the agreements, stressing that a rejection would mean the destruction of the Greek Cypriots.

# Cyprus' road to independence, 1959-60

## The implementation of the agreements: political arrangements, 1959

Following the conclusion of the London agreement, Makarios returned to Cyprus on 1 March and was **triumphantly received** by the Greek Cypriots. The Greek government took special care to ensure the departure of Grivas, who had shown some discomfort for the agreements; he left in mid-March for Athens. In early April, Makarios and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Fazil Kuchuk, appointed the Cypriot members of the **Transitional Committee, a kind of provisional government**. Makarios appointed mostly former EOKA men, and this caused the anger of figures of the old Right, as well as of Grivas, who saw his influence among his former subordinates to be weakened.



EOKA fighters in celebrations after the end of the struggle

In summer 1959 **Grivas, encouraged by the Greek opposition, came out publicly against the provisions of the agreements on the retention of British bases**. However, the Greek government stood firmly at the side of Makarios, and this first rift between the two men seemed to be overcome following their meeting at Rhodes in October.

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.

## The drafting of the Constitution, 1959-60

According to the Zurich and London agreements, the Cyprus Constitution would be based on the "Basic Structure" and would be drafted by a **Constitutional Committee**. This was created in April 1959, and consisted of a Greek Cypriot representative (Glafkos Clerides), a Turkish Cypriot (Rauf Denktash), a Greek (Professor Themistocles Tsatsos) and a Turkish legal expert (Professor Nihat Erim), and a neutral expert, Professor Marcel Bridel of the University of Lausanne.

The main problem centered on the exercise of those sectors of executive power which had not been expressly mentioned in the "Basic Structure". The Turks wanted the President and the Vice-President to be "jointly" responsible for executive power; this provision would create the picture of a "condominium" between these two officials, and would run counter to the democratic principle. The final agreement, reached on 10 November 1959, provided that these sections of **executive power**

**belonged to the Council of Ministers, which was a collective body with a Greek Cypriot majority.**

During the drafting both the Greek- and the Turkish Cypriot sides tried to write into the Constitution everything that they regarded important. As a result, the Constitution became too long and rigid. This would prove important in the road to the new crisis in 1960-63. The Constitution was signed by Makarios and Kuchuk on 6 April 1960.

## Arms traffic and the Deniz incident, autumn 1959

The existence of illegal arms at the hands of people from both communities, and the legacy of the inter-communal violence of 1958 were among the most important obstacles for the restoration of mutual confidence between Greek- and Turkish Cypriots. However, **the illegal arms traffic continued even after the conclusion of the Zurich and London agreements**, mostly by the Turkish Cypriots. In mid-March 1959 EOKA surrendered an impressive amount of arms, but the British still believed that some remained at the hands of former EOKA men.

On 18 October 1959 the British intercepted the Turkish boat *Deniz* (registered at Izmir) carrying ammunition to Cyprus. The crew scuttled the boat. This created a major crisis in Cyprus, which was fuelled by the fact that the official Turkish news agency, Anatolian, announced that the boat was fishing dolphins for which the crew needed arms; the Turkish statement created the impression that the Turkish state was behind this venture. The Greek Cypriots even temporarily suspended the work of the Constitutional Committee. The crisis was slowly overcome as both Athens and Ankara showed that they disapproved of any attempt to overthrow the agreements by force. The British deported the Turkish nationals arrested on board the *Deniz*.

In late October, at British suggestion, **Makarios and Kuchuk appealed to their respective communities to surrender their arms**. According to the British, the Greek Cypriot response was satisfactory, but the Turkish Cypriots failed to obey Kuchuk; Rauf Denktash was regarded as the main factor that this had happened. Thus, **the Deniz incident confirmed Denktash's emergence as an alternative pole in the Turkish Cypriot community**. The confidence-building measure did not work, and in fact backfired. **The problem of the lack of confidence was not solved**, and this would play a major role in the road to the new crisis of 1963.

## The question of the British bases, 1959-60

According to the London agreement the British would retain **two sovereign areas in Cyprus** as well as access to some facilities throughout the island. The retention of British bases had never been questioned by the Greek governments or Makarios, but became the focal point of Grivas' attack against the settlement in summer 1959.

The issue was examined by the Joint Committee, working in London – another of the instruments

set up by the 1959 London Conference for implementing the agreements. However, the British made things even more difficult for the Archbishop when they demanded the retention of extremely large areas of Cyprus: they asked for a total area of 170 s.m. which would include a Greek Cypriot population of 16,000. Makarios counter-proposed the retention of an area of 36 s.m.

In January 1960 a conference at London was held, with the participation of Greece, Turkey, Britain, the Greek- and the Turkish Cypriots. The difference was narrowed down: Makarios now offered an area of 80 s.m. whereas the British were demanding 120 s.m. However, this disagreement made it impossible to proceed with the proclamation of independence in February 1960, as had been agreed in 1959. The proclamation of independence was moved to March and then to August 1960.

The final agreement was reached in early July 1960, and provided for the retention by the British of a total area of 99 s.m.

## Cyprus becomes an independent state, August 1960

Cyprus became an independent state on the night of 15 to 16 August 1960. On 15 August the Treaty of Establishment was signed by Governor Foot, Makarios, Kuchuk and representatives of Greece and Turkey. A new era was starting in Cypriot history, when the people of the island would decide for its future without foreign imposition.

Cyprus became a member-state of the United Nations in September 1960, and later joined the British Commonwealth, the Council of Europe and the Non-Aligned Movement.

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