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PAR-5

Kıbrıs--First Impressions

American Research Institute in Turkey  
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Serencebey  
Beşiktaş Istanbul  
TURKEY

19 March 1985

Mr. Peter Bird Martin  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
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USA

Dear Peter,

T. S. Eliot is reported to have thought April the cruelest month, but that was no doubt because he never spent a year in Istanbul. Here, the savagery takes place in February, and this year it was worse than it has been in more than four decades. In the end, even the wolves got in the act.

On Monday, the 11th day of that memorable month, it was balmy. Istanbul was in the grips of the warm wind from North Africa that the Turks call the Lodos. The sky was as clear as the pollution prevalent in this city allows, and the citizens and the foreigners living in their midst were out and about, running their errands clothed in light sweaters and, in some cases, doffing even those. Spring was just around the corner; the long winter darkness that had set in so suddenly one chilly, late-October morn--the dark grey skies, the fog on the Bosphorus, the endless drizzle, and the pungent sulphuric smell of the soft brown coal burning in the furnaces of Istanbul's ramshackle houses and apartments--this was all about to end: such were the delusions, the wishful thinking of many an innocent come from abroad.

It was not to be. Overnight, the temperature plunged more than fifty degrees Fahrenheit, and it began to snow. This, to be sure, had happened before. Twice or thrice, the temperature had dropped and snow had supplanted the rain. On such occasions, the trees in the Hippodrome of old Stamboul, the ancient Byzantine church Agia Sophia, and the Sultanahmet Camii ("The Blue Mosque") assume a brilliant drapery much like white lace. But, in the past, these wondrous events had been brief: it snowed for an hour or two; then, the temperature edged up a few degrees; and the white mantle covering the city's sidewalks and streets quickly gave way to slush, and that to a mud given texture and color by the oily soot spewing from the smokestacks above.

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This time, however, it continued to snow. There were, of course, respites of an hour or two. One day, it stopped altogether; and everyone breathed a sigh of relief--but not for long. The next morning, it seemed like a blizzard. All in all, it snowed, with brief pauses, for sixteen days straight; and, during that entire period, it was unseasonably (in fact, unbearably) cold. Two feet of snow dropped from the skies; and, as it fell,



it was packed firm under foot. Buses broke down; taxicabs found it impossible to mount the hills of Stamboul, Beyoğlu, and the suburbs stretching up the Bosphorus towards the Black Sea. The street arabs disappeared, and the trucks bearing coal and those carrying canisters of propane gas ceased to make the rounds. Many a household ran out of fuel (mine included). Cooking became impossible, and hot showers ceased. One young woman of my acquaintance went for six days without a bath; in desperation, she finally got permission to use the shower at the Dutch consulate.

Nearly everywhere, the mechanisms for heating homes were inadequate. In many apartments, the pipes froze; and--after trying to secure enough water by collecting and heating the abundant snow--families abandoned their flats to move in with relatives or close friends. Even the robust found it necessary to wear three layers of socks at night. To get warm, foreigners who normally avoided at all cost the familiar, utterly American world of the Hiltons and the Sheratons spent hours sitting in the lobbies of these well-heated (normally, over-heated) hotels; their Turkish friends and acquaintances repaired to the baths. I am told that alarm spread in some quarters when word got out that the wolves normally resident in the Belgrade Forest were making their way down to join the wild dogs and the stray cats who roam the streets of the city, but I cannot verify the tale. For, by the time one such wolf popped up in the fashionable suburb of Sisli, I was gone.

Elizabeth Carey,<sup>1</sup> a former housemate, had flown in from Germany, and I had spirited her away to a new nation that calls itself the Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti--the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. As it turned out, in late February, Cyprus was also in the grips of a winter cold snap, the worst such event in more than half a century. The sun shone brightly throughout most of our sojourn. The flowers were beginning to bloom. But the schools were closed. They were all unheated; and, during our stay, the temperature on the island never rose above fifty degrees Fahrenheit. I hardly noticed. To me, accustomed as I was to the rigors of winter in Istanbul, Cyprus seemed a subtropical paradise.

## I

The Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti is a very recent and a very fragile creation. Its existence is a direct consequence of a series of events that took place late in the summer of 1974--but that have much to do with the earlier history of Cyprus. That history and its legacy deserve a moment of careful attention. Today's Cyprus is anything but a tabula rasa.



The island of Cyprus has always been too important to be ignored and too weak to provide for its own defense. Because of the island's diminutive size; its lack of resources; and its strategic location in the eastern Mediterranean just off the Turkish and Syrian coasts and very near Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt, its inhabitants have only rarely known self-government

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1. I am indebted to Betty for taking the photographs that accompany this letter.

of any kind. Through virtually all of the island's long history, it has been subject to foreign domination. In ancient times, it passed from the Persian Empire to the Hellenistic kingdoms and on to Rome; in the Middle Ages, it was governed by the Byzantine Empire; then, by the crusading Latin dynasty of the Lusignans; and finally by the Venetian republic. The era of Christian



MINARETS ON A CATHEDRAL

domination ended in 1571 when Cyprus fell to the Ottoman Turks. Soon thereafter, its splendid Latin churches acquired the minarets that American and European visitors to Nicosia and Famagousta find so disconcerting today.

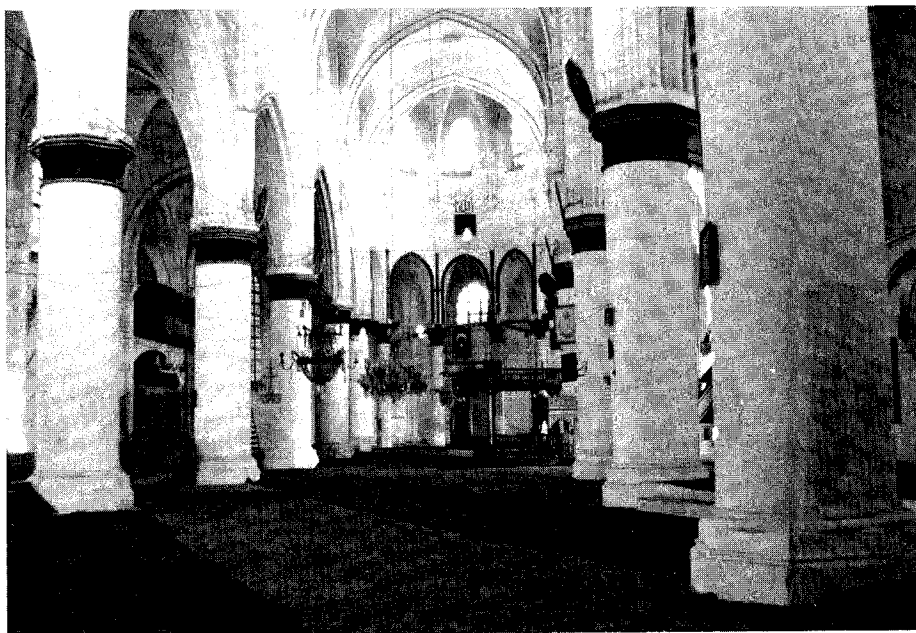
For a period lasting more than three hundred years, Cyprus was administered as a province of the Ottoman Empire. It was at this time that the predominantly Greek-speaking, Orthodox Christian island gained a substantial Turkish-speaking, Sunni Muslim minority. To soldiers serving in the army of conquest and to subsequent immigrants from Anatolia, Cyprus' Ottoman rulers gave land expropriated from the island's Latin aristocracy. As a consequence, less than a quarter of a century ago, Turkish villages and, within mixed villages and towns, Turkish quarters were to be found scattered throughout every corner of the island except the Troodos Mountains in the South. For centuries, the two ethnic communities lived on the island

in close proximity and without great friction. But, though they co-existed, they did not live together in any larger sense. Intercommunal violence was rare but not as rare as social mixing, and intermarriage was impossible without a change of religion by one of the partners.

Eventually, Cyprus' Turkish minority and its Greek majority fell under British protection: for, in 1878, the leaders of the United Kingdom persuaded the Sultan to allow them to begin administering the island in his name and on his behalf. The Sultan received the tribute to which he was accustomed, and the British acquired a base for protecting the Suez canal and for projecting power, when necessary, into other regions of the Levant. It was for both parties a satisfactory, if artificial arrangement--but it could hardly last forever. On the 5th of November, 1914, barely thirty-six years after the establishment of effective British dominion, the Ottoman Empire declared war

on the United Kingdom, and Britain formally annexed Cyprus.

A few months later, His Majesty's government offered the island to the Kingdom of Greece as a bribe to join the struggle against the Central Powers. Had the Greeks not drawn back and delayed their entry into that conflict for

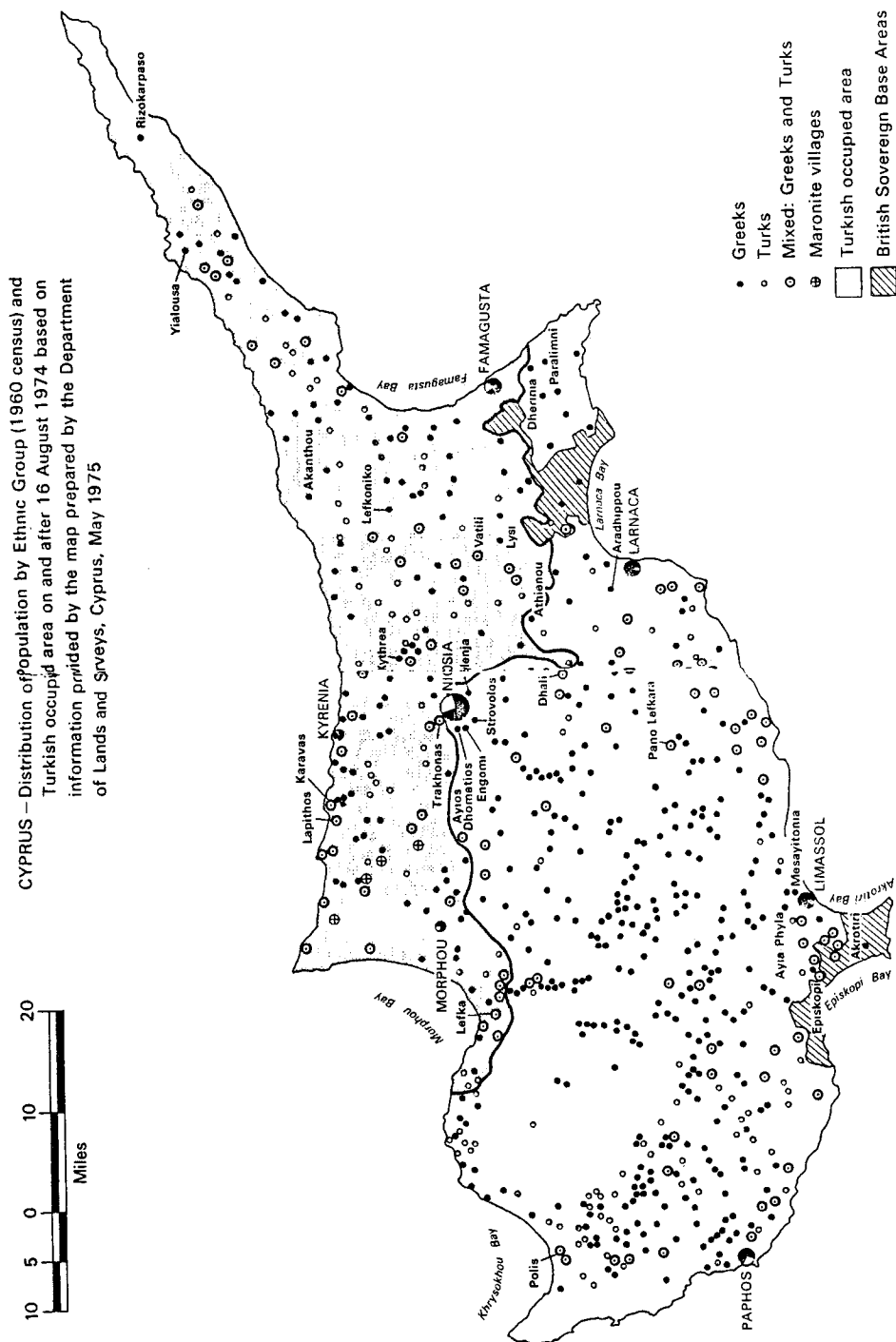


#### THE INTERIOR OF A GOTHIC MOSQUE

two additional years, the Cyprus question (and the fate of the island's Turkish minority) would have been settled during the First World War and the bloody Greco-Turkish struggle that followed. As it worked out, however, the British retained control until 1960. To this day, they maintain two major military installations on the island--for, despite Britain's loss of the Suez canal, Cyprus remains an island of considerable strategic significance for the West. Put simply, it is an unsinkable aircraft carrier and listening post located within easy reach of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt--and not far distant from Iraq and Iran. Unfortunately, its ethnic mix has made it a tinderbox as well.

## II

As soon as British had taken over the administration of Cyprus, the island's Greeks, under the leadership of their ethnarch the Archbishop of Nicosia and of the bishops of the autocephalous Cypriot Greek Orthodox Church, had begun agitating for unification (enosis) with Hellas. In the 1950s, Archbishop Makarios III devoted himself singlemindedly to completing the project that his predecessors had begun. To achieve his aims, he formed



a tactical alliance with Colonel George Grivas, a Cypriot Greek practiced in guerrilla warfare and known to be utterly ruthless. Together the two men organized the Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (EOKA)--the Nation Union of Cypriot Fighters--and launched a terrorist assault designed to drive out the British and to prepare the way for enosis.

In the course of the struggle that followed, the Cypriot Turks, mindful of the treatment meted out by the Greeks to the Turkish minorities elsewhere, sided resolutely with the colonial power. They had no desire to suffer massacre and expulsion like the Muslims of Crete, and they were acutely aware that the safeguards embedded in the Treaty of Lausanne had done little to protect their brethren in eastern Thrace from a Greek persecution praiseworthy only in that it stopped short of systematic violence. The Cypriot Turks were no more than 19% of the island's indigenous population, but they could appeal for support to the millions of Turks whose country lay just forty miles to the North. This they did not hesitate to do.

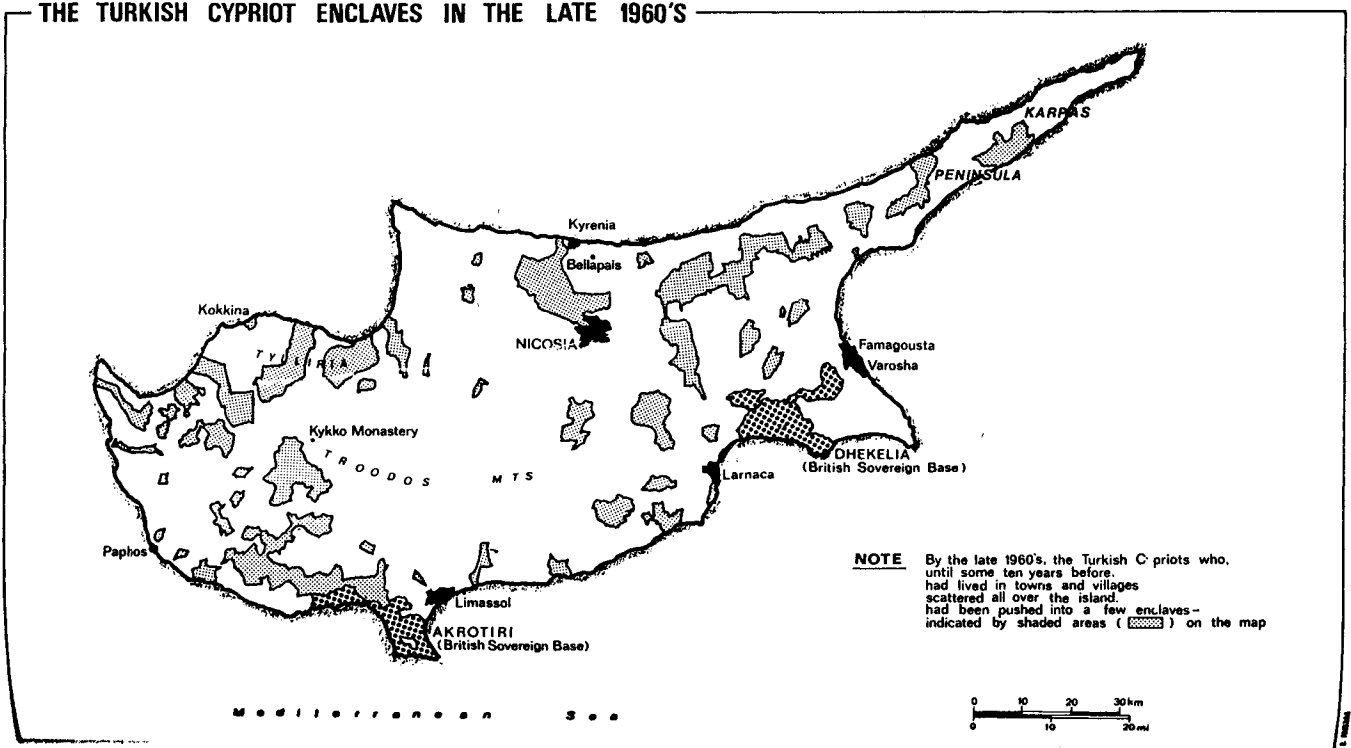
Prior to the Suez Crisis, Britain was unwilling to consider withdrawing from Cyprus, but that disaster occasioned renewed reflection in Whitehall, and the reassessment that took place ultimately made possible comprehensive negotiations involving the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey, and the two ethnic communities of Cyprus. The settlement that emerged from the conferences held in Zürich and London in 1959 was probably the best that one could have hoped for, but it was, in fact, unworkable from the start--for it required goodwill on the part of all those involved in its implementation. The Zürich-London Accords reflected three considerations of vital importance--the inability of Greece to defend an island so far distant from her shores, Turkey's proximity to Cyprus and her ability to assert herself at will in that corner of the Mediterranean, and the Turkish stipulation that the Muslim minority on the island be given firm constitutional safeguards against enosis and against their tyrannical treatment by the island's Christian majority. In negotiating those accords, however, the British neglected--or, rather, they were forced to ignore--the sentiments of the Greek Cypriots themselves. Archbishop Makarios eventually endorsed the agreement under protest, but only because the Greek government of Constantine Karamanlis prudently insisted that enosis was not possible in the face of stubborn Turkish resistance and that nothing better could be gained than what was to be found in the accords.

In large part because of Greek Cypriot obstruction, the Zürich-London Accords were never fully implemented; and, within three and a half years after the new Cypriot constitution had gone into effect, the bi-communal government had collapsed altogether. Unwilling to abandon the cause of enosis, unhappy with the privileges accorded the Turks by the Zürich-London Accords, and frustrated by the Turkish minority's insistence on the rigorous enforcement of those agreements, Archbishop Makarios issued an ultimatum to the Cypriot Turks, demanding that they accept a series of amendments to the constitution that would have deprived them of the one substantive, legal safeguard they had: the power to veto important legislation and policy decisions contrary to their interests. No one expected the Turks to accept the Greek demands; the ultimatum presupposed the step taken next. With Makarios' full support, the Interior Minister Polykarpos Georkatzis employed a ruse to deprive Nicosia's Turkish policemen of their weapons; when this was accomplished, he ordered the Greek Cypriot police to cooperate with EOKA's terrorist bands in launching an

armed assault on the Turkish quarter of the city. What the partisans of enosis had not secured in the negotiations held in Zürich and London, they tried to take by force in the winter and spring of 1963-1964.

The initial attack failed; and, though subsequent assaults on the Turkish villages and quarters scattered throughout the island resulted in a significant loss of life, the attempted coup did not achieve its end. Under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, the Turkish government had a perfect, legal right and even a responsibility to send troops to Cyprus to enforce the terms of the Zürich-London Accords if the constitutional order broke down. Thus far, American pressure had prevented Turkish intervention; but in the course of 1964, it became clear that the government in Ankara would mobilize its army and invade the island if Makarios neglected to put an end to the violence. That he did, but the situation of the Cypriot Turks remained desperate thereafter. Many had abandoned their villages and had sought refuge in

#### THE TURKISH CYPRIOT ENCLAVES IN THE LATE 1960'S



enclaves defended by the Türk Mudafa Teskilat (TMT)--Turkish Defence Organization--trained by the handful of mainland Turkish troops stationed on the island under the Treaty of Guarantee. The island's Turks were subsequently denied freedom of movement, access to telephones and to the post office, and passports. They were prevented from bringing into their enclaves any materials that the Cypriot Greeks deemed "strategic"; and, since the list included everything needed for construction, they were unable to put up new buildings and to repair those damaged in the fighting that had taken place. For all practical purposes, the Turks of Cyprus were prisoners within their



enclaves. Sometimes, for days or even weeks, the Greeks prevented the import of foodstuffs. Had it not been for the financial aid liberally dispensed by the Ankara regime, many of the Turks on the island would have had to leave.

A stalemate resulted from Makarios' attempt to crush the Cypriot Turks, a stalemate remarkably favorable to the island's Greeks. The constitution of 1960 was now a dead letter; the Greek Cypriots now had full control of the Republic of Cyprus and of its revenues. Had the Archbishop and his followers been more patient, they might have achieved the goal they sought. Gradually, the Turkish Cypriots willing to remain confined to the enclaves would have dwindled in number, and eventually the government in Ankara would have tired of footing the bill. Then, it might have been possible to make the island a part of Greece.

### III

Patience, however, was not one of the virtues possessed by the advocates of enosis. In 1960, George Grivas had quarreled with Makarios over the Zürich-London Accords; accusing the Archbishop of having betrayed the cause, the old veteran had withdrawn to Greece to sulk in his tent. In the summer of 1964, he returned to Cyprus once more. Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou (father of the current Prime Minister) was disappointed at Makarios' failure to capture the Turkish quarter of Nicosia, and he was frustrated by the stalemate that had ensued. So, he called Grivas out of retirement in the summer of 1964 and sent him home to organize, train, and lead the Greek forces on Cyprus.

The aging soldier was not slow to act. Late in the summer, he launched an attack on the Kokkina salient in the northwest and managed to overrun several Turkish villages on the neighboring coast. Had it not been for a counterattack by the Turkish Air Force, he would have been able to seize the port. In the three years that followed, the Greek government dispatched to Cyprus a host of weapons and an ever-growing body of troops; gradually, Grivas and the Greek officer corps turned the Cypriot National Guard into a respectable small army. During this period, the violence continued but on a small scale. In November, 1967, however, events took a dramatic turn for the worse.

Grivas then launched a major assault in the district of Larnaca on the Turkish village of Kophinou and on the Turkish quarter of Agios Theodoros, and he succeeded in overrunning both. Once again, the Turks of the mainland mobilized their army and prepared to intervene. A freak storm delayed the invasion and enabled the American intermediary Cyrus Vance to negotiate a compromise. The Colonels now ruling Greece recalled Grivas from the island and agreed to withdraw most of the mainland troops that had been stationed there. They agreed as well that the Cypriot National Guard would be dismantled, that the size and powers of the United Nations force on the island would be increased, and that the Turkish Cypriots of Agios Theodoros and Kophinou would be compensated for the lives lost and the damage done their

property. This agreement prevented the Turkish invasion, but it led to increased bitterness in Ankara. The government in Athens could recall Grivas and withdraw its troops, but it could not (or would not) force Makarios to implement the other provisions of the agreement it had made. As the litany of broken promises grew, on Cyprus, the war of nerves continued.

#### IV

The events of 1967 appear to have persuaded Makarios that the United States was no longer willing and perhaps no longer able to intervene decisively to prevent a Turkish invasion. That sobering thought was reinforced by a pronounced distaste on his part for the dictatorial regime that had seized power in Greece in April, 1967. Though he continued from time to time to speak of enosis, he appears to have finally become willing to contemplate reaching a settlement with the Cypriot Turks. In 1968, he lifted the economic restrictions imposed on the Turkish enclaves and allowed the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Raif Denktaş to return to the island. He then sanctioned a series of intercommunal talks between Denktaş and Glafkos Klerides, the Speaker of the Greek Cypriot House of Representatives. In 1969, when Polykarpos Georgatzis objected to the Archbishop's new tack, Makarios dismissed him from the cabinet.

Two circumstances prevented the talks from bearing fruit. The Greek junta was bitterly opposed to Makarios' new policy; and, though he was a wily operator, the Archbishop was not a statesman. Makarios was prepared to toy with the notion of reaching a negotiated settlement, but he was unwilling to take decisive action. Equally important, he did nothing to disarm the die-hard partisans of enosis in EOKA and to dismantle the Cypriot National Guard. He left them to their own devices even after Polykarpos Georgatzis organized an attempt on his life, and he did nothing to prevent George Grivas from returning to the island to launch a new terrorist campaign as leader of EOKA-B. To guard the Presidential Palace, Makarios did, of course, organize an auxiliary police force called the Tactical Reserve Force, and he came over time increasingly to depend on the private army of his physician Dr. Vassos Lyssarides, the leader of the Cypriot Socialists (EDEK)--but these forces were relatively negligible. As long as George Papadopoulos led the Greek junta, the Colonels in Athens did nothing rash. But he was removed in November, 1973; and Dimitris Ioannides, came to be the dominant figure within the junta.

Two months later, George Grivas died of a heart attack. In the Spring, Makarios outlawed EOKA-B and had two hundred of its suspected members arrested. In early July, he acted to reduce the size of the Cypriot National Guard and wrote an open letter to the figurehead President of Greece, accusing the Colonels of masterminding the EOKA-B terrorist campaign, suggesting that they were plotting his death, and demanding the withdrawal of the 650 Greek soldiers stationed on the island under the Treaty of Guarantee. On the 15th of July, 1974, while the American government was paralyzed by the Watergate crisis, Ioannides and his supporters responded to Makarios' challenge by

staging a coup d'etat in Nicosia. On their orders, the Cypriot National Guard and the Greek army units stationed on the island marched into the city, bombarded the Presidential Palace, ousted Makarios, and installed in his stead Nikos Sampson, an accomplished terrorist who had often boasted of the Turkish Cypriots he had slaughtered.

Nikos Sampson did not order an immediate, general assault on the island's Muslim minority; he and his minions devoted their efforts, instead, to eliminating their political enemies among the Cypriot Greeks. This notwithstanding, his elevation was an event that the Turks of the mainland were unwilling to tolerate. This time, they did not delay. On the 17th, Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit flew to London to consult with British Prime Minister Callaghan; and, when it became clear that the British had no intention of exercising their right to intervene under Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee, he sent an ultimatum to the Colonels in Athens. Finally, on the 19th, when the Greeks failed to cave in, he ordered a Turkish invasion.

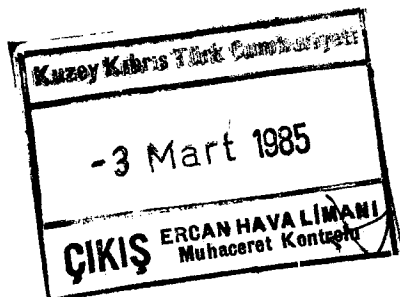
At 6 a.m. on the 20th of July, three brigades of Turkish troops, some six thousand men with forty tanks, landed on a beach a few miles to the West of Kyrenia. Soon thereafter, commandos were airlifted to Nicosia and to various points on the road linking the capital with Kyrenia. By the 22nd, the Turks controlled a corridor stretching from Nicosia to the principle port on the North coast. In the South, the Greek Cypriot National Guard had turned its artillery on the area's Turkish villages and on the Turkish quarter of Nicosia; in the process, many of the Turkish enclaves were overrun.

Though the ceasefire negotiated on the 22nd stipulated that they were to withdraw from the Turkish enclaves in the South, the Greeks once again failed to keep the promises they had made. At the Geneva talks that followed on the 30th of July and the 10th to 12th of August, Rauf Denktaş and the representatives of the Ecevit government demanded the establishment of a bi-zonal, federal republic composed of two essentially autonomous geographical regions. When their demands were rejected, Ecevit ordered the Turkish army to expand the Kyrenia salient. While the EOKA-B partisans massacred entire Turkish villages in the South, the Turkish army carved out a Turkish Cypriot canton in the North encompassing a third of the island. An exchange of populations soon followed. In the decade that has passed since those events, Archbishop Makarios has died; Spyros Kyprianou has succeeded him as President of Cyprus; Nikos Sampson has been released from prison; and negotiations between Rauf Denktaş and the representatives of the Greek Cypriot community have broken down again and again. On the 13th of February, 1975, the Cypriot Turks set up the Kıbrıs Türk Federe Devleti--the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus; and, on the 15th of November, 1983, they declared their independence from the Republic of Cyprus and established the Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti. This was the new nation to which Betty Carey and I journeyed on the 25th of February, 1985.

V

It is not easy to reach the Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti. That republic is, in fact, a pariah state--denied diplomatic recognition by all but one of its neighbors, and virtually inaccessible as a consequence. No one, other than diplomatic and United Nations personnel, is allowed to cross "the green line" dividing Cyprus' Greek South from its Turkish North. In the summer, one can take a ferry from Syria to Famagusta. Otherwise, one must pass through Turkey itself. Even then, one should avoid having one's passport

**VIZE  
VISAS**



stamped. Neither the Greeks nor the Greek Cypriots will admit anyone known to have visited the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Fortunately, the Turkish Cypriots are happy to provide tourists with a separate piece of paper bearing their entry and exit stamps.

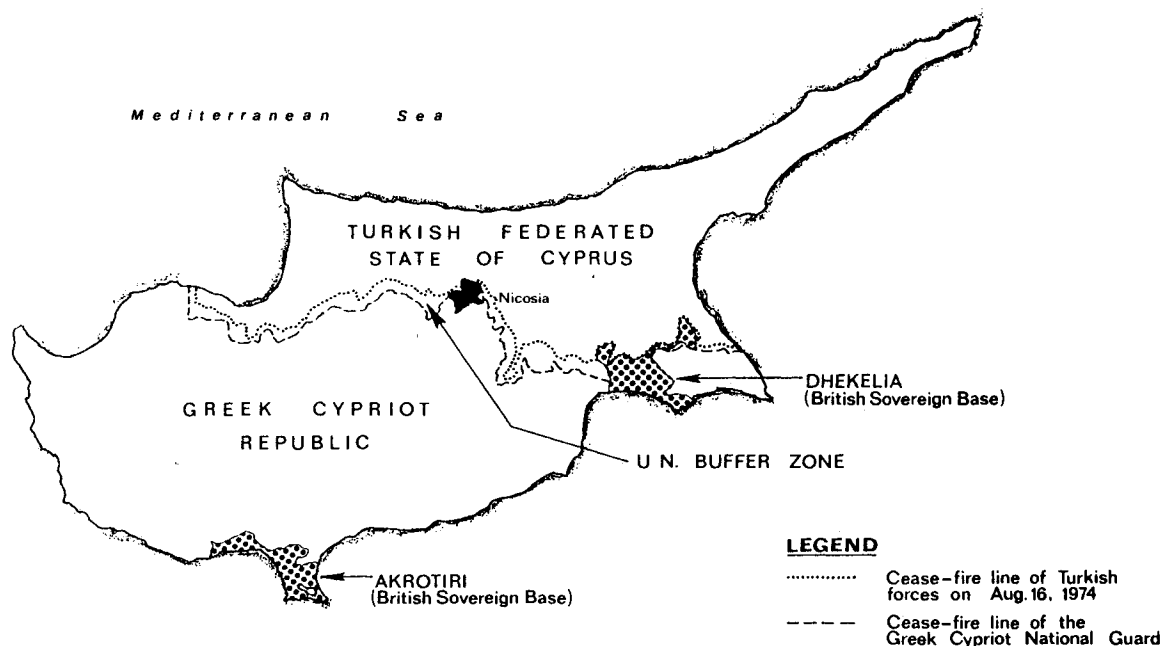
From Istanbul, there are daily flights to Ercan (formerly, Nicosia) Airport--once a week on Türk Hava Yolları (the Turkish national airline), and six days a week on Kıbrıs Türk Hava Yolları (its Turkish Cypriot counterpart). The two airlines have different offices

and separate check-in desks at Istanbul's Yeşilköy airport. In other respects, however, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. Kıbrıs Türk Hava Yolları has no airplanes of its own; it leases its aircraft and borrows its pilots from Türk Hava Yolları. In that regard, the Cypriot Turkish airline is like virtually every other Cypriot Turkish institution. The façade generally suggests local control, but there is everywhere evidence that the mainland Turks call the shots.

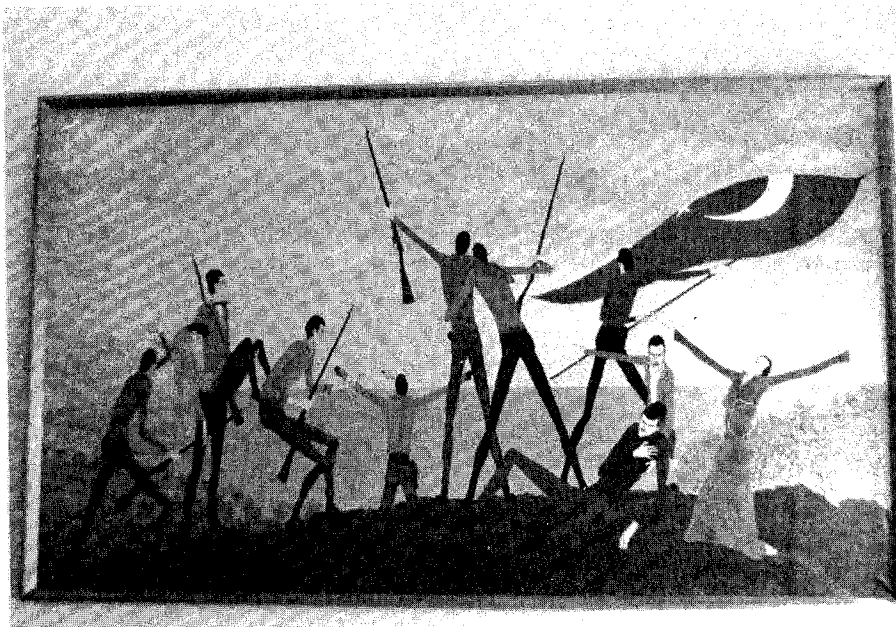
This is only natural. Turkey defends the newborn state. If the mainland republic were to withdraw its troops, the Greek Cypriots would overrun the North in very short order. The new republic now has stamps of its own. It is in the process of establishing a central bank; and, before long, it will, so I was told, abandon the Turkish lira and establish its own currency. But, as long as the Greeks occupying the southern two-thirds of the island deny their Turkish Cypriot brethren the right to found an independent state in the North and refuse as well to agree to the establishment of a bi-zonal, bi-national, federal state, the Cypriot Turks will be the wards of the motherland--beholden to the mainland republic, and under its thumb. It should not be surprising that the Turks of Cyprus look on the government in Ankara with a mixture of gratitude and resentment. The troops hailed as liberators in 1974 have remained to police and occupy the land.

We flew into Cyprus late in the evening, located a taxi, and drove to Girne (Kyrenia). The next morning, we wandered the town, walked about the outskirts of the large camp providing shelter for the Turkish army, noted in the shops the presence of all sorts of British and American goods unavailable in Turkey, and savored the sunshine. In the afternoon, our cabbie--Ahmet H. Pendagomolu--drove us up the mountain to Bellepais, and from the ruins of the Latin monastery there we surveyed the coastal plain stretching East towards Syria and West towards Crete. Ahmet Bey, we learned, was from Limassol in the South. No, he did not want to go back--though he would not mind seeing Limassol again. Things were better here; his wife was no longer afraid, when

## CYPRUS TODAY



he went out at night, that he might never return. The residents of Bellepais, when questioned, made almost precisely the same response. They had come from the village of Mari in the South, and their memories of the decade stretching from 1964 to 1974 were similarly unpleasant. Later, we heard the same story from the young man the Ministry of Information assigned to take us to lunch, and again from the ticket-seller at St. Hilarion Castle high up in the Beq Parmak (Pentadaktylos, i.e., Five-Fingered) Mountains just South of the island's North coast. Whatever is fated to happen on Cyprus, the island's Turks will not sanction turning back the clock. Most seemed willing to see a bi-zonal, federal republic established, but among those we met no one was willing to trust the Cypriot Greeks. Such a republic, if it is ever established, will be an uneasy federation between two ethnically segregated, effectively autonomous states.



The following morning, we boarded a dolmuş going to Lefkoşa (Nicosia). Upon arriving, we made our way to what we thought was the Presidential Palace. It turned out to be the local equivalent of our Executive Office Building. On the wall of the entryway into which we stumbled, there was a painting

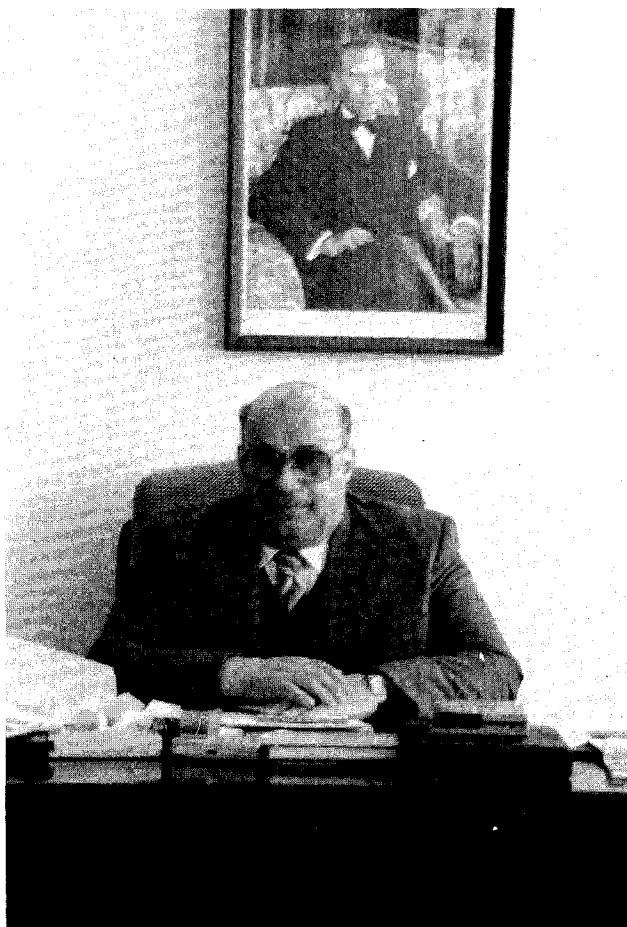
depicting ten Cypriot Turks and one Cypriot woman hailing the Turkish fleet as it approached to land the Turkish expeditionary force. A functionary soon conducted us across the way to what had once been the District Governor's Residence. There we were given coffee and gently interrogated by Alper Faik Genç, the President's Private Secretary. When I asked for information concerning the Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti, he opened a nearby cabinet and handed me a sheaf of pamphlets.



ALPER FAİK GENÇ

I indicated that we had come by in the hope of making an appointment to see the President. I gave him my card and mentioned that I knew Dennison Rusinow, a former Institute Fellow now with the Universities Field Staff International who had over the years had considerable contact with Rauf Denktaş. I cannot say whether the mention of Denny's name worked any magic, but it

certainly did no harm. Within fifteen minutes we had been ushered into the presence of His Excellency Rauf Raif Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.



#### DENKTAŞ UNDER ATATÜRK

town. But the charm he exudes and his abilities clearly befit a larger role in life. Here was a man of extraordinary intelligence, remarkable patience, and unmistakable shrewdness. I have not yet encountered anyone of comparable ability in the mainland republic.

We asked him about the failure of the talks held with Spyros Kyprianou in New York in January. He nodded his head wearily and alluded to recent events in the Greek Cypriot republic to the South. For the first time ever, the communist party AKEL had joined forces with Glafkos Klerides' conservative party Democratic Rally in a no confidence vote against Kyprianou. Two-thirds of the members of the island's Greek legislature had openly expressed their unhappiness at the failure of their President to reach an accommodation with the island's Turks. Kyprianou was scheduled to give a speech that Friday; Denktaş mentioned that there was speculation that the Greek Cypriot leader

Denktaş rose to greet us as we entered his office, and I could not help noticing his girth and wondering about the state of his health. He does not rival Zimbabwe's Joshua Nkomo in size; few men do. But it is rare for a head of state to be as rotund as Denktaş appeared to be, and it must be a strain on the man's heart. When he returned to his desk, my eyes were drawn to the portrait of Atatürk just above his head and to the books on his shelf. Had it not been for that portrait, his might have been the office of an English barrister, which, of course, is precisely what Denktaş once was. Educated at the English School in Nicosia (where he was in the same class as Glafkos Klerides' older brother), he studied law in England and was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1947. Getting in to see him had been no more difficult than getting in to see the mayor of a small town. That was fair enough: there are only a quarter of a million Turkish Cypriots in the world, and a third of those reside in England. In a sense, Rauf Denktaş is the mayor of a small

would resign. The Turkish Cypriot President was prepared to hope--and to wait. In the meantime, the new state was taking shape. The Turkish Cypriots will vote on the new constitution in May; they will have a Presidential election in early June; and, then, they will hold parliamentary elections on the 23rd of that month. You must come back, Denktas said. You must meet my son; he has gone into opposition and thinks that things are going badly here. You will want to speak with him.

After forty-five minutes or so, I asked President Denktas if he minded Betty taking his picture. He was happy to oblige and pulled out his own camera to reciprocate. He, then, took our addresses and promised to mail us the prints of the photographs he had taken (two weeks later, they arrived). As we left, Denktas presented us with a stack of books describing the events of the last thirty years and sent us off by car to the Ministry of Information where we were given additional pamphlets. That afternoon, we wandered through the Turkish quarter of Nicosia, bumping up here and there against the concrete walls that mark off the Green Line, separating Cyprus' Greek world from that of its Turks. I wonder how long it will last. The boundary between the two



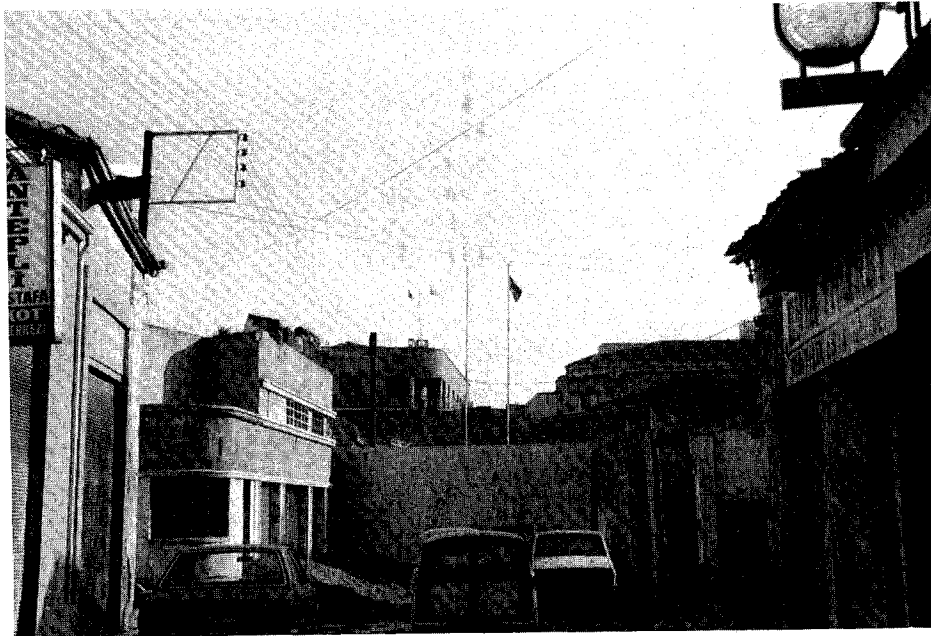
THE GREEN LINE IN LEFKOŞA (NICOSIA)

states is as artificial as a boundary can be: it cuts directly across the the island's central plain. The situation is absurd. Nicosia's water flows from the Turkish sector to a treatment plant on the Greek side and then to both quarters of the town. Cyprus can hardly remain divided forever, but the legacy of violence and distrust created during the last three decades still seems an insuperable obstacle.

That Friday, Kyprianou gave the speech that had been scheduled, but he did not resign. Andreas Papandreou, the Prime Minister of Greece, had reportedly persuaded him to stay on; Constantine Mitsotakis, the leader of the



mainland Greek opposition party New Democracy, then denounced Kyprianou and joined the two Cypriot parties in calling for his resignation. At some point between now and October, elections will be held in Greece. If Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Union (PASOK) wins a majority again, there is little likelihood that there will be a settlement of the Cyprus dispute in the foreseeable future. If he loses, however, if Mitsotakis persuades Kyprianou to resign, and if Glafkos Klerides is elected in Kyprianou's place, then perhaps this long, festering conflict will come to an end. To be frank, however, I would not bet my last dollar on that outcome.



THE GREEN LINE ONCE MORE

Betty and I had a great deal to ponder during the days immediately following our conversation with Rauf Denktas--as we wandered through the northern third of Cyprus, visiting ancient Greek and Roman sites, Crusader castles, Latin churches, Muslim mosques, Byzantine monasteries, and the Turkish Hans and Baths built centuries ago. When we flew back to Istanbul early on the 3rd of March, we found the city mercifully free from ice and snow. Later that Sunday morning, we attended services at the Oecumenical Patriarchate in Stamboul's decaying Fener district, a neighborhood once thoroughly Greek. The church was packed. As we learned while watching the titular head of Eastern Christendom say mass, that Sunday was the Festival of Orthodoxy. The sermon, with its reaffirmation of the Orthodox faith, was a useful reminder of the degree to which the conflicts endemic to the eastern Mediterranean are rooted in religion.

Sincerely,

*Paul A. Rahe*  
Paul A. Rahe



LEFKOŞA'S GREAT HAN UNDER RESTORATION



THE TURKISH BATHS IN LEFKOŞA

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