CHAPTER 8

The Shifts in the Greek Cypriot Bourgeoisie and the Equilibria in the Greek Cypriot Community
In this chapter, I will focus on the Greek Cypriot community. In tandem with the foregoing analysis, I will more comprehensively address the issue of shifts and changes which have taken place in Cyprus in recent years, particularly in the wake of the collapse of the talks in 2017. My analysis remains primarily empirical and focused on the influence of the various internal, geopolitical and economic factors in the political management of the Cyprus dispute. At the same time, this chapter poses certain theoretical questions from a historical perspective. Given that this is the last substantive chapter, my analysis here, leading up to the book’s conclusion, is more abstract and somewhat more generalised in order to capture broader dynamics and structural tendencies, as well as trying to encompass implications for the future.

**LEFT-WING APPROACHES**

While imperialism and the class dimension are two aspects that must be taken into consideration in an analysis of the Cyprus dispute, they do not suffice in themselves. The various left-wing analyses that emerge from time to time trying to account for the partition, the talks or the reunification prospect contain not just one-sided but downright skewed references to ‘imperialism’ and ‘bourgeoisie’. Most of these analyses are imported from Greece and the vast majority of them are ignorant of Cyprus, overlooking important parameters, the significance of historical facts and other data pertinent to the economic, cultural and political reality of Cyprus in its entirety. Often these perspectives result from a hierarchical, Hellencentred worldview concealed behind a smokescreen of internationalism or class mottos. These analyses frequently draw on classical tropes, mechanistically transposing them to any conjecture in which they want to make a political intervention; by turning these tropes into apparatuses, they come up with a facile political position and a convenient political motto, usually generic, neither here nor there and inconsequential as to their political stakes. I do not believe that an overview of the various Marxist or quasi-Marxist approaches that have occasionally appeared has anything to offer to the reader, because they have nothing of any consequence to proffer theoretically. Politically, they have not affected the dynamics of the Cyprus dispute in terms of the Cypriot society and the Cypriot left.

AKEL, the main player of the Greek Cypriot left, has moved in its own unique manner, uninformed by theory. Despite AKEL’s recurring problems, the culmination of which was its position and stance during
2003–2004, the party was more in touch with political reality and more capable of comprehending the issues at stake than most Greek left-wing forces and their echoes in the Greek Cypriot community. Before however examining the basic context wherein AKEL moved and still does, a short reference to the other two, basic, non-AKEL left-wing positions that are said to also influence AKEL to some extent, first articulated in the 1970s and 1980s and since then reproduced with variations, is in order. Both positions draw on Lenin and the right to national self-determination. The problem of both of them lies, firstly, in their definition of the ‘oppressed nation’, and, secondly, in their interpretation of complex class dynamics and their influence in history.¹

Let me refer to the first position as a ‘national-left’ approach, according to which Cyprus essentially forms part of Hellenism and the self-determination of the Cypriot people is the capacity of the Greek majority of the Cypriot population to determine the future of the island. This line of argument regards the Turkish Cypriots as a minority, who were at best indifferent to the plight and struggle of Greek Cypriots against imperialism and at worst as instruments of imperialism against the Cypriot people.²

It was an enosist position until 1974. Subsequently, it was in favour of a united country on the basis of majoritarianism against bicomunalism and against the bizonal federation. Even if, rhetorically speaking, some trends of this school accept bicomunalism and federation, the content which they ascribe to them effectively overturns them. Beneath the left-wing phrasing and ‘anti-imperialist’ ranting, this position is basically similar to that of DIKO: federation with the right content, the one that would place the Greek Cypriot community at an advantage in Cyprus. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and most left-wing factions in Greece move within this framework. In recent years, this opinion is reproduced on the margins of the Greek Cypriot left.

¹Trimikliniotis, N. (2018): The national question, partition and geopolitics in the twenty-first century: the Cyprus problem, the social question and the politics of reconciliation, Global Discourse 8: 303–320

²This theoretical position was initially formulated by Greek journalist and historian Nikos Psiroukis. Psiroukis, N. (1992), The Cypriot Drama (1958–1986) [Το Κυπριακό Δράμα (1958–1986)], Athens: Epikerotita.

British historian Perry Anderson moved along similar lines in a somewhat more sophisticated manner ['The Divisions of Cyprus', London Review of Books, no. 30/8 (24/4/2008)], but was considerably less influential on the political agents of this approach in Cyprus and Greece.
The second, ‘leftist-internationalist’ position so to speak, effectively regards Cyprus as a Greco-Turkish island and interprets the self-determination of the Cypriot people as the right of both Cypriot communities to each have its own state and, should they wish it, to later proceed into collaborating as one, united country, on a federalist or otherwise basis. If the ‘national-left’ position sides with the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie in an attempt to push the latter to a supposed anti-imperialist path, the ‘leftist-internationalist’ position endeavours to precipitate the defeat of the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie on the basis of a revolutionary defeatism, trying to lay the ground for new revolutionary conditions. Beneath this position lies an admission of inability to resolve the Cyprus dispute within the capitalist system. It is an ‘instrumentalist’ approach to the Cyprus conflict since it posits the left-wing stance on this dispute according to how that may ultimately contribute to world revolution. The basic formulation of this position appeared in the 1980s by the Trotskyist organisation Workers’ Democracy. Since then, this approach has been permeating left-wing discussions to a limited extent.³

Both approaches are, politically and theoretically, problematic. The ‘national-left’ position is more problematic and politically unacceptable insofar as it blocks any attempt at bicommunal rapprochement on a political basis and maintains the status quo by way of not recognising the Turkish Cypriots as a community and as an autonomous political entity on an equal footing with the Greek Cypriot community, any declarations about class struggle notwithstanding. By contrast, the leftist-internationalist position allows rapprochement on a political basis and the supporters of this position have always formed an integral part of the peace and reunification movement. At the same time though the leftism of this position is not conducive to the developing dynamics of federalist reunification within the Greek Cypriot community. The fact that this position championed the right to a sovereign Turkish Cypriot state seemed more like backtracking than moving forward, especially during those crucial moments when the Turkish Cypriots held massive protests demanding a federal regulation. In the referendum for the Annan Plan, many proponents of this position voted ‘No’, because they believed the Plan was giving an unfair advantage to the Greek Cypriots over the Turkish Cypriots. That is, they followed

³Ergatiki Democratia (1988) The Cyprus Conflict and the Internationalist Duty of Greek Cypriot Revolutionaries [Το Κυπριακό και τα διεθνιστικά καθήκοντα των ελληνοκυπρίων επαναστάτων] Nicosia: Ergatiki Democratia.
the exact reverse course from other ‘No’ supporters, such as those of the ‘national-left’ school, who had rejected the Plan on the grounds of its unfairly privileging the Turkish Cypriots over the Greek Cypriots, thus ending up at the same position.

Despite their conflicting arguments, both of these perspectives ultimately converge in more than just conclusions. They also share two basic theoretical problems. The first problem is a conceptualisation of the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie as a uniform, undifferentiated class, which must be supposedly overcome either by being forced to enter a ‘national and anti-imperialist’ trajectory or by being nationally defeated in order to leave the field clear for the working class. However, the bourgeoisie is never uniform, certainly did not act as a uniform agent throughout the contemporary Cypriot history and still doesn’t. Both in analytical terms on a theoretical level and in political terms with regard to the empirical political field, the bourgeoisie acts uniformly only under certain conditions and inasmuch as its interests are universally threatened. This has never happened—not even during the 1946–1948 period, by far the most revolutionary moment of Cypriot modernity.

All such analyses focusing on the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie as a key domestic player designing and implementing strategies on the Cyprus dispute vis-à-vis imperialism are essentially a form of crude and half-baked Marxism. There are important divisions and differentiations to be found

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4 Trimikliniotis, N. (2004) Cyprus society confronting solution: Patriotic reasons or class interests? \[Η κυπριακή κοινωνία αντιμέτωπη με τη λύση: Πατριωτικοί λόγοι ή ταξικά συμφέροντα;\] Theseis, 88 http://www.theseis.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=863&Itemid=29

5 The 1946–1948 period was the hegemonic moment of the Greek Cypriot left, during which the capacity for mobilisation of the masses and the electoral victories of the then newly formed AKEL alarmed the bourgeoisie, the Church and the colonial administration. Although AKEL supported enosis as the ultimate goal, drawing on Greek EAM as a main reference, the party led the anti-colonial protests with mottos calling for the granting of immediate constitutional and political freedom and socio-economic justice, culminating in the big miners and construction workers’ strikes and the 1947 self-government rally. Katsiaounis, R. (2000) The Consultative Assembly \[Η Διασκεπτική\], Nicosia, Cyprus Research Centre. Kolokasidis, G. (2016) 90 years of KKK-AKEL: the rally for Self-Government \[90 χρόνα ΚΚΚ-ΑΚΕΛ: Το συλλαλητήριο της «Αυτοκυβέρνησης», Dialogos, (30/10/2016) https://dialogos.com.cy/90chrona-kkk-akel-to-sillalitirio-tis-aftokivernisis/

6 Trimikliniotis, N. (2005) The national question, the Left and the Cyprus conflict: anti-imperialism or anti-nationalism? \[Το εθνικό ζήτημα, η Αριστερά και το Κυπριακό: Αντιμεταλλησίμος ή αντι-εθνικισμός?\] Theseis, 92 http://www.theseis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=4&id=24&Itemid=29
across the bourgeoisie, different readings and hierarchies of interests, and occasionally confrontations but also indifference by certain sections of the bourgeoisie. Not even the division between the ‘rejectionists’ and ‘realists’ can be accurately attributed to a difference between two sections of the bourgeoisie in empirical terms. Political economy is too complex to be reduced to facile categorisations, and cultural and ideological shifts play their own part in a, anyhow, fluid political reality.7

The second problem is an inability to grasp that the autonomy of Cyprus and the Cyprus dispute are standalone issues. Apart from the fact that the so-called national question has always been one of the blind spots of the Marxist-Leninist theoretical tradition and political practice, there was also an extra weakness that applied specifically to the Cyprus dispute: the facile application of ready-made conceptual constructs on this conflict and a superficial analysis of the data in lieu of a painstaking, laborious production of concepts through empirical research and local historical experience. The fact that there is no Cypriot uniqueness does not mean that there is not a Cypriot particularity which complicates the Cyprus dispute.8 Ready-made, dated theories further obscure the issue instead of contributing to its in-depth understanding. Concepts, such as for instance ‘imperialism’, are frequently offered in place of a response no matter what the question is. Even in cases in which the term is not employed to cover up a nationalist stance there is a difficulty in meticulously elucidating and politically interpreting this term. Furthermore, the Cypriot consciousness, that is the existing Cypriot-centrism that is equally opposed to the Greek and Turkish nationalisms, is often excluded from these two approaches which tend to view Cyprus exclusively as a sort of extension to the Greco-Turkish conflict.9

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7 Class conflict permeates not just the content but also the form of politics. By association, divisive hierarchies, incorporated regulations and cultural divisions serve as mechanisms affecting class relationships. Clarke, S. (1991) ‘State, class struggle and the reproduction of capital’, in Clarke, S. (ed) *The State Debate*, The Conference of Socialist Economists, New York: Palgrave

8 Panayiotou, A. (1985) *Cyprus, the national Question and Nationalism* [Η Κύπρος το εθνικό και ο εθνικισμός], Athens: Fylla Poreias. Panayiotou, A. (2012b) Border dialectics: Cypriot social and historical movements in a world systemic context, in N. Trimikliniotis and U. Bozkurt, (eds) *Beyond a Divided Cyprus: a State and Society in Transformation*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 67–82

9 Achniotis, C. (1988) *Cypriot consciousness* [Κυπριακή Συνείδηση], Entos ton Teihon, (35): 12–13
Famously, AKEL is a pragmatic party which lacks theorists; a party that has not developed a strand of Marxist theory that could guide it in politics. In the past, the party had at some point referenced the stages theory and pointed out it should form an alliance with the progressive part of the bourgeoisie, the goal being to complete the national liberation stage as a prerequisite for leaving the field clear for the advent of socialism. After 1974, this stage was conceived as a priority of the ‘reunification of the country and the people’ on the basis of the bizonal bicommunal federation. At the same time, the dynamics of the political system and the need for alliances led AKEL to adopting a logic of partnerships with the so-called democratic, patriotic forces that were represented in parliament by DIKO and EDEK. Although already by the mid-1980s it was apparent how limiting this rationale was and how damaging it was to the cause of federalist reunification, in the late 1990s this primarily electoral strategy resurfaced in order to help AKEL escape its isolation, leading to Tassos Papadopoulos’ election in 2003 and to Christofias’ election with support by DIKO and EDEK in the second round of the 2008 elections.10 From 2011 onwards, as DIKO and EDEK adopted a particularly tough rejectionist line in combination with a more conservative stance on a series of socio-economic issues, the logic of alliance with the ‘democratic, patriotic forces’ was ostensibly indefinitely suspended.

If one is to tackle the dynamics and equilibria within the bourgeoisie, the political system and the Greek Cypriot community, one needs to empirically examine the facts, as developed in recent decades and especially in recent years. The discussion on imperialism, the bourgeoisie and the Greek Cypriot nationalism cannot be made in a vacuum, drawing on generic categories which often further blur instead of clearing out the landscape. AKEL was the main agent of Cypriot-centrism, which post-1974 slowly but steadily was disseminated and consolidated among the Greek Cypriot community without managing to displace or marginalise Greek Cypriot nationalism. Tellingly, while the hard core of ‘No’ voters in 2004 was nationalist, to a large extent they drew on the symbols and rhetoric of Cypriot-centrism in articulating their discourse. Christofias’ election as president reinforced the identification of the left with the de facto monocommunal state of the Republic of Cyprus, and as such, in some respects, furthered the convergence of ethnocentrism with Cypriot-centrism on a

10 Trimikliniotis, N. (2006) ‘A Communist’s Post-Modern Power Dilemma: One Step Back, Two Steps Forward, “Soft No” and Hard Choices’, The Cyprus Review 18(1): 37–86.
social level. However, the polarisation that ensued as a result and the overall conservative shift of society due to the economic crisis confined the colonisation of Cypriot-centrism by the Greek Cypriot ethnocentrism to the symbolic level.

**THE ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS AND THE CRISIS**

As I mentioned in Chap. 5, one of the reasons behind the Greek Cypriot ‘No’ in the 2004 referendum was a reluctance to burden the Greek Cypriot community with the ‘cost of the solution’, that is the financing of the federal state and the adjustment period until the economic activity and standard of living in the Turkish Cypriot constituent state would approach that of the Greek Cypriot constituent state. However, the economic divide between the two sides was narrowed during 2015–2016, thanks to major Turkish investments in northern Cyprus and the economic crisis in southern Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot economic recovery, along with the decline of the Turkish economy and undervaluation of the currency in 2017–2018 brought the convergence to a halt. Apostolides, A. (2018) ‘Economic convergence is failing in Cyprus’, *Cyprus Mail*, (22/4/2018) https://cyprus-mail.com/2018/04/22/economic-convergence-failing-cyprus/

Unemployment and underemployment as a result of the crisis could be tackled with infrastructure projects that would be greenlit in the wake of the agreement. In 2016 there was a straightforward financial motive that pushed towards an agreement, a motive that didn’t exist back in 2004. Nevertheless, in 2016 there was also another aspect, under development, that was pushing to the opposite direction and which also didn’t exist back in 2004: a huge industry of selling Cypriot passports to foreign investors through a network of law firms, accounting offices and land development corporations.

If the 2011–2015 recession, the shrinking economy and the drop in the standard of living was one side of the story during the culmination of the 2016 talks, the other side was the full development of the naturalisation programme which was profitable for the state, especially within a network in which Nicos Anastasiades’ inner circle was prominent. The programme improved numbers and paved the way for a new construction bubble involving tall buildings, especially in Limassol, that is currently in full
If a considerable section of the working class had something specific to hope for from a resolution of the Cyprus dispute—an expansion of the labour market and increased demand in the economy—a powerful section of the bourgeoisie involved in the naturalisation industry saw the solution to the Cyprus dispute as a risk of involvement and transference of the economic centre of gravity elsewhere.

The early twenty-first-century economy of the Republic of Cyprus was primarily based on three sectors: tourism, construction and financial services. Tourism managed to withstand the crisis, the reason being that, due to the political instability and violence affecting rival tourist destinations in neighbouring countries, the influx of tourists in Cyprus was increased instead of slowing down. However, the other two main sectors were on the brink of collapse. Already by 2011, the freezing of construction activities resulted to increased unemployment and to the shutdown of small companies. Meanwhile, the banking crisis led to a general recession of the Cypriot economy which, in turn, further strained the fiscal situation. The overexpansion of two major Cypriot banks, the Cyprus Popular Bank and the Bank of Cyprus, and their close ties with Greece, turned them into time bombs by 2012, which the Cypriot state was unable to defuse. As these banks were ‘too big to fail’, in 2012 the political system proceeded to do three things, wary of the great turmoil that would ensue: rescuing the Cyprus Popular Bank through state funding; requesting aid from the European Stability Mechanism; and signing a Memorandum of Understanding, that is a fiscal adjustment programme that would also provide for a ‘reorganisation’ of the banking system.

In 2013 it became clear that this reorganisation would come about through a combination of bail-out and bail-in measures, that is a haircut of stockholders, investors and depositors. After a total haircut of all bank accounts was initially attempted, only to be blocked in parliament following reactions by the Cypriot people, it was finally decided that the haircut would be limited to the two problematic banks and to uninsured bank accounts (over €100,000). It was also decided that one of the banks in question, namely the Cyprus Popular Bank, would shut down and that its healthy part would be transferred to the other bank, the Bank of Cyprus.

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12 Tall buildings became the new trend post-crisis. They are usually 20- to 35-story high luxury condominiums, meant primarily for wealthy foreign investors and often associated with the sale of foreign passports or, to put it more elegantly, the naturalisation programme aimed at foreign investors.
These developments helped stabilise the Cypriot economy, although in the process they also significantly damaged a portion of the middle class and the collective savings of a section of employees through the Provident Funds. The imposed capital controls and the overall shock to the economy in the short run aggravated recession, increased unemployment and brought cutbacks to available income.\textsuperscript{13}

Losses due to the economic crisis were also registered among segments of the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie. Apart from the destruction of capital and the bankruptcy of mostly small to mid-level companies, another important development was the loss of control over the banking system that now passed into the hands of foreign capital. Simultaneously, the ensuing major reduction of labour cost altogether reinforced the bourgeoisie, both in economic terms and in terms of its ability to influence government policies on a number of issues: from the management of non-performing loans to urban planning to shop opening hours. In the medium term, the economic crisis reinforced capital concentration, drained savings and led to an increase in social inequality.\textsuperscript{14}

The culmination of the 2016 talks came amidst a relative stabilisation of the economy and general adjustment to the new economic order of things. In terms of employment relations, reduced salaries were now a given for the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie. In the public sector, wage moderation had become automatic through a mechanism connecting the margin of wage rises to GDP increase. A potential solution to the Cyprus dispute, which should come with a ‘new social contract’ as well as opening up the economy and the labour market, would also possibly re-open issues that were considered closed. Therefore, if a segment of the bourgeoisie was hostile to the prospect of reunification for the sake of growth, there was a more generalised sense of apprehension among the bourgeoisie about the

13 Ioannou, G. (2014) ‘Employment in crisis: Cyprus 2010–2013’, \textit{The Cyprus Review}, 26(1): 107–126

14 INEK-PEO (2017) Report on Economy and Employment [Έκθεση για την Οικονομία και την Απασχόληση], Nicosia: INEK-PEO. INEK-PEO (2018) Report on Economy and Employment [Έκθεση για την Οικονομία και την Απασχόληση] Nicosia: INEK-PEO. Hanni, G. (2016) Inequality is at high levels [Σε ψηλά επίπεδα η ανισότητα], Stockwatch (19/10/2016) https://www.stockwatch.com.cy/el/article/ergasiaka/se-psila-epipeda-i-anisotita

Hambi, M. (2018) Cypriot household savings went bust [Ξετινάχθηκαν οι αποταμιεύσεις των κυπριακών οικοκυριών], Stockwatch, (31/8/2018) https://www.stockwatch.com.cy/el/article/oikonomia/xetinahthikan-oai-apotamieyseis-ton-kypriakon-noikokyrion
repercussions of the diffusion of the profits from growth. Finally, a segment of the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie was wary of the fact that in some sectors they could not successfully cope with competition because the Turkish capital largely dominated the economy of the Turkish Cypriot community. In 2016–2017, much like it happened in 2004, the section of bourgeoisie who perceived the solution to the Cyprus dispute as risky rather than beneficial prevailed, more effortlessly this time.

Of course, there were also those bourgeois circles that were in favour of reunification and perceived a political peace agreement and a united economy as an opportunity for potential profits rather than losses in the long term. Apart from the owners of great properties (those who did not plead their case to Turkey’s Reimbursement Committee), particularly in Varosha, other Greek Cypriot businessmen also saw possibilities and opportunities in the solution and the opening of the Turkish market. Some of them discerned possible dangers from the extension of the status quo, while certain Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot businessmen shared a desire for a more rational, effective and efficient state, one that would be less authoritarian and corrupt. The end of the ‘doctrine of necessity’, the controls and equilibria that would come together with the bicomunal federal structure, and, overall, the transition from the contemporary ‘state of exception’ to a normal state all made for an attractive concept. However, these approaches remained in the minority and were not publicly expressed. In the early stages of the negotiations, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) responded to the call of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber. Jointly, they did a small campaign about the business opportunities that would arise in the wake of the solution to the Cyprus dispute. CCCI later spoke in favour of reunification. However, the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB), the biggest and most powerful institutional representative of the business world and of employers in general declined to make any statements throughout this process. In fact, during the culmination of the talks in 2016–2017, when several social institutions jointly signed various general announcements basically

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15 Ioannou, G. and Charalambous, G. (2017a) Establishing a Federal Cyprus: the regional and domestic forces at play, Open Democracy, February 2017.
16 In Varosha, in contrast to other areas that came under the control of the Turkish army, Greek Cypriot properties were not distributed to Turkish Cypriots. It was seen as a special case, kept as a bargaining card that could be immediately exchanged in case of a deal which never materialised. As a deserted, ghost city for more than 40 years, it has attracted international interest and constitutes a special dimension of the Cyprus dispute.
expressing their support for the talks and wishing for a favourable conclusion, OEB refused to sign these announcements when asked to.\textsuperscript{17}

Instead, the prevailing opinion was that we are currently having a normal state and that federalisation would only lead to dysfunctions and problems. One should also note here how a large segment of the business world has historically maintained a parasitic relationship with the state, and how conditions of oligopoly and occasionally monopoly have been secured for various economic sectors. Apart from the interconnection of the bourgeois state and private capital, which in the Cypriot case study is reductively formulated as a ‘complementarity of state and capital’,\textsuperscript{18} there is also another, more specific, empirically visible interdependence at work, manifested as clientelism, corruption and conflict of interests.\textsuperscript{19} The Greek Cypriot elite was more united in its stance on the Cyprus dispute during 2016–2017 than it had been in 2003–2004 and more determined to defend its acquired rights and victories through the status quo rather than through a new order of things that could jeopardise the advantages of various sections of this class.\textsuperscript{20} This is precisely where Anastasiades’ government, the bourgeoisie and the deep state politically meet.

Throughout the period of crisis, contempt for the political system was also on the rise, as were incidents of corruption. The magnitude of these incidents was also increased, with people becoming less trusting of institutions, an already existing tendency that was intensified.\textsuperscript{21} Within the political system, apart from the damage sustained by AKEL and reflected in the

\textsuperscript{17}In its official response to the pro-solution movement organisers, OEB mentioned diverging views among its members. Interestingly enough, retail mogul Christos Papaellinas chose to give an interview at this crucial moment in which he directly attacked the prospective solution. The interview was published in \textit{Capital Today} under the title: ‘President, what are you doing?’ Ioakim, S. (2017) Chr. Papaellinas: President, what are you doing? [Χρ. Παπαέλληνας: Πρόεδρε τι πας να κάνεις;], Capital Today, (12/1/2017) http://infognonpolitics.blogspot.com/2017/01/blog-post_673.html

\textsuperscript{18}Kattos, S. (1999) \textit{State, Capital and Labour in Cyprus}, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New South Wales, Sidney, Australia

\textsuperscript{19}Faustmann, H. (2010) ‘Rusfeti and Political Patronage in the Republic of Cyprus’, \textit{The Cyprus Review}, Vol. 22(2): 269–289

\textsuperscript{20}I argue that this was the crux of the matter behind the various official government statements and leaks concerning the high cost that the solution would incur. The other reasons usually cited—the flaws of the Turkish Cypriot economy, the weak banking system of northern Cyprus, the overall uncertainty, the official data that were not released by the Turkish Cypriot side—were mere excuses and smokescreens.

\textsuperscript{21}Ioannou, G. and Charalambous, G. (2017) \textit{The Social and Political Impact of the Economic Crisis}, Nicosia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
loss of thousands of votes in the next few years, with many of those voters choosing abstention, the most significant development was the impressive rise in popularity of the far-right ELAM, now a player in parliamentary dynamics and equilibria. In fact, in the 2018 presidential elections, ELAM saw a rise in its percentages and sent letters with questions to the candidates making it to the second round, namely Nicos Anastasiades and Stavros Malas. It was a symbolic gesture through which ELAM asserted its full political legitimisation and sought recognition of its capacity as a political force. Anastasiades wholeheartedly offered this legitimisation by responding to ELAM’s letter. It also made a pass to the Archbishop at the symbolic level by projecting an image of excellent collaboration and common opinions and concerns of the two over the ‘national issue’.

In March 2013, at the height of the economic crisis, the banking system rescue operations caused certain ideological reactions focusing on Greek Cypriots’ opinion about the EU. Various diverse voices publicly spoke in favour of Cyprus exiting the Eurozone. The burgeoning Euroscepticism, despite being all-pervasive and somewhat profound, did not last for long nor did it evolve into a political form in spite of its rhetorical and emotional intensity. A few months later, at which time the game had already been determined, AKEL published a study arguing for the rejection of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Troika, even if such a rejection would be tantamount to an exit from the Eurozone. The other parties refused to even discuss the issue and AKEL withdrew the study. As in the case of the Greek economic crisis and the 2010 and 2015 incidents, the issue of the Eurozone could not be put in strictly economic terms due to the all-pervasive geopolitical ambience. An exit from the Eurozone was perceived as risking an exit from the EU. Fear and speculation were enough to make the various bourgeois circles which entertained the idea of an exit, as well as AKEL itself, to drop the matter.

**The European Union, the Hydrocarbons and the Alliance with Israel**

The EU has been a key factor in the Cyprus dispute since the late 1990s. It was originally a matter of dispute whether Greek Cypriots have the right to join the EU unilaterally or not and whether Turkey would tolerate this move or not. Crucially, when Cyprus was close to completing accession to the EU (2003–2004) and when the unified defence doctrines and active
volcanoes and the anti-Turkish arcs through attempts at exploiting the Kurdish conflict came to an end, the EU did serve as a ‘catalyst’ for the solution to the Cyprus dispute, a role it had been previously assigned in the dominant rhetoric about the issue. Nevertheless, when the accession of the Republic of Cyprus became a lock regardless of a solution or lack thereof, the shift of a large part of the Greek Cypriot elite away from its commitment to the EU in support of the endeavours of UN for a reunification solution deal, led to a situation described with another term that had also first been articulated in the pre-accession phase: ‘Euro-partition’.

In 2016, in a European Trade Union Institute research meeting which I attended together with a Turkish Cypriot colleague as part of our participation in an publication about collective bargaining in the member-states of the EU, I had a very suggestive talk with an Italian colleague, a lawyer, who made the following question: ‘What does it mean that northern Cyprus belongs to the EU, but that the European legislation does not apply there?’ We explained that insofar as there is no recognition of a second state in Cyprus, northern Cyprus falls under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Cyprus and therefore the EU. ‘But if it’s part of the jurisdiction, why aren’t the laws implemented there? Is it only the territory that falls under the EU rather than the people who live there?’ No, we replied, Turkish Cypriots are EU citizens. We concluded that northern Cyprus is a place whose territory and citizens fall under the EU, unlike the institutions upon which the social, economic and political reality there is predicated. ‘Paradoxical and strange’, our Italian colleague said, shaking his head. ‘Rather ludicrous’, we suggested instead.

I previously mentioned the part played by the EU, mostly as a fantasy image in the Greek Cypriot imaginary and how this image ultimately contributed to the Greek Cypriot ‘No’ to the Annan Plan. I have also mentioned how, despite the post-2004 negative climate, the Greek Cypriot leadership managed to prevent processes that would have turned northern Cyprus into a new Taiwan, for example by making the use of the Ercan Airport official and permitting direct flights, in the process of keeping

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22 The ‘active volcano’ policy coined by Clerides was connected to the purchase of the S-300 missiles aiming to force the international community to intervene for the solution of the Cyprus problem and as a way of quelling a source of regional tension. The quasi informal ‘anti-Turkish arc’ strategy alluded to the connection of the unified defence doctrine with the Kurdish revolt within Turkey.
Turkish Cypriots largely isolated. Under these circumstances, the presence of Turkey in northern Cyprus or the subsumption of northern Cyprus to Turkey was reinforced, with scenarios about the possible declaration of northern Cyprus into a Turkish province circulating. What remains to be discussed is the role of the EU and its image in the last few years, as well as the prospects and possibilities which may arise in the short term.

Even though the process of Turkey’s accession to the EU effectively came to a permanent halt by the end of the 2000s, both the EU and Turkey remained interested in maintaining a special relationship. Turkey sought to assume an upgraded regional role and attempted to present itself as a leading force in the Islamic world and as a protector of the Palestinians. Although these attempts did not adversely affect its relationship with the EU, they did however lead to a rupture in its relations with Israel—a rupture which, although contained, could not be smoothed out. It was within this context that the Republic of Cyprus, under Demetris Christofias, took a decisive step on the matter of natural gas: agreeing on Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) boundaries with Israel and authorising a company for exploratory drilling at block 12. On the heels of a previous agreement with Egypt, the deal with Israel now provided for a Cypriot EEZ in the sea south of Cyprus, within which the Greek Cypriot community could exploit natural gas even without a solution to the Cyprus dispute. To be sure, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership reacted to this development. The Greek Cypriot side responded by invoking the narrative that was also internationally adopted: that hydrocarbons can serve as a motivation for a solution to the Cyprus dispute and for a broader regional collaboration. In fact, Demetris Christofias stated that the Turkish

23 Yalman, G. and Göksel, A. (2017) ‘Transforming Turkey? Putting the Turkey-European Union Relations into a Historical Perspective’, Uluslararası İlişkiler, 14(56): 23–37.

24 An Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) cannot be unilaterally proclaimed by a state and its delineation lines need to be agreed with neighbouring states. In cases of competing claims, the parties are expected to resort to the International Court. The term should not be confused with territorial waters which are more restricted and where a state has sovereignty. EEZ is effectively international waters.

25 There was also an agreement with Lebanon to that end. However, this agreement was not ratified by the parliament of Lebanon due to disagreements with Israel on the issue of boundaries. Therefore, this agreement is not in effect. For a comprehensive and concise presentation of the issue see Gürel, A., Mullen, F. and Tzimitras, H. (2013) The Cyprus Hydrocarbons Issue: Context, Positions and Future Scenarios, Nicosia: PRIO.
Cypriots’ shares from the natural gas earnings could be saved and eventually distributed to them following the successful solution of the dispute.\(^{26}\)

The possibility of discovering and exploiting large quantities of natural gas kept the majority of the Greek Cypriot community, who were afflicted by the economic crisis, in a state of expectation. Regarding the Cyprus dispute, already in the time of the Christofias-Talat convergences natural resources were presumed to be a property of the federal state and this stance was later reaffirmed by Anastasiades’ government when the talks resumed in 2014. Nonetheless, the Cyprus dispute had already come under the shadow of the hydrocarbons, a process that was completed following the collapse of the talks in Crans-Montana in July 2017. The initial collaboration between the Republic of Cyprus and Israel following the EEZ delineation agreement of the two countries focused on energy matters. However, it also carried a considerable symbolic weight, given that it marked the first time that the Republic of Cyprus approached Israel on a diplomatic level, under a left-wing government no less. Anastasiades’ election in 2013 sped up, expanded and intensified the collaboration of the two countries on a number of areas, including military issues. Chief among these was the fact that the Israeli armed forces were given permission to conduct exercises in Cypriot waters, airspace and land.

As far as the energy programme is concerned, in the next few years the Republic of Cyprus proceeded to authorisations for other sea blocks, meeting with heated reactions from Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community. Turkey began to send exploratory ships on a regular basis, accompanied by naval ships, as well as conducting seismographic researches in the area. An agreement between Turkey and the TRNC was signed, delineating the EEZ borders between the two. It was also announced that a drill would be bought and that a series of drillings would be conducted. Turkey also publicised which part it believes falls under its own continental shelf and EEZ, mainly west of Akamas, and the part it claims on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots on almost the entire southern part. A minor crisis in 2014 ultimately fizzled out. When the talks began in 2015, there was a generalised expectation that they would lead to a resolution of the tension surrounding EEZ. However, in parallel with the talks, Anastasiades’ government launched a series of trilateral meetings and partnerships with Greece, Israel and Egypt, built around the narrative of EastMed, an

\(^{26}\) Unsurprisingly, the first income that has already resulted from the authorisations has not gone into a special fund, not even for purely symbolic reasons.
onshore/offshore pipeline that would ostensibly transport the natural gas of the East Mediterranean to Europe, bypassing Turkey in the process.

Following the collapse of the talks in Crans-Montana it was only a matter of time until energy-related tensions began mounting. In the beginning of 2018, Turkey, in a display of power, suspended the energy programme of the Republic of Cyprus by preventing the Italian company ENI from proceeding to a scheduled drilling in the authorised block three. This suspension was fully tolerated by the international community, with the UN making vague statements to the effect that the parties involved should refrain from unilateral actions and the EU merely releasing a few statements one week after the incident. This development was thoroughly predictable given that it was Anastasiades who had been chiefly responsible for the Crans-Montana debacle. The schemes and attempts of the Republic of Cyprus to exclude Turkey from the Eastern Mediterranean energy game were, after all, invariably puerile, even borderline ludicrous, and it was only a matter of time that this became obvious. What, however, became clear in the beginning of 2018 with the incident in block three and was a few months later sealed by the report of the UN Secretary-General was that the Cyprus dispute became wholly subsumed within the dynamics of the energy game. 

Already in 2016 it was becoming clear that the Cyprus dispute was part and parcel of the energy dispute, meaning that the Cyprus dispute was further subsumed into the Greco-Turkish antagonism. On the one hand, the Republic of Cyprus continued regularly its energy programme under the rationale that the energy issue is not related to the Cyprus dispute. On the other hand, Greece, particularly through its Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Kotzias, began to publicly and increasingly frequently uphold the position ‘zero army, zero guarantees’ as a prerequisite for consenting to the agreement on the Cyprus dispute. At the same time, Greece persisted in its efforts to convince Egypt to delineate the boundaries of EEZ east of Crete, in an attempt to subsequently delineate EEZ for Greece and the Republic of Cyprus and thus to effectively block the pretensions of Turkey. Despite the heated differences between the governments of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Erdoğan, and despite its participation in various dramatic trilateral conferences, Egypt did not consent to the Greek efforts which

27 United Nations (2018) Progress towards a Settlement in Cyprus. Report of the Secretary General, 14/6/2018, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2018_610.pdf
included a visit by Kotzias to Egypt. The visit, which took place in November 2016, midway between the first and the second round of Mont Pelerin talks, was not widely publicised.\textsuperscript{28}

In 2019, Turkey fully developed its own energy programme with drilling projects in the sea west of Cyprus. The virtually non-existent international reactions this move prompted took away any doubts as to its significance, once again upending the Greek Cypriot narrative about domestic consumption. Despite the well-known platitudes repeated by politicians of the sort ‘a second Turkish invasion, now in the Cypriot sea’, despite the rhetoric about violations ‘of the Cypriot EEZ’, despite ridiculous statements about ‘arrest warrants’ for crews of Turkish ships, Turkey’s move was typical of its comfortable position which derives not only from its military power but also from the fair amount of diplomatic and political legitimisation it has been enjoying as a country in the last few years. Initially, the Turkish drilling projects were undertaken in areas which had not even been officially registered in the UN as a part of the Cypriot EEZ, the reason being that the Republic of Cyprus did not dare sign a delineation agreement with Greece with the Cyprus problem and the Greco-Turkish issues unresolved. Neither had Greece an agreement with neighbouring Egypt. The Republic of Cyprus rushed off to submit coordinates to the UN, given that the Turkish drilling was in development, without this action leading to substantial diplomatic or political developments. The United Kingdom and the UN spoke about ‘claimed areas’ and repeated the request for ‘equitable share between the communities’. The Republic of Cyprus’ ‘ally’, Israel, released an equally indifferent statement. The only satisfactory stance, for the Greek Cypriot side, was that of Egypt, which also limited itself to a statement though. The EU was somewhat more explicit and mentioned some minor, barely noticeable economic sanctions for Turkey, more symbolic than practical.\textsuperscript{29}

As far as the Greco-Turkish conflict is concerned, there was mounting tension in the Aegean and in diplomatic affairs, namely with the incident of the Turkish military personnel who fled to Greece following the 2016 coup d’état attempt. The officers in question successfully sought asylum in

\textsuperscript{28}Nedos, V. (2016) Kotzias goes to Egypt for the delineation of the EEZ [Ο Κοτζιάς στην Αίγυπτο για την οριοθέτηση ΑΟΖ], (18/11/2018) Kathimerini http://www.kathimerini.gr/884093/article/epikairotha/politikh/o-kotzias-sthn-aigypto-gia-thn-orioBethsh-aoz

\textsuperscript{29}Turkey in early 2020 proceeded to drill also within the Cyprus’ EEZ, a few miles south of Limassol, on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots.
Greece, despite the Turkish government’s repeated requests for extradition to Turkey. In addition to the Aegean and territorial waters disputes, the Eastern Mediterranean energy dispute and the EEZ delineation further aggravated the tension, centred around the island of Kastellorizo and whether it would count or not towards the prospective delineation of the Greek EEZ. The deterioration of the Turkey-USA relations and to some extent Turkey-EU relations was considered in some Greek circles as an opportunity for Greece to step up and improve its role vis-à-vis Turkey in the context of the Western Alliance and NATO. The improvement of its relations with Israel and the EastMed project also worked to that effect. In its most extreme and dramatic form, this stance was conveyed as the proverbial ‘Greek bravado’, featuring the Greek Minister of Defence Panos Kammenos and encompassing a reinforcement of ridiculous dogfights over the Aegean, as well as inflammatory statements. In Turkey, Erdoğan’s government was also far from being low-key, with various incendiary statements flying and an ostentatious mobilisation of the country’s naval and aviation, both in order to maintain inner equilibria and in order to outwardly demonstrate the power correlations.

More significantly, Turkey responded to the deterioration of its relations with the West by strengthening its partnership with Russia, upgrading its military industry and scheduling the promotion of its own, state-controlled energy programme by way of purchasing drill equipment and reinforcing its infrastructure. In the medium term, these gestures were expected to boost Turkey’s position in the energy game of the broader area, whether these games were to be played exclusively through diplomatic means or would also involve military conflict. That being said, if the question of the EEZ delineation between Greece and Turkey and the pipelines is a major regional issue whose development will be determined by the outcome of a series of primarily political antagonisms, when it comes to the EEZ that was proclaimed by the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey both has legal ground for its own claims and can also draw on its capacity as ‘guardian’ of the Turkish Cypriot community under conditions of non-solution to the Cyprus dispute.

In the Greek Cypriot public opinion, the question of hydrocarbons played a particularly negative role to the prospect of reunification. The position of the international community, occasionally adopted by the...
Greek Cypriot leadership, was that the prospective exploitation of hydrocarbons as part of a regional cooperation with Turkey would serve as a motivation for all sides to proceed to a solution agreement on the Cyprus dispute. At the same time though, the Greek Cypriot leadership made it perfectly clear that the search for hydrocarbons was the sovereign right of the Republic of Cyprus and that the Turkish Cypriot community would receive its due share from the profits should the Cyprus dispute ever be resolved. More indirectly and somewhat tacitly, the Greek Cypriot leadership implied that Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots had no say in the matter because blocks in question were not situated on the northern side. To that end, it repeatedly highlighted the map with the sea blocks on the southern side for the sake of the media. These pronouncements had a profound impact on the Greek Cypriot public opinion. During the 2018 elections, Anastasiades himself opined, supposedly unwittingly, what had up to that point only been insinuated without being explicitly stated: that even if the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey had a rightful claim on natural gas, their claims should only be limited to the northern side of Cyprus.  

Therefore, the Greek Cypriot popular perception about the exclusive ownership of the Republic of Cyprus expanded to include the exclusive ownership of the natural gas. The map that depicted the ‘EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus’, indicating only the southern side, was a powerful semiotic statement. It denoted a horizontal partition that extended to the sea, itself an extension of the 1974 Ceasefire Line that was formalised in the beginning of 2018, when the prospect of permanent partition as a conscious Greek Cypriot choice was communicated to the public. The same thing can be said about the alliance with Israel: it was never explicitly stated that this alliance was built on the basis of the status of the Cyprus dispute as an unresolved issue, as an instrument for excluding Turkey from the energy game and as a form of military protection of the Republic of Cyprus in the face of the Turkish army. However, the prevailing public opinion in the Greek Cypriot community holds all of the above

31 ‘If they choose to defend the rights of the Turkish Cypriots as an independent, sovereign entity, then they should also confine themselves to what is due to this lawless entity when it comes to the EEZ. Consequently, they have reason to question the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus.’ This statement was met with heated reactions. Subsequently, Anastasiades claimed that it was misinterpreted. Alphanewslive. (2018) ‘Anastasiades’ statement provokes reactions’ [Αντιδράσεις προκαλεί η δήλωση Αναστασιάδη για την ΑΟΖ] (3/1/2018) Alphanewslive https://www.alphanews.live/politics/antidraseis-prokalei-edelose-anastasiade-gia-ten-aoz
assumptions true. It is a myth that was clearly implied and consistently cultivated by the mass media. There have been various attempts to adopt a different stance, as well as criticism coming from AKEL and other individual voices, none of which has managed to debunk this myth.

The overall inertness of the EU with respect to the Cyprus dispute and its inability to actively intervene towards either direction was the other important parameter which determined the context within which the changes and shifts in the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie and community unfolded. First of all, the fact that the EU continued closely following the UN and its initiatives allowed Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side to accept that the EU obtain an observer status in the procedures, despite their discontent over the perceived ‘insufficient support of the Turkish Cypriots’ post-2004. Secondly, in recent years, due to the refugee crisis and the EU’s attempt to reduce the influx of refugees from the war-torn Syria to the European countries, Turkey, whose accession process to the EU has been indefinitely suspended, has managed to strengthen its own standing. Finally, the fact that the EU still considers the Cyprus dispute as a problem that needs to be solved in the hopes of avoiding complications and troubles in the south-eastern tip of Europe seems, on the one hand, to prevent attempts at a federalist solution from completely freezing up, and on the other hand, to make the official opening of a discussion on a two-state solution more difficult.

**The Position of ‘status quo at all costs’ and ‘any partition when the time comes’**

Had he wanted to, Anastasiades could have moved forward as early as the summer of 2016, as evidenced by the fact there was substantial progress in some respects—progress that went beyond the zivania-type spectacles held jointly with Akinci on the Ledras-Lokmaci street, that onetime central commercial street in old Nicosia where the checkpoint can be found today. Those events had originally served as a substitute for an actual progress in the talks. Following the collapse of the talks, they served as a testament to Anastasiades’ good intentions. In fact, Anastasiades chose to

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32 See Anastasiades’ press conference on 6 November 2018. In that same press conference, he unashamedly justified his rejection of the need for at least one Turkish Cypriot vote in federal state decision-making bodies by referring to the possibility of the Turkish Cypriots acting as agents of Turkey and blocking the EastMed project.
pursue an ambiguous course, invitingly looking over to partitionist forces and rejectionist audiences. Persistence in a maximalist rhetoric on the issues of security and army, formulated from the start as ‘zero army, zero guarantees’, undercut the negotiation itself and generated a charged climate in the public opinion, producing analogous consequences to the other side.\textsuperscript{33} Anastasiades terminated the prospect of an agreement in Mont Pelerin by refusing to ‘lock’ the territory and Morphou issue under a Greek Cypriot administration in exchange for accepting the Christofias-Talat convergence in executive power (rotating presidency and cross-voting). Aided by Kotzias and the inflammatory non-paper on 21 November 2016, Anastasiades laid the ground for a nationalist hysteria which escalated in the next few months on the occasion of the ‘Enosist Referendum’ celebration in Greek Cypriot schools.\textsuperscript{34}

Anastasiades’ ambiguous stance came to an end when he definitively shifted to non-solution around the end of 2016, a stance that became plain in the beginning of 2017 with the ‘Enosist Referendum’ debacle. These gestures were back then interpreted by many as an electoral strategy, as an attempt on his part to secure his comfortable re-election on the strength of the nationalist and rejectionist factions of the electoral body. I posit that this reading was superficial, as demonstrated by the fact that after the elections Anastasiades was not interested in re-initiating the talks and especially after he refused Akıncı’s invitation to co-sign the Guterres framework as a strategic deal. In my view, neither Russia nor Anastasiades’ dependence on his economic transactions can satisfactorily account for these gestures, although they may have also played their part. The disambiguation of Anastasiades’ intentions is linked, apart from media/
communication games, to the deeper causes behind the correlation shifts within the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie.

The post-1974 Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie was invariably ambiguous on the issue of the Cyprus dispute. The bourgeoisie and the political system moved between two polar opposites, two recorded schools of thought, both of which effectively collapsed in 2004 on account of the referendum. Since 2004, there has been a gradual but general shift which shaped a new tendency; a tendency which, if still not explicitly and comprehensively formulated, appears to have prevailed, resulting in a convergence of the bourgeoisie with the deep state and the greatest part of the political system. Before I elaborate on this new line of thought which could be schematically named as ‘status quo at all costs’ or ‘any partition when the time comes’, I must first refer to the two traditional bourgeois schools of thought: the ‘accommodationist’ and the ‘assertive’. I will explain how both schools essentially collapsed in 2004 and how we have slowly but steadily come to the school of thought that seemingly prevails nowadays.

Within the milieu of the post-1974 Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie there were traditionally two lines of argument: the so-called assertive or rejectionist, championing the maintenance of the status quo until the political power correlations would shift in favour of the Greek Cypriots; and the so-called accommodationist or realist, championing a constitutional compromise with the Turkish Cypriot community, while also expecting to, politically and gradually, tailor this compromise in the post-solution era by means of economic power. The bourgeois assertive position was essentially

35 In the present analysis, this ambiguity is limited to the post-1974 developments. In fact, the bourgeoisie’s ambiguous stance on the Cyprus dispute can be traced back to the early twentieth century. I cannot elaborate here on the complex relationship between nationalism and capital or present a genealogy of the various branches of the bourgeoisie and particularly of the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie. What needs to be accentuated is that nationalism has always been the main framework and fundamental apparatus of the bourgeoisie. Historical differentiations and distinctions, especially in the post-1974 era, resulted more from the use of different methods and tactics rather than from any key differences in political content. This does not mean that distinctions are meaningless or that they do not carry material consequences.

36 For the two traditional schools of the ‘moderates’ and the ‘maximalists’ read Stavrinides, Z. (1999) ‘Greek Cypriot perspectives on the Cyprus problem’ in C.H. Dodd (eds.) The Need for New Perspectives, Huntingdon: The Eothen Press. The incumbent Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Christodoulides is considered as one of the main political representatives of the new line in recent years.
opposed to the prospect of compromise, arguing that Greek Cypriots’ legal grounds were strong enough and would withstand time no matter what happened on the ground. The long-term struggle would provide the Greek Cypriot community with the opportunity to fully exploit the media and diplomatic leverage they had gained in the aftermath of the Turkish invasion—an incident which cast the Greek Cypriot community as the victim of Turkey, drawing attention to the so-called external aspects of the Cyprus dispute and diverting attention from its internal aspects. On a rhetorical level, the Cyprus dispute began to be classified exclusively as an ‘invasion and occupation problem’ and the groundwork was laid for the huge illumination campaign that ensued in the next decades, spearheading the so-called long-term struggle.

The main idea behind the bourgeois assertive position was that, even though the Turkish Cypriot community may have placed an important part of the territory under its exclusive control and may have been retaining this control thanks to the power of the Turkish army, these territorial claims could never be legitimised without the Greek Cypriot consent. Following the Turkish invasion, the legal standing of the Turkish Cypriot community was further deteriorated, as the Greek Cypriots’ exclusive sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus on the southern side was reinforced. Even in terms of media appearances, the Turkish Cypriot community could no longer play the victim. Therefore, time essentially worked in the Greek Cypriot community’s favour, consolidating its advantages. The economic miracle and rapid boom of the economy were later approached through this lens as an extra point of pressure to Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side, as yet another advantage in the hands of the Greek Cypriot side. The reasoning was that, even if a more favourable agreement didn’t come, at least these advantages were established by the status quo.

Conversely, the bourgeois realist position saw time as a factor working against the Greek Cypriot side. This school of thought regarded the negative developments on the ground as more important than the diplomatic and media leverage, arguing that compromise was the only way in which these negative developments could be at least partially overturned. The realist school postulated that declarations presenting the Cyprus dispute as an ‘invasion and occupation problem’ were essentially meant for domestic consumption, and that although the UN Security Council resolutions did provide a protection to the Greek Cypriot side, this protection was neither
absolute nor to be taken for granted in the long term. The rapid economic growth was approached through this perspective as an objective condition that would, in the medium term, allow the Greek Cypriot side to counterbalance any political concessions it would be forced to make in the context of the agreement. The prospective repossession of territories and properties was another important parameter in this approach, while the capacity for an economic activity in the entire jurisdiction was a sufficient benefit in itself. The primary issue was to make sure there would be a united market in which Greek Cypriot capital would occupy a prominent position; a political compromise was required to achieve just that.

Both lines effectively collapsed in 2003–2004, when it was made clear that neither the status quo could be perpetuated nor it was feasible to undermine constitutional terms and allow for an economic dominion of Greek Cypriots over Turkish Cypriots in the framework of a bizonal bicommunal federation. At the time, it became clear that these Greek Cypriot pursuits were materially unattainable and that the Turkish Cypriots would never consent to regulations that would leave open the possibility of Greek Cypriot dominion over the Turkish Cypriot state. Furthermore, the loss of the Greek Cypriot diplomatic leverage meant that the Greek Cypriot side was less capable of checking the process of acknowledgement of the Turkish Cypriot state, while the possibility of recognition of the TRNC, even if partial and indirect, was now a visible prospect. As such, apart from the various rhetorical fanfares and petty arguments, a new opinion began emerging within the serious, powerful bourgeois circles that could be succinctly summed up as: ‘Status quo as long as possible and then two states when the time is ripe.’

Turkey’s relations with the USA and the EU have been strained in recent years, a development that has helped to squash any qualms about the timing and terms of partition, as a view prevailed according to which the status quo could more or less be maintained in the medium term without any significant changes. The fact that Turkish capital fully dominated northern Cyprus fed into a scepticism about the potential of Greek Cypriot capital playing a major role in northern Cyprus and in the country’s

37 The UN Security Council resolutions do not classify the Cyprus dispute as an ‘invasion and occupation problem’ and do not specifically ask for the departure of the Turkish army. Instead, they request the achievement of an agreement between the two communities for the resolution of the dispute and the departure of all foreign armies. Furthermore, they condemn the declaration of the TRNC and propose a solution to the Cyprus conflict in the framework of a bizonal bicommunal federation.
restructuring process. Overall, big Greek Cypriot capital was unwilling to risk what it had gained through its association with the monocommunal state of emergent necessity and through the cutting down of salaries during the period of economic crisis; federalisation, together with the sudden and uncontrollable opening of the market and more specifically the labour market, would jeopardise all that. Beneath the façade of public rhetoric in favour of a federal solution, partition has been laid out on the negotiations table already since 2017.\footnote{Kakouris, G. (2017) A two-state solution inside Europe \([\text{Λύση δύο κρατών εντός της Ευρώπης}], \ (27/8/2017) \ Politis \ http://politis.com.cy/article/lisi-dio-kraton-entos-tis-evropis\) Paraschos, A. (2018) The two states and the keys \([\text{Τα δύο κράτη και τα κλειδιά}], \ (4/3/2018) \ Kathimerini \ http://www.kathimerini.com.cy/gr/apopseis/arthrografia/andreas-paraxsos/ta-dyo-krati-kai-ta-kleidia\)

Pantazopoulos, G. (2018) Interview with President Anastasiades \([\text{Συνέντευξη με τον Νίκο Αναστασιάδη}], \ LIFO, (22/6/2018) \ https://www.lifo.gr/articles/greece_articles/197557/nikos-Anastasiades-theloyme-i-moira-tis-kyproy-na-orizetai-apo-toys-ellinokyprioykai-toys-toyrkokyprioy\) Dionysiou, D. (2018) Anastasiades’ flirt with two states \([\text{Το φλέρτ Αναστασιάδη με τα δύο κράτη}], \ (14/10/2018) \ Politis \ http://politis.com.cy/article/to-flert-anastasiadi-me-ta-dio-krati\)\)}

To be sure, the concept of partition has not been accepted by the Greek Cypriot majority,\footnote{Psaltis, C. (2008) Mapping the field of bi-communal relations: a socio-psychological analysis \([\text{Χαρτογραφώντας Το Πεδίο Των Διακοινωνικών Σχέσεων: Μια Κοινωνιο-Ψυχολογική Ανάλυση}], \ Diethnis ke Evropaiki Politiiki: Trimonthly Political and Economic Review, 11: 133–143. Psaltis, C. (2018) Four different Greek Cypriot profiles with respect to the solution of the Cyprus problem \ http://ucy.ac.cy/dir/documents/dir/cpsaltis/4_Profiles_GCsf_Final.pdf\) despite the fact that the bourgeois and political circles have been privately invoking this in order to justify their position. In the wake of the Crans-Montana fiasco, there were early media reports that Anastasiades was discussing the possibility of partition—reports that were not officially refuted. In fact, Anastasiades himself publicly and rather clearly alluded to this possibility twice, ahead of the 2018 elections.

Following his re-election in 2018, there were frequent reports in the media that Anastasiades discusses the matter of the ‘two states’ with Turkey, through a series of meetings and exchanges with Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, bypassing Akıncı in the process. Certainly, the EU does not seem to favour this prospect, while both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community are expected to lay down their terms in relation to the natural gas and other issues, making the agreed partition a more difficult venture than the federalist reunification. Within the Greek
Cypriot community, support of the status quo and support of agreed partition are two different things. In effect, it is rather unrealistic to believe that a partition agreement can be truly clinched—not for another generation at least. The Greek Cypriot elite’s preferences, its ability to achieve them and their mode of realisation are quite different things. And of course, the international and domestic acceptance and legitimisation of these choices are different things altogether.

In addition to the important international parameters which do not favour an agreed partition as a solution to the Cyprus dispute because such an agreement would complicate Greco-Turkish relations and leave less wiggle room to the EU for political manoeuvres, there are also serious internal difficulties that could prevent the Greek Cypriot elite from achieving a majority for the possibility of formalising partition. Apart from the fact there is no possibility of territorial repossession (even the buffer zone would most likely be shared 50%-50% after being bargained exhaustively), it is also highly unlikely that the sea territory could ever be partitioned in the manner imagined by the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie. The sea partition could happen vertically, with quotas analogous to the coastline, and on the basis of findings, power correlations and diplomacy. A negotiation for the EEZ partition cannot happen without consequences, both in terms of the negotiations for partition on the ground and its various related aspects, and in terms of property issues in particular.

Regardless, even if the concept of separation and the refusal to coexist, jointly own and jointly rule the country are prevalent among the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, this does not mean that a ‘smooth’ partition is necessarily achievable. It will certainly not be easy for Anastasiades and his successors. Even if there is, once again, a majority opinion against the compromise solution of federation, as in 2004, this view will not be uniform as to what needs to be done. This majority will dissolve the minute it is confronted with the situation of agreed partition. Agreed partition will not be supported by most ethnocentrists (given that for them the advantage to be had from excluding the Turkish Cypriots will be countered by the price to be paid, that is actual material losses for the Greek Cypriots) and will also be opposed by the majority of the left and the Cypriot-centrists. The ‘No to everything’ rhetoric that was propagated by the Greek Cypriot deep state will come back to bite it if and when a part of the deep state will decide to bring the issue to a close due to force majeure. It is very likely that it will take a regression to violence for the partition of Cyprus to be completed—a process that was, after all, launched
through violence and terrorism to begin with. I contend that the road to partition cannot be and will not be smooth and paved with roses.

Having said that, the groundwork for partition has already been laid out and it will take many upsets for this trajectory to be reversed. The preconditions necessary for these upsets are not visible at the moment. However, they are neither improbable nor inconceivable. From an activist and left-wing standpoint, the reversal of the road to partition and the achievement of reunification was and remains a strategic goal and an existential orientation; this is what is practically at stake. From an analytical viewpoint, it wouldn’t be right of me to speculate and come up with scenarios that would foreground the prospect of reunification, no matter how desirable I may find these scenarios to be. Such hypotheses may be reserved for another, more literary book. In the present book, I will satisfy myself with outlining the reunificationist forces from the perspective of how things stand in 2020.

The Reunificationist Forces Today

The partition of Cyprus was from the outset and remains to this day an absurd concept in many respects: politically, practically, socially, economically. A considerable part of the Cypriot population on both sides fully understands that. The rational part of Cypriot society considers the gestating partition as a dangerous impasse; they have been vocal in the public sphere and politics, trying to prevent this development from coming to pass. The anti-partitionist position that persists in favour of federal reunification on a substantial rather than rhetorical level coincides at this point in history with the interests of the EU. That being said, even though the EU does not accept the two states in Cyprus for its own reasons, it may soon come to accept a normalised status quo of two economic entities and a grey but clear legal status in northern Cyprus. However, that part of the Cypriot population who conceive Cyprus as an autonomous space and as a sovereign country rather than as an extension of a fantasy motherland (Hellenism, Turkism, etc.), have a hard time accepting a normalised

40 Perhaps the issue of environmental protection and the insufficient cooperation across the ethnic divide illustrates this most vividly. For a comprehensive review of this see: Hadjimichael, M. and Papastylianou, K. (2019) Environmental Protection and Cooperation in an (Ethnically) Divided Island: the case of Cyprus, Nicosia: PRIO.
partitionist status quo. This segment of the population forms the bulk of the reunificationist forces today.

Currently, reunificationism is politically expressed by Mustafa Akıncı and Andros Kyprianou. In a few years from now, it will probably be expressed by other politicians. The core of the reunificationist forces in Cyprus is largely Cypriot-centric and on the left side of the political spectrum. Nonetheless, the left and Cypriot-centrism are neither identical nor overlapping categories. The reunificationist forces today are neither exclusively left-wing nor even exclusively Cypriot-centric. The small but sufficiently resolute Unite Cyprus Now movement that debuted shortly before the complete collapse of the talks in 2017 is a fairly liberal, centrist movement, covering both the centre-left and the centre-right space, insofar as one can meaningfully place it across the political spectrum. There is also a liberal, centre-right faction in the fringes of DISY that has distanced itself from Anastasiades’ policies and remains committed to the reunification prospect.

This liberal, centre-right faction is essentially without a political home and is particularly discontented with the post-2017 developments on the Cyprus dispute. It is not easy to estimate how big this faction is, its size being contingent on how much the Cyprus dispute affects its political structuring. However, it is not a negligible group, judging from the

41 Mustafa Akıncı, in a historically significant address, decried the Turkish offensive to Syria from an anti-militarist point of view, drawing parallels to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Specifically, on the 1974 military intervention, he mentioned that ‘even though we used to call it a Happy Peace Operation’, it was in fact a war in which blood was shed. Likewise, he pointed out that in the current Operation Peace Spring (Barış Pınarı Harekâtı) it is not water but blood that is shed and expressed his desire that a dialogue for a diplomatic solution begin immediately. Predictably, Akıncı’s statement drew heated reactions from the Turkish government and the right-wing Turkish Cypriot parties. Akıncı himself received verbal abuse and death threats by Turkey’s nationalist circles. On the Greek Cypriot side, the politicians and journalists of the rejectionist and ethnocentric camp initially tried to downplay and subsequently distort the meaning of Akıncı’s intervention, but this did not prove to be easy. For the second time in his capacity as leader of the Turkish Cypriot community (the first time was at the beginning of his presidential term in 2015), Akıncı referred to the 1974 intervention as ‘war’, thus directly challenging the ideological construct of the Turkish army as the national saviour of the Turkish Cypriot community and the hegemony of militarism, instead propounding a Cypriot-centric position and stance in favour of peace in Cyprus and the broader region. Thanks to this intervention, Mustafa Akıncı once again addressed the problematic relations between the Turkish Cypriot community and Turkey and once again managed to transcend the narrow limits of his community, earning the respect of the progressive forces in Cyprus, both north and south of the dividing line.
fluctuations in the political line of argument of *Politis* newspaper, various statements by Averof Neofytou and the balancing games played by DISY in its attempt to not lose this body of voters. The liberal centre-right voters who continue to regard the Cyprus dispute as an important issue and its resolution on a federal basis as an absolute necessity were caught between a rock and a hard place during the 2018 presidential elections. Some of them voted for Malas, a few abstained, and others reluctantly voted for Anastasiades, ‘not for his handling of the Cyprus dispute, but for his handling of the economy’, as they often made a point to clarify. These tendencies were reflected in the social media and mass media, as in the traditional pro-Clerides newspaper *Alitheia* which harshly criticised Anastasiades’ handling of the Cyprus dispute, while at the same time upholding the traditional party line.

Prior to the above developments, there was a venture involving Constantinos Christofides, the ambitious neoliberal ex-dean of the University of Cyprus who was to be a candidate in the presidential elections on the strength of a programme of ‘reforms’ and in support of immediate reunification. Ultimately, the then dean did not nominate himself despite rather spectacular attempts at preparing the ground for a nomination campaign. Before withdrawing his candidacy plans, Christofides gave a television interview in which he made sure to oppose ‘rotating presidency’, basically making it clear that he could not serve as the representative of this liberal, centre-right, reunificationist tendency I have mentioned here.

At the same time, it must be emphasised that this tendency, while existing, is at this point too weak to affect the internal party process. This can be inferred from a number of things: the fact that not a single high-ranking member of DISY resigned or at least publicly disagreed; the fact that no DISY members substantially criticised the party save for a few independent

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42 Although DISY nowadays does not boast a strong ideological cohesion, political vision, political effectiveness and reliability or a unifying link that could cement its diverse, heterogeneous rank and file outside clientelism and favouritism, the party remains a solid, tight political entity. In contrast to the all-pervasive rhetoric according to which it is a party that confers a degree of autonomy to its members, DISY keeps a tighter leash on its partisans than AKEL does. DISY keeps its partisans much more controlled and instructed in a way that AKEL, which formally operates on the basis of democratic centralism, could not have conceived, not even during the times of Ezekias Papaioannou. All these traits are linked to the quality of DISY as a party of power and to the interdependence of its various sections and central leadership.
rightists and former members who condemned the Crans-Montana fiasco. We can conclude that this faction’s ideological commitment to reunification is weak and cannot be taken for granted for a federalist solution in the medium term. In fact, DISY could perhaps adopt the logic of agreed partition more effortlessly than other, more markedly nationalist, right-wing factions. Finally, Anastasiades’ easy re-election in 2018 indicates, on the one hand, the now visible prospect of partition which is not as scary for people as it used to be, and on the other hand, that the prospect of reunification is not the motivating force in elections that it used to be.

AKEL remains the main and, in truth, only force in politics that can promote federal reunification by virtue of its being a massive organisation. Under its leader Andros Kyprianou, AKEL has indeed made great political and rhetorical progress. However, there are limits as to how confrontational the party can become. These limits are linked to the party’s history, its members, its quality as a massive party and as an electoral machine with a bureaucratic, centralist structure, and finally its orientation towards moderate policies of continuity, consent and integration to communal apparatuses of power. AKEL has historically been caught between Greek Cypriot national unity, in its attempt to avoid being marginalised within the Greek Cypriot community, and bicommunalism, in its attempt to maintain relations with the Turkish Cypriot community and a communication channel with the Turkish Cypriots.

At some point around the end of 2007, I met with a group of right-wing pro-solution supporters, whom I had known since 2004 and with whom I had shared the experience of the ‘Yes’ support in the referendum. We had moved in different circles during the pro-reunification campaign and maintained our ideological opposition, but thanks to the Cyprus dispute there was a common ground which allowed for some intimacy. Back then, I told them something to the effect: ‘Permanent partition is nigh, if there are no upsets on the Greek Cypriot side.’ To which they responded: ‘If that’s what Greek Cypriots want, so be it.’ I was troubled by their way of thinking: not only did it constitute a form of resignation but also revealed their indifference to the crux of the matter. Significantly, it was obvious to me that the pro-reunification right did not possess the required willpower to go against the grain or the existential commitment to reunification that I had come across in left-wing circles. I believe this became apparent in 2009–2010 and again in 2016–2017.

At the same time, it bears mentioning that even though Malas adopted a better stance in 2018 vis-à-vis the Cyprus dispute than he did in 2013, he did not run on a ‘solution now’ campaign, like Akinci did in 2015 within the Turkish Cypriot community and to some extent like Christofias did in 2008 within the Greek Cypriot community.

This became plainly obvious with the parliament resolution debacle regarding the celebration of the Enosis referendum in schools. While AKEL voted against the amendment and harshly criticised the endeavour, the party subsequently chose to promote a ‘unanimous
Given that AKEL does not have faith in its ability to lead the Greek Cypriot community towards a compromise with the Turkish Cypriot community, the party does not take the risks required to pave the road for this compromise. Conversely, the more AKEL refrains from adopting a bold policy of opening up to the Cypriot society on both sides, the more unable it is to take centre stage and is thus dragged into balancing games, calls for national unity and hopeless attempts at alliance with other Greek Cypriot forces opposed to bicommmunal compromises. These difficulties were made patently obvious both in 2003–2004 and in 2008–2010 and to some extent in 2016–2017. While AKEL is the only Greek Cypriot party that can consistently support a process of reunification, it does not seem to be ready for the ruptures that such a stance would entail—ruptures needed much more today than in the past. This reluctance does not only stem from the party’s particularities as a political agent—its leaders’ lack of determination and intensity of willpower. There are actual structural limitations and restrictions in place for AKEL, resulting from its heavy past: from the culture it shaped, from its internalised perception of the hostile environment, from tradition becoming habit or from history becoming a necessity, if one is to paraphrase the well-known song lyrics that Demetris Christofias used as a title for his book.

The Greek Cypriot trade unions and particularly the left-wing PEO is the other basic reunificationist force nowadays. PEO constitutes the biggest AKELian mass organisation. Thanks to its history and position in society, PEO is closer to the Turkish Cypriot community and keeps in close contact with left-wing Turkish Cypriot trade unions. In the 2004 referendum, PEO members were more well-disposed to ‘Yes’ than other AKEL-affiliated organisations. Since 2010, PEO forms the backbone of every major bicommunal protest. At the same time though, as an organisation that organically and in terms of its high-ranking members falls under AKEL, it is also subject to the same correlations and limitations of the party. SEK, on the other hand, while being an ideological expression of the popular, nationalist right, and while being prone to rejectionism due to its affiliations with DISY and DIKO, is not opposed either to resolution of the National Council’, condemning the Turkish Cypriot reactions and assuring the Turkish Cypriot community that the Greek Cypriot community remains committed to the bizonal bicommmunal federation. Afterwards, AKEL visited the Turkish Cypriot left with this resolution in hand (voted by three anti-federal and two semi-anti-federal Greek Cypriot parties), hoping to salvage something out of this.

Kizilyürek, N. (1990) *Cyprus as a whole* [Ολική Κύπρος], Nicosia
rapprochement or to reunification. Obviously, SEK cannot lead the process of reunification, but it has already demonstrated that, if certain conditions are met, it can follow this process should it ever begin. The same thing could possibly be said for the Democratic Labour Federation, DEOK (Δημοκρατική Εργατική Ομοσπονδία Κύπρου, ΔΕΟΚ) and the other Greek Cypriot trade unions.47

Certainly, Greek Cypriot trade unions are not as independent from political parties as Turkish Cypriot trade unions are. Neither do they traditionally assume a political stance, especially on the Cyprus dispute, save for sporadic, individual and often generalised announcements, nor do they organise mass mobilisations and street protests.48 Despite their weaknesses and problems, these trade unions retain considerable power and can potentially play a positive role towards reunification. For example, the All Trade Unions Forum, founded in 1995 with 18 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot trade unions as its members, expressed some important views when it became active again in 2015, after ten years of hiatus, reaffirming these views during the culmination of the talks in 2016.49 These views on a number of issues, such as a standardised and unified system of employment and work relations, wages and benefit specifications, health and social security on the level of federal state, were and still remain important inasmuch as they give us an idea of what is socially at stake in the reunification project.50 Apart from the uniform labour market

47 It is more difficult to predict how the Pancyprian Trade Union of Civil Servants, PASYDY (Παγκύπρια Σωστηχια Ανθρωπίνων Υπαλλήλων, ΠΑΣΥΔΥ), the Union of Bank Employees, ΕΤΥΚ (Εσωθεν Τραπεζικών Υπαλλήλων, ΕΤΥΚ), and the teachers’ trade unions POED, OELMEK and Organisation of Technical Education Teachers, OLTEK (Οργάνωση Ελλήνων Λειτουργών Τεχνικής Εκπαίδευσης Κύπρου, ΟΛΤΕΚ), can proceed, given their complex status as organisations with members from the whole political spectrum which significantly affect their dynamics, correlations and leadership.

48 Ioannou, G. (2016) ‘The connection between trade unions and political parties in Cyprus’, in G. Charalambous and C. Christophorou (eds.) Party-society relations in the Republic of Cyprus, London: Routledge pp. 110–128. Ioannou, G. and Sonan, S. (2017) Trade unions and politics in Cyprus: an historical comparative analysis across the dividing line, Mediterranean Politics 22(4): 484–503

49 The All Trade Unions Forum (2016) Action: The All Trade Unions’ Forum of Cyprus in dialogue with Cyprus about the future of our country. Thematic Memoranda https://fucomasa.inek.org.cy/images/pdf/Memoranda_EN.pdf

50 Many of these points already existed or were implied in the Christofias-Talat convergences but were ultimately overlooked. However, they resurfaced during the final stage of negotiations in the end of 2016, with provisions for transitional periods in health and social security, as confirmed by Andros Kyprianou in his state budget speech in December 2016.
and labour law, the protection of equality, the prohibition of discrimination and the trade union rights, the All Trade Unions Forum memoranda also referred to the need for an education system in united Cyprus ‘that will promote democratic values, a spirit of collaboration, and a respect for multiculturalism’.

The radical left, or the further than AKEL left, is, of course, in its overwhelming majority, intent on pursuing the struggle for the federal reunification of Cyprus. Even though the far left is not a major political force and does not currently possess the ability to motivate people who belong to this end of the political spectrum, it does have a role to play, particularly in the Internet, while also exerting some influence to AKEL and politics at large. Movements such as the ‘Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Teachers Platform – United Cyprus’ and ‘Left-Wing Movement – We Want Federation’ did play a role in crucial periods for the Cyprus dispute such as 2008–2010 and 2016–2017 respectively, through public interventions and initiatives. In the 2014 European Parliament elections, the DRASY-EYLEM formation brought the symbolism of bicomunalism on the table. The alternative Internet news media Defteri Anagnosi and most of the radical left groups and initiatives form an integral part of the broader peace-reunification movement.

Last but not least, there is that other part of the ‘civil society’ that is active or can, under certain conditions, be active in the reunification process in various ways—that is those forces that were overlooked by the leader-centred approach of the UN during the last round of the talks and which were later sought by the UN and more specifically Espen Barth Eide. To be sure, it is no easy venture, either politically or in terms of organisation, to come up with inclusive and efficient ways of involving citizens in the talks for the Cyprus dispute; if this involvement is not achieved though, it seems that things will not be able to move forward. The Home for Cooperation and especially the Cyprus Dialogue Forum were built precisely on this idea, although they do not seem to hold considerable influence over the political elite towards which they are oriented or over society at large on which they should focus more.

It remains to be seen whether all these major or minor forces, be they more or less institutionalised, be they consciously or semi-consciously bent on reunification, will be able to come together and form a historic

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51 Tziarras, Z. (2018) Pre-Conditions for Peace: A Civil Society Perspective on the Cyprus problem, Nicosia: PRIO
bloc. More importantly, it remains to be seen whether these forces will be able to motivate their rank and file, as well as attract other social forces and citizens who are not aligned with specific political parties but who are nonetheless interested in politics, thus pushing forward that great and considerable part of society towards initiatives that will overturn partition. As the handling of the Covid-19 crisis in 2020 has intensified even further the normalisation of partition, the reunificationist forces in both sides, and more so in the Greek Cypriot community, have to act more and be faster and bigger in their action. Not only to rebuild and maintain bicommunal contact across the dividing line but also to re-establish the conception of Cyprus as one country with respect to internal and external challenges and rebuild the idea of a common destiny and a united future, ideologically and culturally, socio-economically as well as politically.