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Nicosia: A Divided Capital in Europe

Petros PAPAPOLYVIΟΥ¹ and Giorgos KENTAS²

Abstract. *Nicosia is a city designed to be divided across many false lines. The rich history of the city reveals the remnants of foreign intervention that imprinted a multi-cultural background on Nicosia, which – at the same time – erected some artificial lines of segregation. Britain’s colonial rule was crucial in fostering the most contemporary lines of division. A given constitution in 1960 made these lines look inevitable, and by 1964 Nicosia (like many other towns in Cyprus) was already divided on the ground. Turkey’s military invasion in 1974 imposed an even deeper line of division across Nicosia (and Cyprus) that engendered some novel problems which are visible up until today. EU accession stimulated some hope for overcoming division, which is relatively elusive.*

Key words: *Nicosia, false lines, British colonial heritage, divided capital, Turkish invasion, EU hope*

Introduction

Nicosia is a divided city. It is maybe one of the rare cases in the contemporary history of Europe where a city is intentionally designed to be divided. That design however is artificial and conceived in a certain historical context which was saturated with a variety of dividing lines. These dividing lines, mostly rooted in the colonial heritage of Cyprus, were transmitted in the post-independence milieu of the island, and they were gradually internalised and intensified by the people of Cyprus, up until 1974 when Turkey invaded the island and draw a deep dividing line across the whole of it. In that respect, to understand the causes and consequences of Nicosia’s divide, one needs to delve into the history of the town in conjunction with the history of Cyprus.

This paper takes stock of the history of Nicosia, looks into the origins of its division, and addresses the challenge of reunification. The discussion develops in two parts. In the first part, we scrutinize the evolution of the city, the growth of its population, the amalgamation of cultural and social elements in the course of time, and the politics that surround Nicosia. In the second part, we examine the dividing lines that emerged during the British colonial rule and the way in which these lines of segregation were multiplied – by intention or contingently –, as well as we look into some sources of hope for the re-unification of Nicosia. Although we are relatively sceptic with the potential of re-unification and the practical implications of such a development, we conclude that it is up to the people of Nicosia to decide on the identity and the future of their town.

I. History and development of Nicosia

This part explores the rich historical background of Nicosia in terms of geography, demographics, social evolution, and politics.

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Historical evolution

Nicosia is the capital and largest city of Cyprus. Situated in the centre of the island it is built between two mountain ranges, Troodos and Pentadaktylos, roughly in the middle of the biggest plain known as Mesaoria. Its soil is fertile since the island's main river Pediaios courses through it, and its climate is considered one of the healthiest in Cyprus. Nicosia is the only Cypriot city out of six which is not littoral, but its central location provides easy and speedy access to the other towns, namely Kyrenia (at a distance of 25 kilometres), Larnaka (45 kilometres), Famagusta (52 kilometres), Limassol (82 kilometres) and Paphos (150 kilometres).³

Pediaios River was the main cause for the establishment of the first settlements in the Nicosia area during the Chalcolithic period (4000-2500 B.C.). Archaeological finds are in abundance in the Bronze Age (2500-1050 B.C.) and in the Geometric Period (1050-750 B.C.) The city's first name, Ledroi ("Λέδροι" in Greek), and of its King Onasagoras are to be found on an inscription dated to 673/672 B.C. together with those of the other nine kingdoms of Cyprus (Michaelides and Pilides 2012). Thereafter, the island passed in succession to the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Persians, Alexander the Great and his successors and then to the Romans. The city's patron, Saint Triphyllios, was in the 4th century A.D. the Bishop of Ledra. During the Byzantine Period, Nicosia is recorded as the capital of the island in the close of the 11th century. At that time, the first contemporary wall fortification was constructed.⁴

In the years of the Lusignans (1192-1489), Nicosia reached a high point of development. The Lusignans created a modern city which served as the seat of the King of Cyprus and of the Latin Church, erecting magnificent Gothic monuments; the most important among those was the cathedral of Saint Sophia, later converted into a mosque (the Selimiye Mosque) by the Ottomans, a landmark that dominates the city to this day. Nicosia was a megalopolis by the standards of the age, numbering no fewer than 25,000 inhabitants prior to the Turkish conquest. In 1489, Cyprus came under the control of the Venetians. The Ottoman expansionism and the sack of Constantinople maintained the significance of Cyprus as an outpost of Europe in Asia. In the face of the Ottoman danger, the Venetians reinforced and extended the walls of Nicosia. Giulio Savorgnano undertook the design of the walls in 1567, as they survive today with 11 bastions, a deep moat filled with water from Pediaios River and three gates leading in and out of the city: Paphos Gate, Famagusta Gate and Kyrenia Gate.⁵ However, the walls of Nicosia could not withstand the Ottoman onslaught and in September 1570 the troops of Lala Mustafa took the city after a siege of six weeks. The Turkish conquest of Cyprus was completed in July 1571 with the capture of Famagusta.

During Turkish rule Nicosia remained the capital of Cyprus and fell into decline as did the island as a whole, having been transformed into one of the worst administered and poor areas of the Ottoman Empire. The city as an administrative centre was the seat of the Turkish governor and of the Orthodox Archbishop, who was the religious and ethnic leader of the Christian *reaya*. In July 1821, a few months after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, Archbishop Kyprianos was hanged in the main square of Nicosia; three other bishops of the Church of Cyprus and tens of Greek notables were also executed. In the

³ Frixos Maratheftis, *Location and Development of the Town of Leucosia (Nicosia) Cyprus* (Nicosia: Nicosia Municipality, 1977).

⁴ Tassos Papacostas, "Byzantine Nicosia 650-1191," in *Historic Nicosia*, ed. Demetrios Michaelides (Nicosia: Rimal Publications, 2012), 77-109.

⁵ Anna Marangou, *Nicosia. A Special Capital* (Nicosia: Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, 1995).

years that followed Greek independence and the establishment of the Greek Kingdom (1830), the Greeks of Cyprus turned to Athens and articulated their own national demand for Enosis (Union) with Greece, as other Greek islands such as the Ionian Isles, Crete and the islands of the North-Eastern Aegean had done.

In the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the Sultan unexpectedly ceded Cyprus to Britain, in the sidelines of the Congress of Berlin. British rule lasted until 1960 when Cyprus became an independent state. These 82 years saw the greatest and most sweeping changes in the history of Nicosia. During that period, Nicosia undoubtedly took the lead in commerce from Larnaca, which hosted the European consulates during Turkish Rule, as well as in education and cultural life from Limassol.

Population growth, social life, and cultural development

In the first British census of 1881, the population of Nicosia stood at 11,536 inhabitants, out of a total island population of 186,173 (a percentage of 6.1).⁶ In the census of 1946, the population of Nicosia numbered 34,485 inhabitants out of 450,114 living in the whole of Cyprus (7.6%). According to the same census, 24,967 (72.3%) people lived within the walls of Nicosia, compared to 9,518 (27.6%) living in the new town outside the walls. With the addition of the nine suburbs of the town (population 18,839), the population of the urban complex of Nicosia in 1946 stood at 53,324 (12.29% of the population island-wide) (Cyprus, Census 1946). In the latest census of 2011 the inhabitants of the Republic of Cyprus numbered 840,407, with 239,277 (28.4%) of them living in the wider urban complex of Nicosia.

In the matter of the ethnic/religious groups of Nicosia inhabitants during British Rule, the British censuses demonstrate higher population percentages for the Turks in the capital, compared to their island-wide percentages. Nevertheless, the Greeks showed a faster rate of increase. Thus, while in 1881 the figures for Ottomans in Nicosia stood at 5,393 (46.8%), for Greeks 20,768 (60.1%) and 3,387 (9.9%) for other religious denominations, the corresponding figures for 1946 were as follows: Turks 10,330 (30%), Greeks 20,768 (60.1%) and 3,387 (9.9%) for other religious denominations. In respect of the latter, 2,252 were Armenian, 398 Roman Catholic/Latin, 160 Maronite and 63 Jewish. This was clearly a different picture than the island-wide one, since the 1946 census showed 80.3% Greeks, 17.9% Turks and 1.8% “others” living in Cyprus.⁷

In 1881, the inhabitants of Nicosia lived in 21 small neighbourhoods (*mahalle* in Turkish). Most of those went by the names of the churches or mosques of each area [i.e. Ayia Sophia, Ayios Antonios, Ayios Ioannis, Phaneromeni, Yeni Djami (Mosque)]. Throughout the British Rule, the majority of Nicosia’s neighbourhoods were divided in respect of the ethnic group of its inhabitants; Turkish or Greek areas of the town were inhabited by each one of the ethnicities in percentages exceeding 80% or 90%. The Turkish-dominated *mahalle* were in the northern part of the city, whilst the Greek quarters were in the south, with small Greek population islets also in the “low neighbourhoods.” Likewise, in the “Armenian quarter” the Armenians were the majority. There was a marked presence of “Others” in the town centre where the Market was situated, with significant numbers also of both Greeks and Turks. Regarding the population of the nine suburbs of Nicosia in 1946, seven of those had a Greek majority of over 86%. In another suburb Greeks and Turks roughly shared the same percentages (54%-44%), while in the

⁶ *Report on the Census of Cyprus, 1881, with Appendix*, London, 1884.

⁷ *Cyprus, Census of Population and Agriculture 1946. Report and Tables*, London 1949.

smallest suburb, Mintzeli, there was a clear Turkish majority of over 86%.⁸ This was due to the fact that the internal migration from the countryside to the towns that came to a head in the period 1931-1950, involved almost exclusively Greek population.

In regard to illiteracy, at its highest island-wide percentage of 73.2% in 1911, Nicosia showed a substantially lower rate of only 51.8% (Cyprus, Census 1911). As it was natural for that period, there were more illiterate women (63.6%) than men (41%). In 1946 things were much better: a 68.2% majority of the Nicosia inhabitants stated that they could read and write. Two percents could only read and 29.7% were totally illiterate (21.6% for men and 38.1% for women). The rate of illiteracy for the whole island was 43.9%.

Concerning the occupational make-up of the population, in the 1946 census were recorded in the city and suburbs of Nicosia 2,379 unskilled workers, 1,116 clerks/store men, 1,079 carpenters, 942 domestic servants of both sexes, 855 shoemakers and shoe factory workers, and 709 textile workers. Those were the fields of employment that attracted most people. Non-manual professions for the same year included 237 primary school teachers and 161 secondary school teachers, 91 doctors, 32 dentists, 47 lawyers, 55 Orthodox clerics and 30 Muslim clerics, 145 bank and insurance employees. The “domestic personnel” of Nicosia constituted a distinct social group representing a sizeable percentage of the internal migration to the urban centres. According to the 1901 census, there were 743 male servants and 558 female servants in the district of Nicosia. Almost all of them worked in Nicosia and came from country villages. A large number of them, 223 boys and 196 girls, were aged 5 to 14 years.

Nicosia under British rule

The British flag was hoisted on Nicosia’s Paphos Gate on 12 July 1878; the last Turkish governor Besim Pasha formally surrendered the rule of the island to Vice Admiral Lord John Hay. The first High Commissioner, Sir Garnet Wolseley, has chosen as the location for the construction of his residence a rise across the Pediaios riverbed, near Agioi Omologites. The High Commissioner’s residence was a stylish prefabricated mansion that had been loaded on ships bound for Ceylon, only to be redirected since it was no longer needed there. Following the destruction of the Government House during the October revolt of 1931, a new building went up on the same site, which serves since 1960 as the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Cyprus. At the same time, the Secretariat buildings were constructed along the road connecting Nicosia with Government House. Many government offices, the Land Registry and the Courts remained in the old town, in Serai Square. This was the city’s main square, where all the official ceremonies took place, as well as the place where the decrees for the annexation of Cyprus to the British Crown in 1914 and its conversion to a colony in 1925 were read out.

One of the first foreign visitors to the city following the British take-over in 1878, William Hepworth Dixon, described Nicosia as “the little sister of Damascus.” In general, the descriptions by foreign visitors speak of a dirty and neglected town that can hardly “be considered as habitable by Europeans,” without a sewerage system, plagued by stagnant waters that are the source of infection and malaria, and a boisterous market full of animals that make movement difficult for humans. The aim of the British was, as in any other of their colonies, to “civilize” the natives and in addition to establish in Cyprus a model administration centre for the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire. In contrast to other colonies, there was no transfer of British settlers, nor was there any need for large military installations. The town in which most of the British lived was Nicosia and this is where

⁸ Ibid.

the main contact and blending of West and East took place. The modernisation came in stages. The most crucial changes include the re-organisation of the administration, the improvement in public hygiene, the creation of a road network (up until 1878 only a deplorable road connected Nicosia to Larnaka), the entrenchment of a feeling of security, the administration of justice, the freedom of expression and the press (the first printing press came to Cyprus only in 1878), the change of mentality in personal appearance, living and everyday life. The civil liberties conceded by the British were also very important. Elections for the Legislative Council were held for the first time in 1883 enabling the proportional representation of the inhabitants on the basis of the 1881 census. Twelve deputies were elected from separate Greek and Turkish electoral rolls: nine “non-Muslim” and three “Muslim”, according to the terminology of the British administration. The twelve elective members were flanked by six other “official” members, one of whom – the High Commissioner- was the President of the Legislative Council and had a casting vote in case of a tie. The Legislative Council was preserved until 1931 when it was abolished as a result of the October uprising. While it was a democratic concession, it in effect legalised the national and political segregation of Greeks and Turks and formalised the British-Turkish alliance, as the British deputies customarily voted along with the Turkish deputies against the Greek demands on all occasions.

In the years 1878-1960, Nicosia became the main stage for political confrontation. It was not only the seat of the British High Commissioner (named Governor since Cyprus became a colony in 1925) and of the Legislative Council but also that of the religious leaders, the Cypriot Archbishop, who held an ethnarchical and political role since the years of Ottoman Rule, and of the Muslim Mufti. At the same time it was the seat of the most prestigious educational institutions of the island, separately for the Greeks, Turks, Britons and Armenians.

Apart from the railway which started running in October 1905 connecting Nicosia with Famagusta, Mesaoria, Morphou and Troodos, a regular intercity bus service had been set up since the 1910s. The railway was abolished as from New Year’s Day 1952, having been considered the vestige of an expiring world, financially non-viable and overcome by new realities. In the same period after World War II, the Nicosia Airport was developing fast into a hub for the South-eastern Mediterranean with the airplanes of “Cyprus Airways” (founded in 1947) connecting Cyprus with Athens and London, Rome, Alexandria and Cairo, Beirut, Ankara and Constantinople, as well as Palestine, Syria and Iraq. Nicosia, as the seat then of three Diplomatic delegations accredited to Cyprus, namely the Consulates of Greece, the United States and Turkey, and a grown administrative, commercial and financial centre, attracted large numbers of visitors, both local and foreign. Since the end of the 1940s, a new ultramodern hotel had opened, soon to evolve into one of the most famous tourist accommodations in the Middle East, the “Ledra Palace Hotel”. This landmark of Nicosia and jewel of Cypriot tourism has been closed since the time of the Turkish invasion in 1974, as it is situated within the “Buffer Zone.”

Uprising in Nicosia and its aftermath

The end of World War II saw a revival of the expectations for freedom and union of Cyprus with Greece. Following the disappointing results of the first appeal on the Cyprus problem to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1954, an armed liberation struggle seemed the only way out for the deliverance of Cyprus. The struggle of EOKA (“National Organization of Cypriot Fighters”) began on 1st April 1955 with bomb attacks and acts of sabotage and continued with raids and ambushes by small guerrilla groups against military targets. The anticolonial struggle took popular dimensions with the

participation of the population in various forms of protest, such as “passive resistance” and vehement student demonstrations. The British reacted by declaring a “state of emergency” and exiling Archbishop Makarios, Kyrenia Bishop Kyprianos and two of the latter’s closest associates to the Seychelles (March 1956). During the governorship of Marshal John Harding the measures against EOKA became harsher, with the courts imposing the heaviest penalties, frequent curfews and the imprisonment of hundreds of Greek Cypriots. The repressive measures came to a head with the execution by hanging of nine Greek Cypriot members of EOKA, aged between 18-25 years, for “terrorist acts”, in the Nicosia Central Prisons in 1956-1957.

Since early 1956, the Turks of Cyprus with the support of Turkey had responded to the activity of EOKA by creating the “Volkan” organisation and its successor TMT (“Turkish Resistance Organization”), under the dominant slogans “Cyprus is Turkish” and “Partition or death.” The Greek-Turkish clashes peaked in the summer of 1958. In Nicosia, churches were torched and tens of Greek shops were destroyed, while many Greeks were forced to flee their houses in the Turkish neighbourhoods of Nicosia. In September 1958, under pressure of implementing the “Macmillan Plan”, which provided for a status of triple dominion over Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios accepted an independence solution. On 17-19 February 1959, the agreement on Cypriot independence was signed in London, following a preliminary agreement between Greece and Turkey in Zurich on February 11.

The Cyprus constitution was a complicated text, which incorporated in full the provisions of the Zurich – London agreements, without the possibility of amending them. The constitution of the Republic of Cyprus bore the seeds of division, since it expressly defined the bi-communal character of the new state, conceding disproportional rights and super-privileges to the Turkish Cypriots who constituted 18% of the population. The Greek Cypriots would elect the President of the Republic for a five-year term, while the Turkish Cypriot Vice President would be respectively elected by his community, having a right of veto on defence and foreign policy issues; he would also propose three Turkish Cypriot ministers out of the ten members of the Council of Ministers. The House of Representatives would have 50 members with the two communities electing their Representatives separately in a ratio of 7 to 3 (35 Greeks and 15 Turks). A separate simple majority of the representatives of each community was needed for any change in matters of electoral law, taxation and Municipalities. In the Police and Civil Service the proportion of Greeks and Turks in all ranks should be maintained at a ratio of 7:3, whilst in the 2,000 - strong Cyprus army the ratio was 6:4. Finally, in the five greater cities of Cyprus, the Turkish inhabitants would have their own separate Municipalities.

The Cyprus Constitution incorporates the “Treaty of Guarantee” and the “Treaty of Alliance,” which had also been agreed in February 1959. Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom undertook the obligation as “guarantor powers” to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, by preventing the union of Cyprus with another state or its dismemberment. Moreover, the three countries held the right of unilateral intervention in order to restore the status of the Treaties. Britain would maintain military bases in an area of 99 square miles. The Cypriot independence was officially proclaimed on 16 August 1960. The first serious disagreements in the relationship of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots appeared on matters regarding the immediate implementation of the 7:3 ratios in the civil service and the setting of boundaries for the separate municipalities. As a means of pressure the Turkish Cypriot MPs refused to vote for the taxation bills in 1961. The crisis culminated in the bi-communal troubles that broke out in Nicosia on 21 December 1963. Prior to this,

Archbishop Makarios had proposed to Vice President Fazil Kutchuk the amendment of 13 points in the Cypriot constitution, which the Greek Cypriots claimed that created insurmountable problems to the democratic functioning and viability of the state. The Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish government rejected Makarios' proposals by arguing that they violated the spirit of the treaties of establishment of the Republic and "turned into a minority" the Turkish Cypriot community, thus posing great risks to its safety.

One of the most important consequences of the Greco-Turkish clashes in the Christmas of 1963 was the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriot state and legislative officials, and also of most of the civil servants into the areas under the control of Turkish Cypriot armed groups. The generalisation of the conflict was averted through the intervention of Britain. In the course of the negotiations, the commander of the British forces in Cyprus general Young marked on a map of Nicosia the "Green Line". The boundaries that would in the course of time, assume through their preservation a symbolism similar to that of the wall that went up in post-war Berlin.

II. Challenges of a divided capital

Drawing on the history, the social evolution, and the political surroundings of Nicosia, this part looks into the challenges that it faces as a divided city after Cyprus' national independence in 1960. Both the division and the hope of re-unification of Nicosia are situated in the overall situation of Cyprus.

So many dividing lines

One would not grasp the depth and breadth of the division of Nicosia unless they understand the rationale behind the many dividing lines across the whole island. In that respect the micro-division of Nicosia is part and parcel of many other macro-divisions in Cyprus. In that respect, the division of Nicosia is rooted in a holistic account of causes and consequences of the *de facto* division of Cyprus and it thus may function as a symbol of a divided island. Although intertwined and quite complex, these causes and consequences emerge from four basic sources: First, the colonial heritage of Britain in Cyprus,⁹ second, third-party involvement and intervention in the domestic affairs of Cyprus,¹⁰ third, ineffectiveness of international institutions and governance,¹¹ and fourth failure of the government of Cyprus and the two large communities of the island to consolidate the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus.¹² Bearing in mind the first three factors, the latter was almost futile.¹³

⁹ William Mallinson, *A Modern History of Cyprus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

¹⁰ Laurence Stern, *The Wrong Horse: The Politics of Intervention and Failure of American Diplomacy* (New York: Time Books, 1977); George Ball, *The Past Has Another Partner* (New York: Norton, 1982); Montague Stearns, *Entangled Allies: US Policy toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1992).

¹¹ John Terence and Nicholas Rees, *United Nations Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Routledge, 2005); George Kalliarakis, *The Dynamics of Failure: The Derailed UN-mediation Processes on Cyprus and Kosovo* (Diss.) (München: University of München, 2013).

¹² Mallinson, *A Modern History of Cyprus*. One may also take into account many other macro-dividing lines which are not examined here; e.g. intra-community segregation in terms of politics, economics, ideology and social status, third-state involvement and manipulation (e.g. beyond diplomatic etiquette activities of third-state Ambassadors), various degrees of interactions between the inhabitants of Nicosia in terms of background, origin, legal status (e.g. unregulated immigrants), and the like.

¹³ Stephen Xydis, *Cyprus; Reluctant Republic* (Michigan: Mouton & Co: 1973).

Some accounts on post-1964 and post-1974 Cyprus Problem,¹⁴ including accounts that elaborated on the case of Nicosia,¹⁵ focus on a dyadic approach of the Greek Cypriot vs. Turkish Cypriot divide. By idealising the so-called inter-communal or bi-communal aspect of the Cyprus Problem, these accounts omit or underestimate the perplexity of the situation. Considering the aforementioned four sources of divides in Cyprus, one needs to examine the interplay between domestic and foreign factors that made the emergence of multiple dividing lines across Cyprus possible. Under the colonial rule of Britain, Cypriots developed some false lines of segregation,¹⁶ based on arbitrary political means of oppression. The major outcome of that practice was the artificially constructed ‘ethnic communities’ of Cyprus, the central source of future dividing lines. Under the British colonial rule, the majority inherited population of Greeks was subjugated into an ‘ethnic community’ of an equivalent political status with the minority population of Muslims and Muslim converts – mainly remnants of the Ottoman rule in Cyprus.¹⁷ These two groups were given the name of Greek Cypriot community and Turkish Cypriot community respectively. These false lines of (political, ethnic and social) division were further deteriorated in the aftermath of the declaration of the independent state of Turkey in 1923.¹⁸ In 1950s, Britain’s policy of ‘divide and rule’ was instrumentalised to its maximum degree in two directions: first, by involving Greece and Turkey in Cyprus¹⁹ and second, by employing all stratagems available for containing an anti-colonial struggle.²⁰ The former re-introduced a dividing line in Cyprus while the latter aggravated the inter-communal divide.²¹

Britain’s foreign policy in 1950s advanced a Greco-Turkey divide over Cyprus and empowered the domestic ‘ethnic divide’ among Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Coupled with old dividing lines, these new or re-elaborated dividing lines were inherited to the newly born state of Cyprus (the Republic of Cyprus). The struggle to come to terms with so many dividing lines was proved unsuccessful. In the course of the Zurich and London Agreements, Britain, Turkey and Greece reached a consensus over a peculiar “balance” in Cyprus²². That “balance” however actually comprised of multiple lines of segregation in Cyprus that were visible in all aspects of the new state’s life. In the context of the Treaty

¹⁴ Cf. Thomas Diez and Nathalie Tocci, *Cyprus: A Conflict at the Crossroads* (Manchester: University of Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Cf. Yiannis Papadakis, “Nicosia after 1960: A River, a Bridge and a Dead Zone,” *GMJ: Mediterranean Edition* 1 (2006): 1-16.

¹⁶ We prefer using ‘false’ (instead of ‘fault’) lines of segregation or division in order to stress the artificiality of these ‘lines’. ‘Fault lines’ denote a boundary between incompatible ideas or beliefs. We believe that most of such incompatibilities are fake.

¹⁷ Theodore Papadopoulos, *Social and Historical Data on Population* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Center, 1965). For a post-modern discussion see *Cyprus and the Politics and Memory*, ed. Rebecca Bryant and Yiannis Papadakis (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

¹⁸ Andrew Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2000).

¹⁹ Mallinson, *A Modern History of Cyprus*.

²⁰ James Corum, “British Strategy Against the Cyprus Insurgents, 1955-1959,” in *Bad Strategies: How Major Powers Fail in Counterinsurgency*, ed. James Corum (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2008), 79-122.

²¹ Among Britain’s tactics against the Greek rebellion were to afford the operation of a Turkish para-military organisation (TMT) in Cyprus and to use Turkish Cypriots in non-combatant counter-insurgency operations; see David French, *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-insurgency on Cyprus, 1955-1959* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²² Giorgios Kentas, “The Peculiar Concept of “Balance” between Turkey and Greece in Cyprus,” in *Great Power Politics in Cyprus: Foreign Interventions and Domestic Perceptions*, ed. Michalis Kontos (Cambridge: Cambridge Publishers, 2013).

of Establishment, Britain curtailed the sovereignty of Cyprus in various ways and places, by maintaining two military bases, physical control over other location in Cyprus, as well as by maintaining special rights and privileges over Cyprus and its government.²³ That post-colonial regime maintained old, as well as engendered new, dividing lines that affected both the state and the people of Cyprus in a practical manner. The status of the population leaving within the so-called British Sovereign Bases, as well as their rights and obligations, had to be arranged under the provisions of the Treaty of Establishment.²⁴ The Greco-Turkey divide in Cyprus was (re)arranged in the context of a given Treaty of Alliance between Cyprus, Greece and Turkey that provided for the permanent station of a Greek and a Turkish military contingent on the island that would not answer to the government of Cyprus, but they would function under special provisions of that Treaty.²⁵ Greco-Turkish disputes were amplified and became an additional source of division and strife in Cyprus.²⁶

The third source of Cyprus' macro-divisions emerged out of the Cold War contingency and the strategy and calculations of US and Soviet Union in the region.²⁷ The East-West divide had serious implications in both the position of Cyprus in East Mediterranean and the Middle East, as well as in domestic politics.²⁸ Superpower choices were quite problematic for Cyprus and its people.²⁹

The fourth dividing line concerns the provisions of "an unworkable Constitution"³⁰ that re-elaborated and naturalised inter-communal segregation in all aspects of life in Cyprus. The ethnic element of the dividing lines across Cyprus was actually an epiphenomenon of the surrounding environment and the imperial regime imposed on the island in 1960. The dyadic structure of the state of Cyprus was such that forced Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to develop and sustain multidimensional dividing lines and approaches in politics, economics, social affairs, and everyday life.³¹ Once internalised however the internal element of ethnic division acquired its own 'logic' and 'dynamics' that gave it an impetus of its own right. As it is explained in the section that follows these dividing lines were also forced upon cities and their inhabitants. Nicosia – like all major cities of Cyprus – were primed to be ethnically divided by default.

In that context of so many dividing lines, the government of Cyprus could not assume control over its domestic affairs. The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus

²³ Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959* (London: Clarendon Press, 1998); Mallinson, *Britain and Cyprus*.

²⁴ For example, individual possession of land in the British military bases is dealt with under special provisions that prevent the owners to develop their land.

²⁵ Giorgos Kentas, *I Asfalia sto Plaisio Lisis toy Kypriakou: I Diethis Diastasi* [Security in the context of a Cyprus problem settlement: the international dimension] (Athens: Livanis, 2013).

²⁶ In the context of the first and the second dividing lines, one should also take into account the Treaty of Guarantee between Cyprus, Britain, Turkey and Greece, that gave some special role and privileges to these three foreign states in the domains of foreign and security policy of the Republic of Cyprus; see Kentas, *I Asfalia sto Plaisio*.

²⁷ Ball.

²⁸ Achilles Emilianides, *Kinovouleftiki Siniparxi Ellinokiprion kai Tourkokiprion 1960-1963* [Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot co-existence in Parliament 1960-1963] (Nicosia: Epifaniou, 2003).

²⁹ Brendan O'Malley, *The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001).

³⁰ Thomas Adams, "The First Republic of Cyprus: A Review of an Unworkable Constitution," *The Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966): 475-470.

³¹ Criton Tornaritis, *Cyprus Constitution and Other Legal Problems* (Nicosia, 1980).

provided for a number of steps for the gradual evolution of political institutions and arrangements that were necessary for a transitional period. The colonial legacy of false dividing lines, third party intervention amid the Cold War and intensified inter-communal strife give rise to a number of crises that culminated in a constitutional deadlock and violence in 1963-64. That situation added even more lines of segregation, which were relatively more tangible and visible than old ones. As already mentioned, Nicosia was the centre of that struggle and the locus of the first geographical dividing line in post-independent Cyprus, the so-called Green Line.

Both locally and internationally that situation was dealt with as an internal affair of the Republic of Cyprus. UN Security Council Resolution 186/1964 spelled out the terms of restoration of order in Cyprus and a UN Peacekeeping Mission (UNFICYP) was delegated to Cyprus.³² The years that followed were troublesome. In 1974, the divide across Nicosia and beyond was further enhanced. Turkey used a short-lived –still unsuccessful– coup by Greek junta proxies in Cyprus³³ as a pretext to invade the island.³⁴ Hence a long artificial line that stretches from Deryneia (a small town at the southeast edge of Famagusta bay) up until the coast of Pyrgos Tillirias (a small village at the northwest edge of Morphou bay)³⁵ divided Cyprus in two parts.

The Turkish invasion extended the de facto division of towns, villages, communities and people across the whole island. Some 200,000 Greek Cypriots (40% of the Greek population) and some 65,000 Turkish Cypriots (over half of the Turkish population)³⁶ (as well as other small communities of Cyprus)³⁷ were forced out of their towns, villages, and homes to become displaced persons in their own country. A long ceasefire line of some 180 kilometres that comprises of a Buffer Zone—that entails 4% of Cyprus territory assigned to the UN to patrol the ceasefire line—creates a sense of a ‘Dead Zone’. On top of that ‘zone’ and the pre-existing 3% of the Cyprus territory occupied by the British military bases, almost 36% of the territory of Cyprus came under the military control of Turkey.

³² Cyprus Conflict Net, “The Galo Plaza Report, 1965,” accessed March 03, 2015, http://www.cyprus-conflict.net/galo_plaza_report.html.

³³ Greece was under the rule of a military junta between 1967 and 1974; see Christopher Woodhouse, *The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels* (London: Granada, 1985).

³⁴ For the illegitimacy of Turkish invasion see Costas Melakopides, *Making Peace in Cyprus* (Kingston: Center for International Relations, Queen’s University, 1996).

³⁵ That dividing line maintained, or created some new, enclaves in Cyprus. For example, the Greek communities of Pyrgos and Pigenia, and other small communities of Tilliria, were isolated from other Greek communities on the island as of 1964. In that particular case, Kokkina (a Turkish military pocket) stands in between Pyrgos and Pachyammos as an artificial barrier. Although, these two communities are less than two kilometers away one from the other, inhabitants have to drive for forty-five minutes to an hour a mountain distance of some twenty-five kilometers. Similar cases concerned Turkish Cypriots as of 1964.

³⁶ For an analysis on the way in which Turkish Cypriots were forced by Turkey to settle in the occupied north part of Cyprus see Claire Palley, *An International Relations Debacle: The UN Secretary-General’s Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus 1999-2004* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2005).

³⁷ Apart from Greek and Turkish Cypriots, the Republic of Cyprus entails of three small religious communities, the Maronites, the Latins, and the Armenians. See Achilles Emilianides, *Religion and Law in Cyprus* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Kluwer Law International, 2011).

The Nicosia divide

The consequences of Turkey's invasion are visible in many towns and villages of Cyprus that were forcefully cut in two between July 20 and August 16 1974. Some of these places however were divided in a peculiar way even before that event. Nicosia demonstrates its own peculiarities, which are worth considered.

Nicosia was actually not meant to be a united city. The dyadic, dividing, structure of the Constitution of Cyprus provided *inter alia* that “[s]eparated municipalities shall be created in the five towns of the Republic, that is to say, Nicosia, Limassol, Famagusta, Larnaca and Paphos by Turkish inhabitants thereof”.³⁸ In these towns, the Greek electors shall elect the Greek municipality and the Turkish electors shall elect the Turkish municipality. The same article provides for the set up of a coordinating body “composed of two members chosen by the council of the Greek municipality, two members chosen by the council of the Turkish municipality and a President chosen by agreement between the two councils of such municipalities in such town. Such co-ordinating body shall provide for work which needs to be carried out jointly, shall carry out joint services entrusted to it by agreement of the councils of the two municipalities within the town and shall concern itself with matters which require a degree of co-operation.”³⁹ Articles 174-177 provide for practical arrangements in towns with separate municipalities; tax, fees and services (Article 174), licence and permit (Article 175), town planning (Article 176), range of jurisdiction and performance (Article 177).⁴⁰

The dividing line of ‘separate municipalities’ (“a microcosm of the Cyprus Problem”) was proved so forceful to undermine the very foundations of the whole Republic.⁴¹ Systematic efforts to address that issue between 1959 and 1963 failed. The dividing lines of the British rule within municipality councils were enriched by Turkey's quest for a geographical separation of municipalities and furnished the background for the very idea of separate municipalities in the context of the Zurich and London Agreements.⁴² These historically embedded positions of Britain and Turkey over geographic, demographic and governmental arrangements in Cyprus did not leave space for reconciliation and compromise in the years that followed independence. Moreover, conflicting perceptions among Greek and Turkish Cypriots on general governing arrangements left the issue of separate municipalities in limbo for a long period, long enough to fuel a formidable deadlock in 1963.⁴³

Looking into the historical record one may discern the political depth of that issue and understand why Nicosia had such a faith. In 1958, the *Time* magazine published an article exemplifying Britain's plan for a settlement to the Cyprus Problem as it was

³⁸ *Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus*, 1960, Article 173. The same article provided that in four years time after independence the President and the Vice-President of the Republic shall examine whether that separation shall continue. That however never happened. See Diana Markides Weston, *Cyprus 1957-1963: From Colonial Conflict to Constitutional Crisis. The Key Role of the Municipal Issue* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Article 178 provides for arrangements to other localities of Cyprus “with the rule of proportional representation of the two Communities”.

⁴¹ Markides Weston, *Cyprus 1957-1963*.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Diana Markides Weston, “The Issues of Separate Municipalities in Cyprus 1957-1963: An Overview,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 8 (1998): 177-204.

delivered to the Greek and Turkish governments.⁴⁴ Among other things that article talks about riots by Greeks who claimed the right to self-determination and the union of Cyprus with Greece, as well as inter-communal clashes that led into the drawing of the ‘Mason-Dixon’ Line separating the Greek and Turkish sectors in the old city of Nicosia. What the *Time* magazine conceals however is what Nancy Crawshaw reveals as an intentional ploy by the British to instigate inter-communal violence and turn international attention to that direction instead to the direction of the anti-colonial struggle of the Greeks.⁴⁵

The ‘Mason-Dixon’ Line opened up the question on whether Nicosia (and other towns in Cyprus) could ever be united or remain ethnically, religiously, and racially divided. In 1960s and 1970s constitutional arrangements and domestic political struggle – which in some occasions entailed the use of physical force – showed that the division of Nicosia, as it emerged during the colonial era, was primed to become even sharper. The strategic ambition of Turkey and the incommensurable perceptions among Greek and Turkish Cypriots led into a series of violent entanglement in Nicosia and beyond.

In the post-1974 setting, the Nicosia divide obtained a new dimension, that of a forced geographic, demographic, religious and racial homogeneity. Turkey claimed ‘Lefkosha’ (Nicosia in Turkish) as the capital of a new regime, which in 1983 declared unilaterally its independence under the name “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, a pseudo-state recognised only by Turkey.⁴⁶ Ever since, Turkey has been attempting to impose an Ottoman legacy on the capital by changing the names of places and streets, demolishing Greek monuments and premises, converting churches into mosques, and erasing all elements of Greek-Orthodox presence in Nicosia and beyond.⁴⁷ That vandalism however was not reciprocated by the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, which maintain Turkish and Muslim monuments and other places. Looked from its southern part, Nicosia maintains a multi-cultural flair; looked from its northern part Nicosia seems to have been transformed into a Turkish town.⁴⁸

The only divided capital in the EU

There are many divided cities in the world. In an interesting study Calame and Charlesworth juxtapose Nicosia with four other divided cities, namely Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, and Mostar.⁴⁹ What stands out in the case of Nicosia is that it is the only capital across the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) that is arbitrarily divided by the military might of a candidate state for accession to the EU, i.e. Turkey. The challenge of the re-unification of Nicosia entails a challenge of the re-unification of a whole state and a challenge of addressing the abovementioned deeply embedded dividing lines.

⁴⁴ “Cyprus: Along the Mason-Dixon Line,” *Time*, 23 June 1958, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,810347,00.html>.

⁴⁵ Nancy Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978).

⁴⁶ UN Security Council Resolutions 541 and 550 condemned that unilateral declaration and called upon all states to refrain from any action that would assist secession in Cyprus.

⁴⁷ Sevina Zesimou, “Seeing Beyond the Walls: Maps, Power and Ideology in Nicosia,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 8 (1998): 252-83.

⁴⁸ Paradoxically Turkey’s attempt to impose an ethnic homogeneity in Cyprus was soon undermined by Ankara’s orchestrated policy of mass migration of Turks to Cyprus with the aim of undermining the demographic structure of the island. In few years time Turkish Cypriots became a minority in occupied areas of Cyprus.

⁴⁹ Jon Calame, and Esther Charlesworth, *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

Greek Cypriots, the authorities of the city of Nicosia and the government of the Republic of Cyprus seem to invest a lot in the EU factor. It was just after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 when the slogans “Nicosia: the only divided capital in Europe” and “The last divided capital” appeared. A year later the government of Cyprus made an application to the EU and in 2004 Cyprus joined the EU. The accession of the island to the EU gave some hope for swift re-unification under EU law and the principles on which the EU is founded. Although the main goal of EU accession was the settlement of the Cyprus Problem – and hence the re-unification of the whole island – that goal was not reached.

In 1990s, Turkish Cypriots were relatively sceptic toward the EU. EU accession was considered a Greek Cypriot project that must be opposed. Things changed in December 2002 when Cyprus was invited to join the Union and Turkish Cypriot Leader Denktash and the newly elected AK party in Turkey rejected a second draft UN proposal (the well-known Annan Plan) for the solution of the Cyprus Problem.⁵⁰ Reacting to that, more than 30,000 Turkish Cypriots marched in Nicosia in late December 2002 in a pro-EU, pro-solution rally. Negotiations on the Annan Plan continued in March 2003, but once more Turkey and Turkish Cypriots rejected a third draft proposal.⁵¹ Few weeks later, in April 2003, the President of Cyprus, Mr. T. Papadopoulos, signed the Act of Accession to the EU. Negotiations on the Annan Plan resumed one year later, in February 2004, but no agreement was reached. In the context of an agreement between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders (T. Papadopoulos and M. Talat respectively), the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, used his digression and finalised a fifth draft proposal that was put in two simultaneous referenda in the Turkish and Greek communities respectively. Voters in the occupied northern part of Cyprus (i.e. Turkish Cypriots and Turkish settlers) found that proposal appealing and endorsed it by 65% while voters in the areas under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus found that plan wanting and reject it by 76%.⁵²

Concerning Nicosia, that plan would have not re-unified it but it would have re-divided it anew. Having that plan been endorsed, a permanent boundary would cut, not only the town of Nicosia, but all Cyprus, in two zones in accordance with provisions on the delineation of constituent state boundaries.⁵³ According to the Plan “[i]n towns (namely Nicosia and Famagusta) and built up areas in general, the final boundary shall be demarcated in such a way as to take into account as an overriding concern ownership of properties in the area of the boundary”.⁵⁴ Access and connecting roads across the two constituent states will belong to either the Greek or the Turkish State.⁵⁵ For example, “[t]he highway connecting north Nicosia and Famagusta is under the territorial administration of the Turkish Cypriot State for its entire length.”⁵⁶ The detailed

⁵⁰ The first draft was submitted in November 11 2002 and the second draft was submitted in December 10 2002, few days before the EU Summit that invited Cyprus to join the EU.

⁵¹ United Nations, “Report of the Secretary-General on His Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus”, April 1, 2003,” accessed March 02, 2015, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2003/398.

⁵² For a comprehensive discussion of the Annan plan, its ramifications for Cyprus, and its aftermath, see Palley; for a critical approach on the Greek Cypriot decision see Lord Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005).

⁵³ United Nations, “The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem” (Annan Plan), accessed March 02, 2015, <http://www.unficyp.org/media/Other%20official%20documents/annanplan.pdf>, Annex VI, Article 1).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Article 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

description of the course of the boundary between the constituent states is spelled out in Attachment 1 of Annex VI. In that context, apart from a quite general reference that “[t]he seat of the federal government shall be greater Nicosia”,⁵⁷ there are no other references that create the sense of a (re)unification Nicosia. Actually that proposed plan did not even mention that Nicosia would be the capital of Cyprus.

In that context, Cyprus would have been re-unified under a *suis generis* federal structure of two constituent states, but Nicosia would be permanently divided in two pieces among the Greek and the Turkish State. The best that such an arrangement would offer to the north and south Nicosia(s) would be a chance to cooperate with financial and logistic support of the federal government.⁵⁸ Beyond that, Nicosia would have been divided permanently and thus remained the only divided ‘capital’ in the EU.

Reconciliation and crossing points

Apart from a symbol of a divided capital, Nicosia offers a promising chance for communication and reconciliation among Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Up until early 2000s, communication between the two communities was difficult due to restrictions on free movement imposed by Turkey. Occasional meetings however were held in Ledra Palace, a former Hotel in the buffer zone of Nicosia district, which is used by the UN. Those meetings were relatively controversial in both the Greek and the Turkish communities, but officially Greek Cypriot leadership encouraged these meetings, while Turkish Cypriot leadership prevented and/or censored them. Greek Cypriots and the recognised government of Cyprus advocate peaceful co-existence among the two communities, while Turkish leadership and Turkey argue that, on grounds of historical experience, Greek and Turkish Cypriots cannot leave together, but side-by-side.

A frequent sponsor of bi-communal meetings and events in Nicosia (and abroad) is the US, which is one of the major supporters of programs of rapprochement through USAID, Fulbright and other governmental agencies that support and finance individuals and NGO programs. Some other relatively low profile countries facilitate bi-communal meetings in the buffer zone of Nicosia. In 1980s, the government of Czechoslovakia initiated periodical meetings of Greek and Turkish Cypriot political parties. The idea was to help Cypriots understand the concept and practice of federalism in a ‘successful federation’.⁵⁹ After the demise of the Czechoslovakian federation (under a so-called velvet divorce) in 1993, political parties meetings in Nicosia are hosted under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia.

The mayor of Nicosia Lellos Demetriades and the de facto attempted one of the most ambitious projects of reconciliation in Nicosia elected mayor of the occupied part of Nicosia Mustafa Akinci. That project concerned the coordination and co-management of the sewerage system of Nicosia. Together they also designed a common planning strategy for Nicosia, called “Nicosia Master Plan”.⁶⁰ Calame and Charlesworth observe that the “urban planning process and physical interventions undertaken by the communal Nicosia Master Plan team did not provide solution to the problem of partition but did develop

⁵⁷ Ibid. Annex I, Article 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Annex I, Article 16, par. 6.

⁵⁹ During 1980s and up until early 1990s political figures of Cyprus Left considered Yugoslavia as a successful model of federation for Cyprus, see KYKEM, *Omospondia kai Kypriako* [Cyprus problem and federation] (Nicosia: KYKEM Publication, 1990).

⁶⁰ Lellos Demetriades, “The Nicosia Master Plan,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 8 (1998): 169-176.

viable future scenarios, putting them a large step ahead of their counterparts in other divided cities”.⁶¹

Bi-communal communication and contact changed dramatically in 2003, when Turkey decided to partially lift restrictions on free movement in Cyprus. That decision came in April 23, 2003, just a few days after Cyprus signed its Act of Accession to the EU (April 16, 2003), amid pressure from Turkish Cypriots who felt that they are about to miss a historic opportunity to join the EU. As a result, a crossing point was announced in Nicosia, the Ledra Palace crossing point (for pedestrians only). In the course of time, two more crossing points opened in Nicosia, Ledra street (for pedestrians only), and Agios Dhometios (for vehicles).

With the accession of Cyprus to the EU in May 2004 communication and reconciliation was further improved. Cyprus Act of accession provides that the whole island of Cyprus joined the EU, but the implementation of EU legislation is suspended in the areas where the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control, up until a comprehensive solution is reached. That implies that both Greek and Turkish Cypriots are EU citizens, who enjoy all rights and assume all responsibilities provided by EU legislation. In the course of few years, more that 90,000 Turkish Cypriots applied and acquired IDs and passports of the Republic of Cyprus. Moreover, in 2004 a Green Line Regulation was adopted by the Council of the EU that lays down special rules concerning goods, services and persons crossing the line between the areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus exercises effective control and the areas in which it does not. That Regulation gave some impetus in business collaboration between the two communities.

Bi-communal contact, cooperation and collaboration are accelerating across Cyprus, with Nicosia leading most of initiatives. The central question is whether the citizens of Nicosia and the rest of Cypriots are already accustomed to the dividing lines of the past and the present or whether they are willing to rise above them. This is an under-research area that must be pursued.

Conclusion

Nicosia is in search of a soul and an identity; is it really meant to be a divided city or would its fortune change in the future? The historical record suggests that Nicosia cannot be united in a conventional way – one name, one municipality, one mayor, one civic identity – but if ever it would be re-united it will have to learn to live across lines of segregation. Everything comes down to a question on whether the designs for Nicosia should anticipate a united city or a divided city in permanent. This is a question to be answered by the people of Nicosia, the people of Cyprus.

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⁶¹ Calame and Charlesworth, *Divided Cities*, 202.

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