

Overview

When asked to pinpoint when he became politicised Nelson Mandela said that he had “no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments which produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people. There was no particular day on which I said I will fight for the liberation of my people; instead I found myself doing so and could not do otherwise.” These words resonate with us all at *Lobby* and we share the same feelings that Mandela has expressed. We have been deprived of our human rights in Cyprus for 33 years in brazen contravention of all international conventions on the protection of human rights. We are denied the right to freedom of movement and the right to own property in our own island in obvious disregard of European Union law. Many families continue to face the tragedy of still not knowing the fate of their loved ones. To add insult to injury our places of worship are desecrated and vandalised and our properties redeveloped and advertised for sale here in the UK. Some may feel powerless to fight this but if we all join together we can make a difference. *Lobby for Cyprus* is the voice of the Greek Cypriot refugees in the UK. We will not compromise our principles, which are the reunification of Cyprus on the basis of the 3Rs:

Removal of all Turkish troops, Repatriation of all Turkish colonists, Return of all refugees to their homes. If you support these objectives please help us make a difference.

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The big steal

Not content with having occupied the northern part of Cyprus, Turkey is now engaging in the systematic concreting over of stolen Greek Cypriot land and selling it to foreigners. This is the final act to complete the 1974 ethnic cleansing of Greek Cypriots and to consolidate Turkey’s illegal occupation.



Desecration of Greek heritage in Lapithos, occupied Cyprus. This systematic destruction was made to make way for an illegal property development (right)



Part of the former Greek cemetery in Lapithos – demolished and concreted over to build luxury villas for illegal sale

What were the steps that led to the current exploitation of Greek Cypriot land and properties? 1 Find a pretext to invade Cyprus; 2 Ethnically cleanse the Greek Cypriots; 3 Systematically destroy Greek cultural heritage; 4 Destroy Greek cemeteries and churches. 5 Change all place names from Greek to Turkish. 6 Bring in tens of thousands of Turkish colonists to alter the demography of the island. 7 Destroy or redevelop Greek homes and land. 8 Perpetuate the lie that the occupied north is and has always been Turkish. 9 Concrete over remaining land. 10 Sell new developments on Greek land to foreigners.

Unfortunately, governments such as those in the UK and the US seem not to possess the ethics or courage to stand up to Turkey, despite its numerous violations of human rights and international law. There exists a complacent attitude taken by the UK government which turns a blind eye to opportunists building on Greek

Cypriot land and selling it from the UK.

According to official statistics more than 82 percent of property in the occupied area prior to the Turkish invasion of 1974, was either owned by Greek Cypriots (60.6 percent) or by the Republic of Cyprus itself (22.82 percent). By contrast barely 16 percent of the property was owned by Turkish Cypriots.

Following the Turkish invasion, the illegal regime in the occupied north of the island claimed ownership of the 82 percent of land and produced bogus title-deeds in an attempt to create new ownership.

As the occupation regime has been deemed an illegal secessionist entity under United Nations Security council resolution 541 and 550 and by the European Court of Human Rights, the occupation regime does not have jurisdiction to perform valid transfers of property ownership.

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More myths of Turkish Cypriot ‘isolation’

The myth of Turkish Cypriot isolation continues to confuse those with an interest in Cypriot politics. In an attempt to upgrade the status of the illegal regime in occupied Cyprus, millions of pounds in public relations are being wasted on trying to prove a negative – the alleged isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

Despite the efforts of Turkey and the leaders of the Turkish Cypriots to have the so-called government of the occupied north recognised as a legitimate one, only Turkey recognises it. Therefore, Turkey’s claim of ‘isolation’ is designed to pressure the EU and the UN into recognition of the existence of that illegal entity.

Unfortunately in this case the facts shout louder than the money can talk.

According to statistics released by the Republic of Cyprus in June 2007 and accurate as of May 2007: 49,156 Turkish Cypriots currently have Republic of Cyprus passports; 79,497 have Republic identity cards and 90,920 have Republic birth certificates.

Armed with these documents, the Turkish Cypriots are free to travel not only throughout the Cyprus Republic but also, as citizens of the European Union, throughout Europe. On that basis it is very hard to see how this constitutes isolation. Indeed, by seeking this legitimacy and obtaining it, the Turkish Cypriots are expressly defying their leaders, whose policy of seeking international recognition for the illegal regime is proving increasingly bankrupt.

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The big steal

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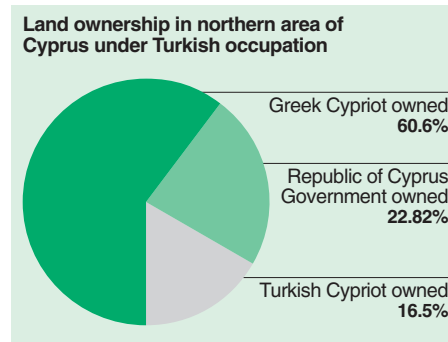
Of course it will be recalled that every court that has ever looked at these deeds has declared them worthless and illegal. The ethnically cleansed Greek Cypriots remain the legitimate holders of title-deeds, as reaffirmed by numerous cases, in particular the landmark European Court of Human Rights *Loizidou v Turkey* case of 1996 which compensated displaced Greek Cypriot owner Titina Loizidou for loss of use – not loss of ownership, as she remains the legitimate owner. Greek Cypriot ownership was reaffirmed by English High Court (*Orams v Apostolides* 2006), despite the spin that much of the UK press placed in reports to suggest that the Orams won ownership of Mr

There is no doubt that in law, the Greek Cypriots own their land and properties in occupied Cyprus

Apostolides' property in Lapithos. Indeed, the High Court judge branded the Orams trespassers. In the recent *Xenides-Arestis v Turkey* case, Greek Cypriot ownership was reconfirmed. There is no doubt that in law, Greek Cypriots still own their land and properties in occupied Cyprus.

In an attempt to circumvent this, the Turkish occupation authorities are now perpetrating the big steal. Companies are being set up in the UK to promote the illegal sale of Greek Cypriot properties to UK citizens. They use massive property exhibitions such as those at Excel to do this. For example, sales of property in Akanthou, Ayios Amvrosios and Vokolida are commonplace. Yet no Turkish Cypriots owned property in these areas. The buyers are duped into buying, by being told that the title-deeds are safe. They are told that there has been a property exchange between

weblink:
www.lobbyforcyprus.org/property



Greek and Turkish Cypriots, which of course is patently untrue, as it takes two willing parties to agree to an exchange. Distributing false title-deeds does not constitute 'property exchange' by any stretch of the imagination.

Lobby advises any displaced land and property owners to contact *Lobby* if they find their land is being built on. We will offer advice on legal rights free of charge.

The irony is that the shoddy workmanship of some illegal developments in the occupied territories and the dubious practices of the builders may be what finally kills off this activity. Dissatisfied British buyers have set up their own 'homebuyers' pressure group, saying their "dreams of a home" in the occupied north have become a nightmare.

This is due to unscrupulous lawyers, builders, developers and estate agents taking advantage of unsuspecting, or indeed greedy buyers keen to seize the opportunity to exploit plundered Greek Cypriot properties.

The buying or selling of Greek Cypriot properties in occupied Cyprus constitutes a criminal offence. **Those found guilty of such exploitation risk facing legal action, which can and has resulted in imprisonment in free areas of the Republic of Cyprus.** ■

More myths about 'isolation'

» Continued from page 1

In addition to their complete freedom of movement these Turkish Cypriots are also likely to be working in the Republic and send or take money to the occupied north. They are equally accorded all the rights of Cypriot citizens including free state health care, social welfare services, national insurance and provision of education.

The news of the actions of the Turkish Cypriots to defy the efforts of their leaders and accept the benefits of citizenship of the Republic comes after the Republic of Cyprus had announced initiatives to establish joint ventures and other opportunities between businesses in the Republic and those in the occupied area. These programmes are a continuing part of the Republic's compliance with the July 8, 2006 agreement, which the illegal regime in the occupied area has yet to honour by any action.

The 'isolation' is a myth, pure and simple. Turkish Cypriots are supported by the Republic of Cyprus and are entitled to the benefits of Cypriot and EU citizenship. ■

Number of Turkish Cypriots with Republic of Cyprus documentation

Official figures up to May 2007

90,920

Turkish Cypriots with Republic of Cyprus birth certificates

79,497

Turkish Cypriots with Republic of Cyprus identity cards

49,156

Turkish Cypriots with Republic of Cyprus passports

Source: Government of Republic of Cyprus

Who really calls the shots in occupied Cyprus?

The fallacies that Turkey is a genuine democracy and that the occupied area of Cyprus has the ability to take decisions independently of Turkey's strategic interests have been well illustrated recently.

Ask Prime Minister Erdogan in Turkey or the leader of the Turkish Cypriots Mr Talat how they fared in their recent run-ins with the Turkish military.

First Talat. Last summer, having agreed a way forward on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots for resumption of talks aimed at reunifying Cyprus, the so-called July 8 process, Talat travelled to Turkey to update General Buyukanit, the leader of the Turkish military machine. He was told in no uncertain terms that he needed to think again. Since then Talat has, unsurprisingly, obstinately refused to have anything to do with the July 8 process, to the massive disappointment of the rest of the world, including all five permanent members of the UN Security Council that fully supported

implementation of the July 8 agreement.

As for Mr Erdogan, he decided that he would like to run for office as president of Turkey. However both he and his second in command, Mr Gul, were not popular choices with the Turkish military, which again flexed its muscle and persuaded them not to run.

If there was ever any doubt as to who calls the shots in Turkey (and by extension in occupied Cyprus) this is a timely reminder! But perhaps more worrying is the revelation in the diaries of a retired admiral in the Turkish navy, that had Greek Cypriots accepted the discredited Annan Plan, the Turkish military would have launched an immediate coup in Turkey to prevent the Erdogan government abiding by their side of the bargain, namely the return of some stolen property to the Greek Cypriots.

Meanwhile the Republic of Cyprus would have been dismantled, the existence of the British bases would have been accepted by Greek Cypriots in a referendum and the theft of properties in the occupied area

would have been legitimised.

Despite the desire for reunification of their island, this all lends evidence to Greek Cypriots that there is little hope for negotiating a solution with the Turkish Cypriots or even with the elected government in Turkey.

Until the true power politics in Turkey is appreciated then no solution is likely to be found in Cyprus in the near future. If the US and the UK were serious about resolving the Cyprus issue fairly, then it is obvious that pressure must be applied on the real decision makers – the Turkish military. However, for as long as Turkish support continues to be needed by the West to shore up its own campaigns in the Middle East, no such pressure is likely to be applied.

Unless the international community takes notice of the role of the Turkish military in politics, there will be no imminent Cyprus settlement that is consistent with international law and protection of human rights – and thus capable of acceptance by Greek Cypriots. ■

A society uprooted: Famagusta



Far left: The once bustling Demokratias Street in Ammochostos, Famagusta, now derelict after decades of Turkish occupation.

Left: The same view of Demokratias Street in 1973, prior to the Turkish invasion and occupation. Turkey, with impunity, continues to violate UN Resolution 550 which calls for the transfer of the town of Famagusta to the administration of the UN.

Photo ©Laurie Patton

How to win friends and influence people

At a recent conference in Washington, US Undersecretary at the State Department, Nicholas Burns, stated that the US wanted to be part of an effort to renew the talks aimed at getting the stalled talks on Cyprus back on track.

He said that the US should be in the centre of this effort along with the UK. Similar sentiments have been expressed in recent weeks by the Foreign Office Minister for Europe Geoff Hoon, and by Lord Hannay the former UK special representative to Cyprus. Indeed if the Turkish media are to be believed, Tony Blair has even offered to be a special mediator for resolution of the Cyprus issue. Given the partisan behaviour of his wife in representing the Orams it is hard to see how Mr Blair could be deemed impartial, but it is equally hard to see what Greek Cypriots stand to gain from continued UK and US involvement in Cyprus.

After all, was it not the UK and the US who were the main architects and supporters of the Annan Plan, something condemned as a crime against humanity by many international lawyers and academics? How often have either of these countries

supported the principles of the right to return of the 200,000 refugees, or condemned Turkey for the 1974 invasion and occupation or the cultural destruction that has since followed? How many times have the US and the UK pressured the Republic of Cyprus into holding back from arming itself against continued Turkish aggression? So why exactly should Greek Cypriots embrace continued involvement from these countries?

Contrast this behaviour with that of France for example, which has recently signed a defence pact with the Republic of Cyprus. Or that of Italy and Germany, where recently, both Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have roundly condemned the cultural destruction of the rich Christian heritage in the occupied area. We also welcome the statements of José Manuel Barroso,

'We cannot turn a blind eye to the destruction of churches or other religious sites in some countries, as we see it happening in the northern part of Cyprus'

German Chancellor Angela Merkel

President of the European Commission, who echoed their comments saying that EU principles and values provide for respect of freedom, justice, peace and solidarity. When have the leaders of the UK or the US ever made such statements?

Perhaps the recent statements from Burns, Hoon and Hannay are an expression of their concern at them possibly losing their influence in Cyprus. Indeed in recent months the Republic of Cyprus has strengthened its links with India, China and Russia. All three countries have publicly stated that no solution can be achieved unless it respects the countless UN resolutions on Cyprus and respects human rights and international law. Again it is hard to remember similar pronouncements from the US and the UK.

There is no reason in principle why the US and the UK should be excluded from further involvement in attempts to resolve the Cyprus issue but a change of approach is needed. It's time to get back to basics and to understand that Cyprus can only be reunited when the 3Rs are implemented:

Removal of all Turkish troops

Repatriation of all colonists

Return of all refugees to their homes. ■

The right to return

Since its inception Lobby for Cyprus has placed at the core of its policies the inalienable right to return of the refugees to their homes and lands.

This is the main reason why we have not supported various solutions proposed as settlements of the Cyprus issue, such as the Annan Plan. They simply did not facilitate the right of all refugees to return, as called for by UN resolutions. *Lobby* was never concerned about going against the grain whenever necessary, as our policies comply with the requirements of international law.

Lobby is especially delighted to have become one of the ten founding members of the European Union of Exiles and Expelled People. This Union consists of a many national groups throughout the EU, all of

which demand the right of all refugees to return to lands they were expelled from in the last 100 years. There are German, Estonian, Finnish and an Italian group. There are also Cypriot, Pontic Greek and Armenian groups, all of which demand the right to return to lands lost to Turkey. The Union is currently lobbying the European Parliament to secure the establishment of a right to return memorial day within the EU and the various founder members have agreed to work together to support the principle of the right to return of all fellow members.

While these views may be inconvenient to those demanding a solution based upon ethnic separation in Cyprus there is evidence that the tide is changing and that the Turkish imposed apartheid in Cyprus cannot be sustained. ■

'...all the refugees should return to their homes in safety and calls upon the parties concerned to undertake urgent measures to that end.'

UN resolution 3212 on Cyprus



Greek Cypriots protest for the right to return to their stolen lands, Downing Street, London

Our occupied lands: Morphou and Lapithos

Bitter sweet pilgrimage – a refugee returns

Since the Turkish occupation regime allowed limited freedom of movement through the occupation line in 2003, many Greek Cypriots have visited their occupied lands. The following is the personal account of a refugee who fled the Turkish invasion of 1974.

“When I heard the occupation regime would allow Greek Cypriots to cross the ‘green line’ I thought that I should not go back as a visitor to my own land. But I realised that people’s ‘visit’ to their homes was not merely a visit but a pilgrimage and for days I could not sleep or eat.

Crossing the occupation line was unsettling – we had mixed feelings and this was proving to be a bitter-sweet experience.

Entering Morphou, my home town, after decades was like living a dream. I felt so overwhelmed as we walked the streets of Morphou in dismay. It has deteriorated so much. The old cemetery has been turned into a car park, the new cemetery desecrated... all the crosses were broken. I cried for a mother, I know personally, who longs to come back and search for the unmarked grave of her son, killed by Turkish soldiers in 1974... With strange contradiction I felt so happy to be back and so sad and angry to see the destruction and the imposed changes. We visited our family property, the orange groves, the factory, the land and finally we went to our two houses. Going back to our neighbourhood and knocking on the door of the family home to be let in, was so strange. We went

in... it was in bad condition... so many happy childhood memories.

We picked oranges and flowers from our land... we collected soil from the beloved land to bring back to London, and more importantly, to take to the graves of our family members who worked hard on this land and are now buried away from home. As our tears fell to the ground we promised we will return.

My second visit to the occupied areas was with my relatives to Lapithos, where my family originally comes from. I felt equally upset to see the destruction and the desecrated graves. We searched for the graves of our loved ones. At the first cemetery of Ayios Mamas all that was left from our uncle was a broken cross, thrown with others inside the ruined small church. There was no grave to go to and lay some flowers. Sadly all we could do was light a candle on the broken cross. Half of the cemetery was desecrated and the other half taken over by luxury villas. We were determined to find the graves of our family members. The second cemetery of Archangelos is high on the hills. We found the family grave of our great-grandmother and great-grandfather. We cleaned the stone, laid some flowers and lit a candle... we were so sorry it has taken so long... Going around Lapithos I personally felt overwhelmed by the beauty of the place that I forgot everything else. How could we have left behind such a beautiful land? Once again we lovingly collected soil from the beloved land, making the same promise. **We will return. ■**

A paradise destroyed: Morphou and Lapithos

The eradication of Europe’s heritage



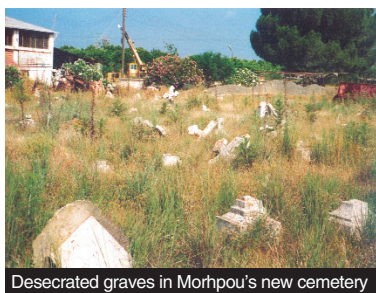
Desecrated crosses thrown into looted church of Ayios Mamas, Lapithos



Morphou's new cemetery



Greek Cypriots take soil from their beloved land



Desecrated graves in Morphou's new cemetery



Greek Cypriot refugees lay flowers at the grave of their great-grandmother

Quotations

“...the pillage, the destruction and the plundering of places of worship, of each and every religion, is a crime against humanity and civilisation.”

Joint declaration of Pope Benedict XVI and the primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus Archbishop Chrysostomos II, June 2007

“We visited 26 former Greek villages. We found not a single undesecrated cemetery... At Syngراسis, the church interior was smashed beyond recognition, littered with the remains of icons, pews and beer bottles. The broken crucifix was drenched in urine.”

The Guardian, 6 May 1976

“The Secretariat sought to mislead the international community through the Secretary-General's Reports and briefings it prepared, so as to pressure a small state effectively to accept the consequences of aggression by a large neighbouring state allied to two permanent members of the Security Council... a significant opportunity to reach an agreed settlement was lost as a result of the conduct of the UN Secretariat, advised by the USA and the UK.”

Claire Palley, in ‘An International Relations Debauché’, 2005

“... but you've got it all wrong, hasn't anyone told you that our plan here is for partition?”

Former US acting Secretary of State George Ball to former naval intelligence officer Martin Packard, Cyprus, 1964

“If Ankara's actions in Cyprus do not constitute ethnic cleansing, the term has no meaning.”

The Washington Times, 18 November 1999

“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed”

Martin Luther King Jr



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