

Displacement in Cyprus

Consequences of Civil
and Military Strife

Report 2

**Life Stories: Turkish Cypriot
Community**

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In addition, the names of interviewees have been changed except in the case of persons who have additionally agreed to participate in a PRIO Cyprus Centre documentary film project. In those cases, because their stories will also be reflected on film, original names have been used.

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This report is based on formal life history interviews conducted in 2010-11, as well as on both formal and informal interviews and discussions with Turkish Cypriots regarding their displacement conducted over the past decade. Primary thanks go to the persons whose lives are described here, as well as to those who were interviewed but whose stories were not included in this report. While I thank the former for sharing their experiences and allowing them to be made public, I am grateful to the latter for the insight that their stories provided onto the various ways in which Turkish Cypriots are thinking about their displacement today. A special acknowledgment goes to Dr. Sami Solyalı, who gave generously of his time and aided in locating persons now living in Morphou/Güzelyurt. Pevrin Harmanlı and Nahide Merlen also facilitated interviews, while Albert Vandellos's contribution to the filming associated with this project was indispensable. I am grateful to Murat Yaman for his help in the transcription of interviews.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past half century, Cyprus has experienced several waves of displacement that have uprooted villages, severed ties of people and land, and remade the social geography of the island. For the more than 215,000 Cypriots who have been displaced, the flight from their homes and resettlement elsewhere is both a lasting personal trauma and, for many, a political cause. For some, there is a desire for return; for others, there is an insistence on remaining where they are and a refusal to be displaced again. These desires are reflected in media and political rhetoric and shape the ways that many Cypriot displaced persons perceive not only the political future but also their own experiences of loss and uprooting. Moreover, the division of the island led to almost three decades in which Cypriots on either side of the Green Line emphasized their own suffering and loss while unable to see what those in the other community had experienced.

The PRIO project ‘Internal Displacement in Cyprus: Mapping the Consequences of Civil and Military Strife’ brings together the life stories of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who underwent displacement. Our aim is to enable a better understanding of what members of the other community experienced, as well as how those experiences shape their lives today and their hopes for the future. In a series of in-depth life history interviews, we asked displaced Cypriots about the circumstances that led to flight; how they fled; what they left behind; and the process of resettlement and adjustment to a new life. In addition, we asked how these experiences shape their lives and sense of self and identity today, and what they hope for the future, both for themselves and for their children.

This report summarizes the findings of thirty life history interviews with Turkish Cypriots displaced from the island’s south to the north. Part I provides an introduction to Turkish Cypriot displacement, including a brief history of that displacement and a summary of factors shaping the ways in which they think about and recount that uprooting today. Part II then provides summaries of ten of those stories in order to give the reader insight into the variety of experiences of displacement and resettlement. What clearly emerges from these stories is the individual trauma of fleeing one’s home, and the variety of paths that people have taken to resettle, rebuild, and restart their lives. At the same time, the individuality of these stories is tempered by the importance of family, and the struggle to keep families intact. And while routes of displacement and modes of resettlement are varied, there are certain convergent visions of the future as a result of these experiences, which are summarized in Part III. In that concluding section, the report addresses ways in which Turkish

Cypriot displaced persons are now envisioning the future, including their own potential displacement in the event of a negotiated settlement. The findings are indicative rather than conclusive, but they provide us with some understanding of how recent events, such as the 2003 easing of movement restrictions across the Green Line and the 2004 Annan Plan referendum, have influenced the ways in which Turkish Cypriots view ongoing negotiations and the possibility for a negotiated settlement to the island's division.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND



Image 1: Displaced Turkish Cypriot children in a refugee camp outside Nicosia, 1964.

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, one year after Cyprus' division, almost sixty percent of the Turkish Cypriot population was either displaced or had experienced long-term displacement. This is a simple statement, but one with complex consequences, both for the social life of the small Turkish Cypriot community and for the possibility of any future settlement. And while much has been written about the displacement of Greek Cypriots in 1974 and the experiences of refugees and their children in exile,¹ to date there has been no published academic study specifically focused on Turkish Cypriot displacement and experiences of resettlement.² As a result, many Turkish Cypriots interviewed for this work expressed the sense that their displacement had been marginalized and ignored. Moreover, this gap in the literature exists despite the fact that any negotiated settlement aimed at reunifying the island will potentially entail further displacement and will have to be approved at referendum by persons who were themselves displaced. Understanding Turkish Cypriot displacement, then, is important to understanding current Turkish Cypriot attitudes towards potential reunification.

This report is based on thirty extended life history interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011. The timing of these interviews is important, as many interviewees directly related their past experiences to their visions of the future in the context of ongoing negotiations.

¹ A non-exhaustive catalog of such literature would begin with Peter Loizos' celebrated account of the displacement of the villagers of Argaki, *The Heart Grown Bitter: A Chronicle of Cypriot War Refugees* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1981), as well as his follow-up work on the health effects of long-term displacement, *Iron in the Soul: Displacement, Livelihood, and Health in Cyprus* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008). Other sources include Roger Zetter's work on the ways in which Greek Cypriots were resettled after their displacement and the relationship of this resettlement to the reproduction of refugee identity. See especially Roger Zetter, 'Rehousing the Greek-Cypriot Refugees from 1974: Dependency, Assimilation, Politicisation,' in *Cyprus in Transition: 1960–1985*, ed. J. T. A. Koumouliides (London: Trigraph, 1985), 106-125; and 'Reconceptualizing the Myth of Return: Continuity and Transition Amongst the Greek-Cypriot Refugees of 1974,' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12, no. 1 (1999): 1-22. On the long-term effects of trauma, see Anna M. Agathangelou and Kyle D. Killian, 'In the Wake of 1974: Psychological Well Being and Post-Traumatic Stress in Greek Cypriot Refugee Families,' *Cyprus Review* 14, no. 2 (2002): 45 - 69. Other works have dealt more specifically with memory of lost villages and the transmission of that memory. See especially Antonio Maratheftis's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 'Den Ksechno, I Do Not Forget: The Greek Cypriot Refugee Experience as Oral Narrative' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1989), as well as Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, *The Making of a Refugee: Children Adopting Refugee Identity in Cyprus* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002). Stefan Ege's recent M.A. thesis, 'Re/producing Refugees in the Republic of Cyprus: History and Memory between State, Family, and Society' (M.A. thesis, University of Zurich, 2007) also investigates recent inter-generational changes in approaches to memory.

² Though two studies, one by the author, have reflected displacement experiences of certain groups of Turkish Cypriots within the context of comparative research. See Rebecca Bryant, *The Past in Pieces: Belonging in the New Cyprus* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) and Lisa Dikomitis, *Cyprus and Its Places of Desire: Cultures of Displacement Among Greek and Turkish Cypriot Refugees* (London: I.B. Tauris, forthcoming 2012). In addition, Vamik Volkan's *Cyprus—War and Adaptation: A Psychoanalytic History of Two Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1979) provides insight into the experiences of Turkish Cypriots attempting to settle in an ethnically cleansed territory after 1974.

Moreover, the ways in which they describe their experiences is also framed by reflection on several events: the opening of the Green Line in 2003 and visits to their former homes and villages; visits by Greek Cypriots to their homes in the north in consequence of the opening; the 2004 failure of a UN-sponsored reunification plan at referendum; and disappointment at what many perceive as a failure by the international community to recognize and 'reward' Turkish Cypriots' support of the reunification plan. Present concerns always shape what people remember about the past and how they interpret past events, and this is no less the case in these interviews. Indeed, life history interviews are important not only for what they can reveal about the past but also for what they can tell us about the ways that people may be rethinking that past in the present.

In the sociological literature on Cyprus, it has often been observed that while Greek Cypriots after 1974 have engaged in a politics of remembrance in which the present is perceived as temporary, Turkish Cypriots have engaged in a politics of forgetting in which the present is perceived as permanent.³ Certainly, official narratives on both sides of the island have encouraged these two different ways of approaching the past. However, not only do individual stories of displacement only partially fit into such narrative frames, but we also see how narrators' understandings of displacement have changed over time, and how persons have been able to reflect on such changes. What these stories reveal, then, is not only a richer approach to the past than official narratives provide, but also a glimpse into the ways that common narratives may be rewritten in the future.

³ On the uses of the slogan 'Dhen Xechno,' 'I do not forget,' in a Greek Cypriot politics of remembrance, see the above-mentioned studies, as well as Miranda Christou, 'A Double Imagination: Memory and Education in Cyprus,' *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 24 (2006), 285-106, and Christalla Yakinthou, 'The Quiet Deflation of Den Xehno? Changes in the Greek Cypriot Communal Narrative on the Missing,' *The Cyprus Review* 20, no. 1 (2008), 15-33. For comparative approaches to the uses of remembering and forgetting, see Maria Hadjipavliou-Trigeorgis, 'Different Relationships to the Land: Personal Narratives, Political Implications and Future Possibilities,' in *Cyprus and Its People: Nation, Identity, and Experience in an Unimaginable Community, 1955-1997*, ed. V. Calotychos, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 251-76; Russell King and Sarah Ladbury, 'The Cultural Construction of Political Reality: Greek and Turkish Cyprus Since 1974,' *Anthropological Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (1982): 1-16; Nurit Kliot and Yoel Mansfeld, 'Resettling Displaced People in North and South Cyprus: A Comparison,' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 7, no. 4 (1994): 328-359; and Paul Sant Cassia, *Bodies of Evidence: Burial, Memory and the Recovery of Missing Persons in Cyprus* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005).

AN OVERVIEW OF TURKISH CYPRIOT DISPLACEMENT

The interviews contained in this booklet describe the lives and experiences of Turkish Cypriots displaced from their homes at several phases of the conflict, and after 1974, from south Cyprus to various locations in the island's north. While all of the interviewees have their origins in south Cyprus, many were already refugees in the island's south before their relocation to the north. As a result, many of the stories tell not only about post-1974 displacement but also about their uprooting within their regions of origin. This report does not include pre-1974 Turkish Cypriot displacement within the north, which was the subject of another study by the author.⁴

Half a century ago, when the Republic of Cyprus was established, the Turkish Cypriot population consisted of 106,000 persons scattered throughout the island. This included at the time 114 mixed towns and villages and 117 wholly Turkish villages.⁵ Over the course of less than a century, the number of mixed villages in the island had declined from 346 in 1891 to 252 in 1931 to 114 in 1960.⁶ The PRIO Cyprus Centre's Internal Displacement in Cyprus project and other sources show that the reasons for this homogenization were varied. While a certain number of villages experienced the effects of urbanization and migration abroad, other villages became homogenized because of intercommunal tensions, in some cases caused by growing ethno-nationalist divisions and in others by local disputes.⁷ Much of the

⁴ Bryant, *The Past in Pieces*.

⁵ For an overview of mixed villages and patterns of segregation, see Eleni Lytras and Charis Psaltis, *Formerly Mixed Villages in Cyprus: Representations of the Past, Present and Future* (Nicosia: Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 2011).

⁶ This is according to Richard Patrick, who counted a village as mixed if ten or more persons of another ethnic group were resident there, or in cases of small villages of less than 100, where another ethnic group comprised at least 10% of the total. See Richard Patrick, *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict: 1963-1971*, ed. J. H. Bater and R. Preston (Waterloo: University of Waterloo, Department of Geography, Publication Series No. 4, 1976), 12.

⁷ Explanations for this homogenization may often be found in archival sources, though these sources have not been consistently compiled. One example is the Famagusta village of Akanthou, which had a small Turkish population at the turn of the century. In 1910, Akanthou's Turkish Cypriot villagers complained to the British administration that their imam had been insulted and the mosque defiled, and they wished to be moved outside the village (Cyprus State Archive, 1000/1910, Complaint of Turks of Akanthou of persecution by their Christian co-villagers, 31 May 1910). By ten years later, the number of Turkish Cypriots in the village had dropped from 61 to 21, and they later disappeared from the village altogether. In the Limassol village of Trimiklini, the murder of the village's imam immediately after the British arrival provoked Muslim Cypriots to move from the village (see Jack C. Goodwin, *An historical toponymy of Cyprus* [Nicosia: Jack C. Goodwin, 1978], 1607). And persons from Kamyli, in the Kyrenia district, claim that villagers from neighboring Larnakas tis Lapithiou came to live in their village after 1911 because of a dispute that resulted in a murder (personal interview).

homogenization during the early part of the century that was not due to urbanization or out-migration occurred when the minority Turkish Cypriot population in a village moved to what they perceived as safer areas with larger Turkish concentrations. Although there were cases in which Greek Cypriots made this same homogenizing transition, such cases were fewer because minority Greek populations in villages were less common.

The 1950's, however, were a watershed that became the first moment of displacement for several thousand Cypriots as a result of intercommunal conflict, tension, or perceived pressure or threat. With the beginning of the EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston) armed struggle against British colonial rule in 1955, tensions reached the villages, as EOKA's local organization and activities were observed by Turkish Cypriots, who did not participate in the struggle. Turkish Cypriots who lived through this period invariably describe it as the moment when intercommunal relations declined, often resulting in severed communication, as well as the loss of friendships and business relations. Turkish Cypriots report that at the local level, EOKA members often pressured Greek Cypriots to buy only from other Greek Cypriots, and to hire Greek Cypriots rather than Turkish Cypriots. Although EOKA officially refrained from targeting Turkish Cypriots, at the local level Turkish Cypriots report that they often felt under threat. Tensions were increased when Turkish Cypriots joined the British auxiliary police force intended to quell the rebellion.⁸ The killing of auxiliary police officers tended to be interpreted by Turkish Cypriots as an attack on those police as members of an ethnic group rather than as agents of the British administration.

In addition, Turkish Cypriots began to mobilize in small, armed groups as early as 1955, culminating in the formation of the paramilitary organization TMT (Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı) in late 1957.⁹ With the aid of a small group of fighters secretly trained in Turkey, TMT quickly mobilized throughout the island, establishing a chain of command that incorporated previous local armed groups and placed them under district commanders. TMT also engaged in intra-ethnic 'purification,' demanding that Turkish Cypriots cease trade with Greek Cypriots and punishing those who spoke Greek. The emergence of TMT, along with targeted and reciprocal killings, soon brought tensions to a peak.

⁸ The auxiliary force was composed of 1,700 Turkish Cypriots and 70 Greek Cypriots, while an additional reserve force of 550 officers was entirely Turkish Cypriot (Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands: India-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007], 68).

⁹ Recent memoirs and other publications by former TMT members tend to show that organization of armed groups within villages was common during the period but that there was no effective umbrella organization until the establishment of TMT. Many of these groups were not brought under TMT's control until Rauf Denktaş and Burhan Nalbantoğlu negotiated the involvement of Turkish officers, who would oversee organization and training after August 1958. See, for instance, Hasan Demirağ, *Kıbrıs; Onlar ve Biz, 1571-1956* (Lefkoşa: Kıbrıs TMT Derneği Yayınları, 2003), 454-461; Arslan Mengüç, *Anılarda Erenköy* (Istanbul: Bir-Mat Matbaacılık, 2005); and Mehmet Ali Tremeşeli, *Ayios Spiridon'un Çanları: Mehmet Ali Tremeşeli'nin Anıları*, prepared for publication by R. Halluma (Nicosia: Galeri Kültür Yayınları, 2007).

While 1,900 Greek Cypriots were displaced in 1958 from eight locations, mainly in city neighborhoods, approximately 2,700 Turkish Cypriots were displaced from 36 locations.¹⁰ Almost half of those displaced returned to their villages with the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. However, when intercommunal conflict began in late 1963, all but two of these villages were again displaced. In addition, almost all of those who were displaced in 1958 and did not return to their original villages were later displaced from the villages where they had taken refuge. In sum, almost all of the Turkish Cypriots uprooted from their homes during this period would also be displaced in 1963, and again in 1974, thus becoming refugees three times. In the life stories that document this displacement, it is clear that the vast majority of these persons left their homes unwillingly because of a perceived threat or actual instances of violence.

The breakdown of constitutional order in late 1963 led to several months of island-wide intercommunal violence, during which an estimated 500 Greek Cypriots, 1,200 Armenians, and 25,000 Turkish Cypriots fled their villages and neighborhoods. In total, Turkish Cypriots ‘completely evacuated 72 mixed villages and abandoned 24 Turkish-Cypriot villages. In addition, they partially evacuated 8 mixed villages.’¹¹ The number of those displaced constituted approximately a quarter of the total Turkish Cypriot population, though a much larger number was affected by that displacement, as persons fled to what they perceived as safer centers of Turkish population concentration and first took refuge with relatives and friends. Moreover, centers of Turkish population were soon barricaded, and sandbags and trenches separated even most of the villages that remained mixed. The civil conflict that ensued meant that ninety percent of the Turkish Cypriot population soon found itself in enclaves, many of which were surrounded by three layers of soldiers—Turkish Cypriot, United Nations, and Greek Cypriot. According to political geographer Richard Patrick, who served with the Canadian forces during this period and interviewed displaced Turkish Cypriots, approximately 8000 Turkish Cypriots remained outside the enclaves. However, Patrick reports that these villages were not given services by the government of Cyprus, as they refused to submit to government control.¹²

¹⁰ The village and neighborhoods from which Greek Cypriots were displaced were the Ayios Loucas and Selimiye neighborhoods of Nicosia; Lefke and Louroujina in the Nicosia district; Marona, Souskiou, and Mandria in the Paphos district; Alekora in Limassol district; and Kellia and Menoyia in Larnaka district. Turkish Cypriots evacuated the following neighborhoods and villages and did not return: Büyük Kaymaklı, Pano Lakatamia, Analionas, Kataliondas, Avlona, Psimolophou, Asha, Kondea, Lefkoniko, Peristerona Piyis, Ayios Seryios, Spathariko, Vassili, Melanagara, Amargeti, Moronero, Myrmikoph, and Anarita. Villages that Turkish Cypriots evacuated in 1958 and to which they wholly or partially returned with the establishment of the Republic are: Kato Lakatamia, Kato Dheftera, Aredhiou, Morphou, Dhyo Potami, Ayios Epiktitos, Arnadhi, Ayios Theodoros, Lythrangomi, Kilanemos, Alethriko, Anglisidhes, Pissouri, Kritou Marottou, Prastio, Lemba, Akoursos, and Tima (Patrick 1976: 97-98). Additionally, Turkish Cypriots evacuated some neighborhoods of Nicosia, especially the Omeriye neighborhood, and did not return.

¹¹ Patrick, *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict*, 75.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 463-5.

The role of the Turkish underground organization TMT in this movement is often debated. In 1958, we see that TMT aided in the resettlement of at least two villages from the island's south to the north, presumably in preparation for a plan to partition the island. Moreover, the two villages in question, Lemba/Çınarlı and Akoursos/Akarsu, were not near the current line of demarcation, so their movement to Skylloura/Yılmazköy and Afaia/Gaziköy, in the west and east Mesaoria respectively, seems to indicate an attempt to move Turkish Cypriots towards the island's north. However, for 1963-4, the author's own formal and informal interviews with several hundred displaced Turkish Cypriots, as well as other independent sources of documentation, indicate that flight in the first weeks was in almost all cases spontaneous. Political geographer Richard Patrick, who conducted interviews in the enclaves immediately after this movement, concluded,

The author's investigations reveal that the overwhelming majority of Turk-Cypriot refugees moved only after Turk-Cypriots had been killed, abducted or harassed by Greek-Cypriots within their village, quarter, or in the local vicinity.... Generally, Turk-Cypriot refugees moved en masse to the nearest Turk-Cypriot village or quarter that was guarded by Fighters. In most cases, refugees fled from their homes, leaving clothing, furniture and food behind.¹³

After the first spontaneous flight, other movements during ceasefires in January and March of 1964 were organized by the Turkish Cypriot leadership and often facilitated by British forces, but were provoked by perceptions of immediate threat.

There are indications that TMT may have prevented the later return of Turkish Cypriots to some villages, as in the case of certain villagers from Pitargou in Paphos who had taken refuge in Axyliou village and whose attempted return to Pitargou resulted in a gun-battle in which several people were injured.¹⁴ For most people, however, return was impeded by safety concerns, and in many cases by the destruction of their property. Patrick notes, 'Most of the abandoned [Turkish Cypriot] villages and quarters were ransacked and even burned by Greek Cypriots.'¹⁵ Indeed, in many of our interviews Turkish Cypriots reported that their homes were looted, damaged, or even burned and destroyed. A U.N. report from 20 September 1964 found from aerial photographs that 977 Turkish Cypriot homes had been destroyed and that 2000 had been pillaged and severely damaged.¹⁶ This does not include, however, the looting not only of homes but also of crops, animals, and farm machinery, as well as damage not visible in aerial photographs. Turkish Cypriots have tended to interpret these actions as an attempt to impede their return.

¹³ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁵ Ibid., see also Martin Packard, *Getting It Wrong: Fragments from a Cyprus Diary 1964* (London: Author House, 2008).

¹⁶ UN document S/5950.

As they fled, most people seem to have assumed that their displacement would last only a few days or weeks, until the immediate violence had ended. For many, the looting and destruction of their homes did, in fact, impede their return, as they had no means to rebuild. In April 1969, for instance, the Turkish Cypriot leadership apparently gave President Makarios a list of 23 villages that wished to return. The Greek Cypriot leadership rejected return to Neopolis/Yenişehir and Omorphita/Küçük Kaymaklı for strategic reasons, thus preventing the return of approximately 6,000 displaced persons. Moreover, displaced persons demanded compensation for destruction of property and loss of use from the government of Cyprus, as well as rebuilding of their homes.¹⁷ The government of Cyprus agreed to rebuild houses in 1970, and in consequence approximately 2,000 Turkish Cypriots returned to nineteen mixed villages and six Turkish Cypriot villages, after almost seven years of displacement.¹⁸ The remaining almost 23,000 displaced persons were unable to return and so remained displaced until 1974.

Between late 1963 and July 1974, then, displaced Turkish Cypriots invariably lived in enclaves, and until 1968 had no access to their homes and lands. Turkish Cypriots who had been civil servants in the Republic of Cyprus government aided in recreating within the enclaves an administration that bore many of the hallmarks of a 'state,' complete with a legislature, police, social services, and a post office. Almost all men able to carry a weapon became *mücahids*, or fighters, including boys as young as fourteen and men as old as seventy. Many men displaced from their villages and unable to access their lands would become professional fighters during this period, receiving a regular salary after TMT was transformed into a standing army in 1965. Beginning in March 1968, with the easing of economic sanctions, Turkish Cypriots were more easily able to exit the enclaves and access their lands, and some began to farm or find work outside the confines of the enclaves. As noted above, however, only a small number of those who fled their homes in 1963-4 returned on a permanent basis to their villages during this period.

Although Turkish Cypriots had anticipated Turkey's military intervention for more than a decade, most average Turkish Cypriots were caught unawares by the events of July 1974. One indication of this is the large number of Turkish Cypriot students who had been studying abroad, was visiting the island during summer holidays, and became caught up in the fighting. Starting in the late 1960's, Turkey had begun to give special quotas and scholarships for Cypriot students to attend Turkish universities, especially to males who had served as *mücahids*, or fighters. Many families chose to send their sons and daughters to Turkey not

¹⁷ 'Onbinlerin Dönüşü,' *Savaş*, 21 April 1969, p. 1.

¹⁸ Patrick, *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict*, p. 75. Patrick also remarks, however, that displacement during the 1960's only accelerated a trend towards urbanization in the Turkish Cypriot community and that young people who had grown up in the urban enclaves would not want to return to villages 'unless the Turkish-Cypriot leadership is prepared to exert some forms of pressure to return on many of the refugees' (*ibid.*, 336-7).

only for the chance to receive higher education but also to keep them away from potential danger. At the time, an estimated 1,200 Turkish Cypriot youth were studying outside the island, most in Turkey. And because of proximity, most of these youth were able to return to the island during holidays. As a result, many young people who had been sent away in part for reasons of safety were in the island when the Greek coup d'état against President Makarios began on 15 July. Young men were called up for military service in the Turkish Cypriot army, and many of these served in combat when the Turkish military intervention began on 20 July.

One of the most common themes in stories of displacement from 1974 is the division of families and their attempts to reunite in the island's north. In the south of the island, men and women were often separated, as men were rounded up and taken as prisoners of war, later to be sent to the north in prisoner exchanges. Women tended to find their own routes to join their husbands and families. Not only were families separated and scattered because of the war, but also it was very difficult to receive news about one's family members. Moreover, while many parents attempted to send their children to what they saw as the relative safety of the north, often they themselves remained to protect their property with the assumption that once the danger passed, their children would be able to return. The Vienna Agreement of September 1975 enabled the reunification of families while at the same time facilitating the displacement of the 10,000 Turkish Cypriots who had resisted leaving their homes and properties. Many of those who were transferred with the Vienna Agreement say that they continued to believe for many years that they would eventually be able to return to their homes.



Image 2: Turkish Cypriots arrive with buses that were called 'freedom transport' (özgürlük nakliyatı) after the Vienna Agreement of 1975.

Turkish Cypriots' arrival in the north coincided with the flight of Greek Cypriots to the south, and refugees desperate for shelter either squatted in or were settled in Greek Cypriot houses. In addition to the 45,000 Turkish Cypriots displaced during this period and the 12,000 who had been living since 1963 in insufficient and crowded conditions in the north, there was an additional approximately 4,500 Turkish Cypriots originally from the north who had been displaced in 1958 and/or 1963-4 and unable to return to their homes, usually because their homes had been destroyed.¹⁹ As a result, there were approximately 61,500 displaced Turkish Cypriots in search of adequate housing during the post-1974 period. Although there was some attempt on the part of the Turkish Cypriot administration to settle communities together, this attempt was only partially successful. So while many villages were resettled together in comparable villages in the island's north, many other villages found their communities scattered.

Distribution of Greek Cypriot property during the early period was done by lot, though many people found houses that they liked and squatted there. Each family settled in rural areas was given a house and agricultural land, while each family settled in towns and cities was given a house and shop or office.²⁰ Only in 1977 was a points system established that attempted to assign properties on the basis of what Turkish Cypriots had left behind in the south. The system, however, was reportedly rife with nepotism, favoritism, and various forms of discrimination, including for political reasons.²¹

It was also open to interpretation, especially as regards the value of land. Indeed, in 1976 one journalist from Turkey had observed that 'after the operation the most discussed subject has been the difficulties in the distribution of houses and land.' He goes on to remark,

In the interviews that I've had with average people, I've seen that their complaints on this subject have increased. No matter with whom I speak, they sigh, 'Oh, sir, I had

¹⁹ Villages from which they were displaced were Agia Marina, Agios Vasileios, Dyo Potamoi, Karavostasi, Morphou, Neo Chorio/Minareliköy, Ornithi, Palaikythro, Pendageia, Peristeronari, Pryoi, Skylloura, Trakhona/Kızılbaş, Tymbou in Nicosia district; Agios Epiktitos, Agios Ermolaos, Agios Georgios, Charkeia, Diorios, Klepini, Lapithos, Liveras, Trapeza, Vasileia and Vavilas and some parts of Kazafani in Kyrenia district; and Agios Sergios, Agios Theodoros, Arnadi, Asha, Pervolia (Bahçalar), Kilanemos, Kondea, Lefkoniko, Melenarga, Monarga, Pigi Peristerona, Sparthariko, Stylos, Syngrassis, Trikomo, Vasilii and Vitsadha in Famagusta district. Some were also displaced from neighborhoods of Famagusta and Nicosia.

²⁰ Although the subject is beyond the scope of this report, we should also note that during this period around 25-30,000 Turkish nationals arrived in Cyprus as part of a facilitated migration, and each family was granted a house and agricultural land. Since this distribution was done on the basis of families, we may estimate that around 5-6,000 houses were distributed in this way. In addition, TSFC Citizenship Law Act No. 3/1975 made families of the 498 Turkish soldiers killed in the 1974 war eligible for citizenship, as well as Turkish soldiers who had served in Cyprus until 18 August 1974. A certain number of veterans of the 1974 war returned to Cyprus and acquired citizenship under this law, though it should also be noted that of the 1200 current active members of the Turkish Army Veterans Association, 75% are married to Turkish Cypriots. It may be estimated, then, that approximately 500 additional properties may have been distributed to Turkish veterans, though many would in any case have been eligible for such properties through their spouses, in cases where those spouses were displaced persons. See Mete Hatay, *Is the Turkish Cypriot Population Shrinking? An Overview of the Ethno-Demography of Cyprus in the Light of the Preliminary Results of the 2006 Turkish-Cypriot Census*, PRIO Report 2/2007.

²¹ For more ethnographic detail, see Julie Scott, 'Property values: ownership, legitimacy and land markets in northern Cyprus' in *Property Relations: Renewing the Anthropological Tradition*, ed. C. Hann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 142-159.

such a house, such shops, such properties in the south.' I've seen very few people who were satisfied with what they had received.... The administration conducted a survey with Turkish Cypriots now living in the Omorfo (Güzelyurt) district in order to determine how much land they had left in the south. When they began to add up the total square meters based on the answers, the officials' eyes popped out of their heads, because the total added up to 1.5 times the total square meters of Cyprus as a whole.²²

What this observation indicates is not only the ways in which persons may have exaggerated the value of their lost properties, but also the central role that property would play in individuals' experiences of displacement.

It should be noted, however, that in these early years, while Turkish Cypriots inhabited houses and used land, they did not have official documents that guaranteed their right to continue doing so. In 1982, in response to the sense of uncertainty this situation produced, the government began to issue what it called *kesin tasarruf*, or 'definitive possession certificate,' a deed guaranteeing right to use, to those who presented title deeds for equivalent land in the south. By giving up those deeds, they were guaranteeing that they could pass the property that they inhabited to their children, even that they could sell the property in a limited way. They relinquished their deeds for property in the south to the Turkish Cypriot administration, which continues to hold those deeds in anticipation of a negotiated property exchange.

In addition to what were called 'exchange points' (*eşdeğer puanları*), there were several other ways in which Greek Cypriot property was distributed in the north of the island after 1974. *Şehit aileleri*, or persons who had lost loved ones in the conflict, received a house and small amount of monthly compensation. In addition, after 1989 men who had been *mücahit*s, or fighters, during the 1958-74 period received points that could be used towards acquisition of property. With the point system, it was also possible to buy, sell, and give away points in order to reach a total that would allow one to acquire a desired property. In 1993, in response to pressures from those who had not been able to find the equivalent in 'exchange points,' the government began to distribute what it called *yükümlü koçan*, or a type of title deed that could be gained through adding up other sorts of points, not only exchange points but also, for instance, 'fighter's points.'

While there was a certain market in exchanges of property, the lack of title deeds meant not only was there no significant market in Greek Cypriot properties, but also that many Turkish Cypriots experienced uncertainty about their future hold over the property that they possessed. This tended to discourage investment in the improvement of these properties except where necessary. It was only in 1995 that an amendment to the previous land tenure law elevated the status of 'definitive possession certificate' to the status of 'immovable property title deed' (*koçan*). From that point on, all 'definitive possession certificates' became title deeds.

²² Engin Köklüçinar, *Ağlayan ve Gülen Kıbrıs* (Istanbul: Yedigün, 1976), 113-114.

Many Turkish Cypriots had long wanted title deeds, but the issuing of the deeds at this moment may also be seen in relation to a test case that had recently been brought in the European Court of Human Rights by a Greek Cypriot refugee from Kyrenia, Titina Loizidou, who charged that the Turkish army had illegally prevented her from returning to her home and deprived her of access to her properties in the island's north. She won that case in 1996, creating a significant precedent that would ultimately lead to further lawsuits. However, despite this case, the issuing of title deeds in the previous year nevertheless precipitated new real estate speculation in Greek Cypriot property, beginning in the late 1990's and growing in the early 2000's. A global real estate boom, as well as anticipation that a resolution to the island's division was at hand, led to a spike in development on such properties after late 2002.

Two watershed moments in recent years appear to have significantly affected the ways in which Turkish Cypriots view the Greek Cypriot properties in which they live. The first watershed was the easing of movement restrictions in 2003 and the visits of Turkish Cypriots to their former homes and villages in the island's south, as well as of Greek Cypriots to the homes where Turkish Cypriot displaced persons now live in the island's north. This is discussed below as a factor shaping narratives of displacement, but here we may note that all but two of our interviewees reported that their homes were entirely or partially destroyed, and this clearly influenced their sense of belonging to the place. Many people refused to visit their villages after this single visit, as one refugee from Magounda expressed:

We were thinking, we came here and settled in Greek Cypriots' houses, and we've looked after them, that is, the condition of the houses has gotten better, not worse. My whole family and I were expecting that Greek Cypriots would have looked after our houses and that they would be standing, that there would be people living in them. But when we crossed to see our house, we experienced a huge disappointment when we found that it had fallen down. It was like a cold shower, and after that I didn't even want to go my village again.

This sentiment appears to have been quite common amongst Turkish Cypriots after the opening of the checkpoints.

The second watershed was the Greek Cypriot defeat of the Annan Plan at referendum in April 2004; the Republic of Cyprus's subsequent entry into the European Union as a member state; and a resulting boom in lawsuits over property. Civil suits were almost entirely lawsuits brought by Greek Cypriots over their property in the island's north, primarily against foreigners currently using it. Suits in the European Court of Human Rights continued to be brought against the Republic of Turkey as respondent until the ECHR allowed the establishment of an Immovable Property Commission in the island's north to hear property cases

in the island.²³ A consequent combination of uncertainty over their hold on their properties and the continuing perceived failure of ongoing negotiations has resulted in anxieties over the future, skepticism about prospects for a negotiated settlement, and often contradictory messages about the extent to which they are willing to compromise to effect a solution.

What many of the interviews show is the establishment of a system and a life in the island's north that for some was accepted immediately and for others accepted gradually, over a matter of decades. It was a system that incorporated them and rewarded them through loss—loss of homes, loss of loved ones—but that at the same time institutionalized uncertainty, as the system was established on the idea that certain properties may ultimately be returned. This was particularly the case for certain regions, especially that of Morphou/Güzelyurt, which today is entirely comprised of displaced persons and has long been discussed as an area that would potentially be incorporated into a Greek Cypriot constituent state in the event of a federal solution to the Cyprus Problem. As a result, interviewees report that many families now living in Güzelyurt have bought more secure homes for their children on Turkish-titled property, especially in Nicosia and Kyrenia, and have even buried their dead in Nicosia's Turkish cemetery. Investment in 'insecure' areas has stagnated, and until recently even public works remained untended. This has, however, begun to change in recent years, as we see a shift in attitudes regarding potential solutions to the island's division. More and more Turkish Cypriots have begun to express opposition to any plan that would entail further displacement. Or as one elderly woman expressed it, 'I've been a refugee three times, and I'm too old to become one again.'

²³ For detail on this resort to legal remedies and its recent developments, see Rhodri Williams and Ayla Gürel, *European Court of Human Rights and the Cyprus Property Issue: Charting a Way Forward*, PRIO Cyprus Centre Paper (Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre, 2011) and Nikos Skoutaris, 'Building transitional justice mechanisms without a peace settlement: A critical appraisal of the recent jurisprudence of the Strasbourg Court on the Cyprus issue,' *European Law Review* 35 (2010): 720-733. For analysis of the cases in respect to negotiating positions, see Kudret Özersay and Ayla Gürel, 'Property and Human Rights in Cyprus: The European Court of Human Rights as a Platform of Political Struggle,' *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008), 291-321.

FACTORS SHAPING PERCEPTIONS OF DISPLACEMENT

Each story of displacement is unique, but there are identifiable social and political factors that influence the ways in which persons perceive their own uprooting. Because while the experience of loss, mourning, and disorientation is individual, we give those events meaning within particular cultural and historical contexts. Moreover, it is possible to see in these interviews that persons tend to draw conclusions from their experiences, to see their stories as leading to particular endings. The endings of these stories, then, tend to cohere around particular common conclusions, discussed at the end of this booklet. Here we would like briefly to discuss some of the factors shaping both perceptions and narrations of displacement.

1. Generational differences

Interviews show significant generational differences between those whose childhoods were spent in the south and their parents, who were adults when they were displaced. Persons who have memories of their homes in the south but were children at the time are now between the ages of approximately 45 and 60, depending on the date of their displacement. These persons were often nostalgic about the places of their childhood, and in the case of those from mixed villages, this often meant memories of Greek Cypriot friends. Some of these frequently visit their villages and have attempted to establish or re-establish contacts with Greek Cypriots there. At the same time, the only person who said that he would want to return to his village in the event of a solution was from a large land-owning family in a formerly Turkish village in the Paphos district, where land prices have recently risen. Others say that their businesses and investments are now in the north, and they could not start again in the south.

This generation's parents, who were adults when they were displaced, are now over 65 years old if they were displaced in 1974, or over 75 years old if they were uprooted in 1963-4. The perspective of this generation towards the places from which they fled is considerably more complex than that of their children. When describing their displacement, many of them relate desires to remain in their homes that conflicted with the need to protect their children. Many of them had Greek Cypriot friends but for that reason also express bitterness about the events that drove them away. They relate incidents of which their children apparently were not aware, suggesting that they attempted to protect their children from knowledge

of certain events and tensions. While some expressed a wistful desire to return to their homes, all said that this was now impossible. As one man from the Solea district who recently turned 89 years old expressed it, 'We're lame and blind, the wife and me both. Who'll take care of us?'

Attention to generational differences shows us that Turkish Cypriot approaches to the places that they left behind are more complex than simply 'forgetting' or 'remembering.' While the now middle-aged generation is often nostalgic for a place they hardly remember, their parents tend to 'remember in order to forget.' On the other hand, the younger generation of persons under 35, the children and grandchildren of these refugees, only knows the north, and most show little interest in the south. Many of their parents relate how, since the opening of the checkpoints, they enjoy visiting their former villages but have difficulty convincing their children to go with them. Youth today show none of the 'postmemory,' or inter-generational transmission of traumatic memory, prevalent amongst children of Greek Cypriot displaced persons.²⁴



Image 3: Reunion of families in the island's north (c. 1975).

²⁴ See especially Hadjiyanni, *The Making of a Refugee*.

2. Timing of displacement

One significant difference in experiences of displacement is between those who became refugees in 1958 and/or 1963 and those who were displaced only as a result of the events of 1974. While the latter group had witnessed the displacement of others, in many cases because they took refuge in their own towns or villages, they remained unprepared for their own uprooting in and after 1974. In contrast, those displaced in 1963 were still refugees in 1974 and so often saw the island's division and their settlement in the north as a resolution of their refugee status.

Despite this difference, however, one factor that unites the experiences of ninety percent of the Turkish Cypriot population and distinguishes them from those of Greek Cypriots is the life of the enclaves between 1963 and 1974. Although many Turkish Cypriots were not displaced until 1974, most nevertheless report a life of fear and restriction during the previous decade. This unites them with Turkish Cypriots from throughout the island during this period, who report living in cramped conditions and in what may be called an 'anticipation of violence,' which one of our interviewees summed up by saying, 'Fear was realized between people by allusion and innuendo.' This anticipation of violence, however, also resulted in stress over extended periods of time, though it should be noted that a recent psychological survey indicates that stress was higher for those displaced than for non-displaced persons on the whole.²⁵



Image 4: Turkish Cypriots at the Akrotiri base await transport to the north via Turkey.

²⁵ Deniz Ergun, Mehmet Çakıcı, and Ebru Çakıcı, 'Comparing Psychological Responses of Internally Displaced and Non-Displaced Turkish Cypriots,' *Torture* 18, no. 1 (2008): 20-28.

3. Place

The places from which persons were displaced also shape their perceptions of displacement. While for some, good relations with Greek Cypriot neighbors influence the ways that they remember their lost homes, for many others place plays a role primarily in terms of the market value of their lost properties. For some refugees, this is a matter of unfavorably comparing what they have received with what they have lost. They see that the value of their former homes has risen in the island's south, even as property values have stagnated in the north. This often results in a confused dissatisfaction about the distribution of Greek Cypriot property after 1974 and the changes in property values north and south since that time. Discussions of lost property are often contradictory: while many people express dissatisfaction with the properties that they received in the north, they also do not wish to be relocated again to the south. On the other hand, in some cases, their recognition of the difference in property values north and south is tempered by dissatisfaction over the neglect or destruction of their former homes. In yet other cases, property that was once valuable or that they believe should now be valuable has lost its value because of neglect, rezoning, or various forms of expropriation for public works.



Image 5: Ruins of the former Turkish Cypriot village of Souskiou/Susuz, in the Paphos district.

Image 6: Door in the formerly Turkish-majority mixed village of Mallia, now inhabited by Greek Cypriots originally from the village and a small number of Greek Cypriots displaced from the north.

4. Gender

Women's narratives of the conflict tend to differ from men's, both in particular experiences that they relate and in forms of narration. One of the most important findings from the author's previous research, confirmed in these interviews, is that women relate experiencing extraordinary stress during the 1963-74 period because of the universal conscription of men into the Turkish Cypriot army and the waiting that women endured each day as men went to guard duty, as well as the quotidian struggles for survival that many relate during this period. Women's stories tend to reveal details about the struggles of displaced families to provide for their children, including the difficulties of finding necessities such as milk or adequate shelter. One woman displaced in early 1964, for instance, described how her family took shelter first with relatives, then in a dilapidated storage shed, then in a Red Crescent tent, and finally, in 1970, in social housing built by the Turkish Cypriot administration. Both women's experiences and their narrations of those experiences, then, tend to focus on struggles of the everyday.²⁶



Image 7: Women waiting for loved ones to arrive in north Cyprus, 1975.

In addition, women's losses and compensation for them were institutionalized differently than those of men. In the first years after 1964, for instance, 'wives of martyrs,' received compensation only on the condition that they did not remarry, though this regulation was later changed. And displaced women were given housing as dependents, as members of families, rather than as persons representing families on their own.

²⁶ For more specifically on the issue of gender and narrative amongst Turkish Cypriots, see also Rebecca Bryant, 'Writing the Catastrophe: Nostalgia and Its Histories in Cyprus,' *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 26, no. 2 (2008), 399-422.

5. Political orientation and civil society participation

A leftist movement began to re-emerge in the Turkish Cypriot community in the late 1960's, after the beginnings of such a movement had been violently suppressed in the 1950's.²⁷ Turkish Cypriot youth studying at universities in Turkey joined that country's growing leftist movements and brought these ideas back to Cyprus. The leftist alternative, however, only began to gain influence in Cyprus in the late 1970's, when a significant opposition to mainstream nationalist politics began to develop in the community. As a result, leftist experiences of the conflict appear to differ little from those of persons with other political leanings, although narratives by those on the political left tend to differ in the retrospective interpretation of events. Narrations by members of the left tend retrospectively to emphasize the suffering of both communities and the presence of fanatical elements on both sides. Their narratives, then, tend to particularize violence to 'extremists' rather than generalizing it to 'Greek Cypriots,' while they emphasize elements of cooperation that they remember from the past.



Image 8: One of the many Turkish Cypriot rallies in favor of the Annan Plan in 2004.

Moreover, beginning in the 1990's, a growing number of Cypriots began to participate in a nascent civil society movement across the Green Line. This movement included both

²⁷ Both EOKA and TMT were anti-communist in orientation, and TMT announced in May 1958 that it would punish those Turkish Cypriots who engaged in common political activities with Greek Cypriots. Shortly following this, a number of murders or attempted murders terrorized leftists and effectively destroyed a Turkish Cypriot leftist movement (Ahmet An, *Kıbrıs Nereye Gidiyor?* [Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2002], 131-135; also Niyazi Kızılyürek, *Doğmamış bir Devletin Tarihi: Birleşik Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti* [Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005], 37).

facilitated activities, such as workshops within the buffer zone and bicommunal events for professionals, and locally led initiatives, such as the bicommunal women's organization Hands Across the Divide.²⁸ While many of these activities ceased or took a different form after the easing of movement restrictions in 2003, they clearly aided in creating the groundwork for intercommunal interaction and have shaped the ways in which those who participated view prospects for a united Cyprus.

6. Opening of the checkpoints

One of the most important factors shaping narratives today was the easing of movement restrictions across the Green Line in 2003. The opening of the checkpoints resulted in noticeable changes in approaches to displacement, both because of Turkish Cypriots' visits to their own villages and because of the return of Greek Cypriots to visit the properties where Turkish Cypriots currently live.

As noted earlier, Greek Cypriot official narratives, institutionalized in education and refugee associations, have since 1974 emphasized remembrance of villages and the right of return. Confrontation with this politics of remembrance after the 2003 opening led to several responses by Turkish Cypriots. The first may be seen as a 're-refugizing' of Turkish Cypriot experience, or a new nostalgia for former villages that was not articulated before 2003. This was often expressed as a desire to show that 'we are also refugees' and 'we also lost our property and suffered.'



Image 9: The only remains of the Turkish Cypriot village of Ayios Epiphanios/ Aybifan in Nicosia district.

²⁸ For more on civil society in relation to peace-building in Cyprus, see Benjamin J. Broome, 'Reaching Across the Dividing Line: Building a Collective Vision for Peace in Cyprus,' *International Journal of Peace Research* 41, no.2 (2004), 191-209, and Maria Hadjipavliou-Trigeorgis, 'Unofficial Intercommunal Contacts and their Contribution to Peace-Building in Conflict Societies: The Case of Cyprus,' *The Cyprus Review* 5, no. 2 (1993): 68-87. On Hands Across the Divide, see Cynthia Cockburn, *The Line: Women, Partition and the Gender Order in Cyprus* (London: Zed Books, 2004).

A more common response was disappointment that their houses and properties were in ruin, and in many cases refusal to go more than once to see their former homes. This was often expressed in comparison to what they perceived as their own attempts to care for the houses in which they lived. As one interviewee from the Turkish neighborhood of Limassol articulated it,

When I went I couldn't find anyone I used to know. All the houses were empty and falling down. When I saw my own house I couldn't even knock on the door. It was like it wasn't Limassol, at least not my Limassol. The Turkish neighborhood was all run down. They hadn't even painted our house the way we had looked after things.

She has refused to go to see her house a second time, and this has been a common theme in descriptions of returns.

7. Lawsuits

A final important factor shaping contemporary narratives of displacement has been the transformation of the property issue through lawsuits over the past decade. Although many Turkish Cypriots had lived for almost three decades in a state of uncertainty over the future of the homes that they possessed, their leaders had told them that the issue would be resolved with a negotiated solution to the Cyprus division. Over the past several years, however, lawsuits over lost property brought in the ECHR and local courts, as well as the perception that the property issue is becoming increasingly detached from a negotiated settlement, have led many people to seek more secure personal solutions. For some, this has entailed investing in pre-1974 Turkish-titled properties, especially in the Nicosia and Kyrenia areas, or developing the properties that they currently hold in order to have a claim on them following a negotiated solution. For many others, however, it has resulted in an increasingly rejectionist attitude toward any potential negotiated solution that would involve relinquishing territory, return of currently occupied property, or in general any option entailing further displacement. This may be clearly seen in the seventeen life history interviews from Morphou/Güzelyurt: whereas in 2004 all but one of the persons interviewed had voted in favor of the Annan Plan and hence of the incorporation of Morphou/Güzelyurt into a Greek Cypriot constituent state, they are now skeptical that a plan that would entail Turkish Cypriot displacement from Morphou/Güzelyurt could pass at referendum in the region.²⁹

²⁹ However, certain persons, especially those with a leftist political orientation, say that they would not oppose a solution in which Greek Cypriots would be able to return to live in Morphou/Güzelyurt alongside them under a Turkish Cypriot constituent state.

It should be noted, though, that not only have Turkish Cypriots less often pursued legal remedies than have Greek Cypriot refugees, but the importance of Greek Cypriot legal cases in shaping their own narratives appears to have diminished since the Demades decision in the ECHR gave credibility to the Immovable Property Commission in the island's north. While in the author's previous research narratives of displacement often also were shaped by the context of Greek Cypriot lawsuits,³⁰ in the research that informs this report lawsuits were rarely directly discussed.

³⁰ See especially 'The Spoils of History' in Bryant, *The Past in Pieces*.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews contained in this booklet are a selection from thirty life history studies conducted with displaced persons currently residing in Morphou/Güzelyurt, Kyrenia/Girne, and Yialousa/Yenierenköy. These places were selected both because of the areas from which their current populations originally derive and also because they would probably be differently affected by a negotiated federal solution. Persons now resident in Morphou originally come primarily from the Limassol and Paphos districts, and the Morphou area has long been discussed as one that would potentially be incorporated into a Greek Cypriot constituent state in the event of a federal solution. This would potentially entail the return of thousands of Greek Cypriots to Morphou and the resettlement of the town's current Turkish Cypriot population. Kyrenia was settled primarily by persons from Limassol after 1974, and it has never been discussed as an area subject to territorial readjustment, though it would be subject to the terms of any solution to the island's property problem. And the persons now living in Yialousa/Yenierenköy originally derive from five different villages surrounding Kokkina/Erenköy in the Tillyria/Dillirga region. The village of Kokkina/Erenköy is currently an exclave occupied by the Turkish Cypriot army and cut off from the island's north, though there has been recent discussion of options to allow the return of villagers to the area.

In addition, more general conclusions of the report are based on the author's own research since 2003 on Turkish Cypriot displacement and the effect of the opening of the Green Line on perceptions of past and place. Although this booklet concerns Turkish Cypriots displaced from south to north as a result of the conflict, the author's previous work chronicles Turkish Cypriot displacement within the north and may be consulted for more information on this displacement, as well as on the effects of new legal mechanisms on perceptions of this displacement.³¹ While the counterpart to this report that addresses displacement from north to south also includes stories of Greek Cypriots who are currently pursuing legal remedies for the loss of their property,³² Turkish Cypriot legal cases will form the basis for a separate report that analyzes the complicated impediments to such legal remedies.

With these life stories, then, we can see not only how various villages and regions experienced displacement differently, but also how the options for solutions in the ongoing negotiations influence the ways that Turkish Cypriots today relate the past to their visions of a future. Life histories are complex and often contradictory, but they provide us with important tools for understanding how the past may be reshaped in the present.

³¹ Bryant, *The Past in Pieces*.

³² Olga Demetriou, *Life Stories: Greek Cypriot Community* (Nicosia: PRIO, 2011).

PART TWO: LIFE STORIES



Image 10: Abandoned house in north Nicosia

Ramadan (47 years old) - from Koilani/Gilan to Morphou/Güzelyurt

Ramadan was born in Polemidia and went to primary school there but lived in Koilani/Gilan for the first years of his life. He is one of six children. His father was a farmer, with fields of wheat and barley, as well as vineyards and apple trees. Ramadan speaks Greek, and in the first years of his life most of his friends were Greek.

I remember learning both languages at once. Definitely we didn't speak Greek at home, but my friends were Greek, and sometimes when my mother had work she would leave me with a Greek Cypriot neighbor, and of course then we spoke Greek. In the village there was a cooperative form of child-minding because there were no nurseries like there are now. For instance, my mother breast-fed two or three Greek Cypriot children, meaning I have 'milk-siblings' (süt kardeşleri) who are Greek Cypriot.

They were in the village in 1974, a small minority of only about 35 Turkish Cypriots in a population of almost 1400.

In 1974 some of our friends locked us in a room for our own safety, and some people, taking advantage of that, harmed our animals and fields. In 1958 my parents had also moved from Gilan to Paramal, which is a village near Limassol. But my father couldn't stand it, and he and my mother returned. They also fled to Binatlı in 1963, and in 1974 they once again became refugees, this time to Güzelyurt. In other words, my family has been refugees three times.

In 1974, his parents chose to remain in the village, and Ramadan remained with them as the smallest child. His brothers and sisters, however, managed in various ways to make the trip to the north, especially via the English bases, and through them via Turkey. Ramadan finally made the trip because there was no open school left for him to attend. Only three Turkish children were left in the vicinity, and he had already missed a year of school by the time he made the trip.

My mother and father stayed in the south, and I was alone with them because my brothers and sisters left, but I didn't want to leave them. My trip to the north was an adventure. At that time there was a lot of human trafficking, that is for a hundred Cypriot pounds per person they would get you to the north.... I came to the north in a minibus filled with 25 people all on top of each other, through back roads. It was a two-and-a-half hour journey, but it seemed like two-and-a-half months.

His parents later came to the north with the help of the United Nations after the Vienna Agreement.

For a long time, he says, they lived in hopes of returning to Gilan.

After every negotiation we would have hope. Eventually, that hope began to disappear, but I still have it. I'm among those who believe it's possible to live together. One of my children is studying at University of Cyprus, and the other is studying at the English School. We still have relationships with people on the other side.

Six months before the checkpoints opened, Ramadan had gone to the south for work but had quickly found a taxi and gone from Polemidia to Koilani. In 1974, while still living in the village, he had helped a refugee from Vasilia named Andreas move into his own house.

When we got to the house it was noon, he was sleeping and we woke him up. He asked where I was from, and when I said I was from that village he said in 1974 there was a child called Ramadan. We were very emotional, the man was asking me about myself, and I started crying. We continue our relationship today, just like normal people. That day when we went to the village all the villagers gathered around because we had come, like it was something organized. It was a really interesting day. And after the checkpoints opened I've gone a lot, I've met different people, I've been in contact with refugees from Morphou, we've played football matches together, we've had events together. Right now we've put things on hold, we're waiting for the results of the negotiations.

He goes to the village at every opportunity, and though his children at first showed little interest, they have now become more attached to the village.

I have some special attachment to my village, whether you call it village nationalism, or village chauvinism, there's something about the air and the water, for instance there's no humidity. It's at a high altitude, and whether summer or winter there's a flowing stream, cold water, vineyards, greenness. It's a beautiful, livable place. If you ask me where I'd prefer to live, I'd say Gilan, it's a big village, authentic, made with yellow stones, we have friends there. For instance, on the weekends the population goes up to 1000 because everyone comes back to the village, and I like this.

Despite these hopes and his 'village chauvinism,' at the moment he does not think about returning and does not think that any members of his family would return. He does, however, think that it could be possible in the future. He also remains ambivalent about what should happen to the Morphou region, remarking that quite a lot of refugee housing has been built in and around their land in Polemidia and saying that 'people shouldn't be forced to become refugees a fourth time.'

I've made all my investments in this region. I have a market and a bakery in Güzelyurt, and after 37 years we've at this point accepted that this is our home. And there are also all the social ties, all my aunts and relatives are here, all my relatives died and are buried here.

Kemal (88 years old) - from Koilani/Gilan to Morphou/Güzelyurt

Kemal is the father of Ramadan, and his family was one of the largest landowners in Koilani village. He remembers the village as a productive one where they generally got along well with their Greek Cypriot neighbors. Nevertheless, in 1958 most of the Turkish Cypriots left the village when Kemal's older brother and cousin were murdered by EOKA. By that time Kemal had already been married more than a decade and had investments in the village that he says he could not leave behind. Although they left for a brief period of time, they returned. Only certain members of his family remained, concentrated in one neighborhood of the village.

Their first serious displacement was in 1963, at the beginning of the intercommunal conflict.

The Greek Cypriots started to torment us. In the village the grocer, the driver, everyone was Greek Cypriot, so we would shop from them, we would use their cars to take our goods to market. That is, they profited from what we earned. When the troubles started in 1963, they really started not wanting us around, they couldn't stand having us there anymore, and they began to torment us. For one month they wouldn't sell anything to us, they took our goods.... These were the Koilani Greek Cypriots. They wouldn't give us food, and we informed the United Nations so that we could get rations from them, but they prevented us from receiving them, saying they were going to start giving us food, but they didn't.... We really suffered during those years. They wouldn't let us go to the coffeeshops, they excluded us from everywhere. That's why in 1963 we had to leave for Polemidia.

They stayed for about a year in Polemidia, but Kemal says that because they were wealthy landowners, they were not given sufficient rations. They decided to return to Koilani, but neither their house nor their fields and gardens were as they had left them. Their fellow villagers had taken their crops, animals, and farm machinery, and their home had been damaged.



*Image 11:
The mosque in the
Turkish neighborhood
of Koilani/Gilan
village.*

Nevertheless, they repaired their home and remained in the village for the next ten years. On 20 July 1974, Kemal relates that they were working and sleeping in their orchards outside the village. Suddenly, Greek Cypriots from the village came and announced that they were taking them back to the village. He says that they were forced to stay in a Greek Cypriot's house for several days, in the fear that Turkish soldiers might arrive. His interpretation of this event is that they were being used to show to the Turkish army that the villagers had protected them.

He says that they managed to remain in the village until 1975, but during that year they experienced pressure to leave.

In 1974 they started tormenting us, for instance we'd pick our apples and they'd come and take them right out of our hands. Because we had property we held on as long as we could, we didn't want to leave, but finally we were afraid of being killed and had to flee.

Although the persons putting pressure on them were from the village, he says that it was mostly youth. When they were taken to the north in 1974, they left two houses, their animals, and all their possessions behind. They travelled in a UN caravan of buses of those who had remained behind in surrounding villages, such as Mallia and Silikou. Their first two sons had been taken prisoner in July 1974 and had later been part of the prisoner exchange. As a result, they were already settled in the north by the time Kemal and his wife arrived.

When they arrived in the north, they had nothing, but they also had difficulty receiving sufficient compensation because of the amount of property they had left behind in the south.

We came here, and the administration gave us five liras, and we tried to get by on that. I was a businessman over there, and here I was out of work. I said to my wife, we're not going to be able to go back, we don't have a salary, so let's start a bakery, we can make peksimet and sell it and try to get by on that. We really suffered, we'd make çörek and peksimet, and I would travel around on a bicycle selling them for a few cents. Our lives passed like that.

They were given a half-finished house and a garden, but the garden was untended and dry. It took them many years to make the garden productive. He says that their lives since coming to the north have been very difficult, but they have been fortunate that their children are now in a position to help them.

After the opening of the checkpoints, Kemal began to visit his friends remaining in Gilan.

When we went, they met us with drums as though nothing had happened. In any case the old people were good, we used to get along with them. We would eat and drink together. They also came to this side and found us. When they came, they were expecting to find us living in really bad conditions, but when they came they saw that wasn't the case.

They still hold the title deeds to much of their property in Koilani/Gilan, while Kemal's wife also has title deeds to property in Polemidia.

Our property has just remained over there, we're waiting to see if there will be a solution, and maybe something will happen. The best solution for us is some kind of exchange. Our properties over there are very valuable, but we can't go live there anymore. In any case, we weren't able to live there, all night we would stand by the windows waiting to see if they were going to kill us... But anyway, at this point wherever our children are, that's where we'll live. At this point we can't build a new world for ourselves...

Şaziye (50 years old) - from Paphos town to Morphou/Güzelyurt

Şaziye grew up in Moutallo, the Turkish neighborhood of Paphos town, at a time when the neighborhood was a closed enclave. She says the Paphos of her childhood is one in which neighbors looked after each other, and ties of friendship were strong. She describes her childhood as happy, spent entirely within the confines of the enclaves.

It was a lovely town. It wasn't open. Everyone knew each other, and it was a place where friendship and kinship were very important. It was like a family. It was small, but like a family. I remember it as a tiny place, where everyone knew each other, and everyone got along well with each other.

She relates that she never met any Greek Cypriots as a child and only knew about Greek Cypriots from lessons in school.



Image 12: Şaziye as a girl in Paphos immediately before her displacement.

She was the fourth of six children, and her father had died after the birth of the sixth. In 1974, at the age of thirty, her mother became a widow, only a short time before the coup d'état and Turkish military invasion that summer. Şaziye remembers the coup and the fighting between Greek Cypriots that they heard as children. In fact, she says, she had wanted there to be a war.

I was just a child. I used to see war films, and I remember saying, 'I hope there will be a war, and we can see it.' I didn't remember the war [conflict of 1963-4]. Then we started hearing gunfire, and I said, 'No, I don't want a war!'

Only three days after the invasion began, she says that the Turkish Cypriot women were rounded up and locked in a cafe. They stayed there for several days before being sent back to their homes, but they were effectively prisoners within the neighborhood for the next several months. Although they were prisoners, she recalls that within a week there was a sudden attack by Greek Cypriot forces that left several dead.³³ One of these was their tenant, and she says that he was killed with his dog, which he loved. She relates that she witnessed this neighbor's hasty burial.

We were small, and we were curious about what was happening. We were there when they buried him. The man's face was unrecognizable. They buried him with his dog.

She also recalls that during this period Turkish planes would sometimes fly over Paphos, and the women and children being held prisoner there would be ordered into open spaces, to prevent the planes from bombing. Once the planes had passed over, they would be sent back to their homes.

Her mother was ill at the time, and the UN forces offered to take her to the north. One of Şaziye's older brothers was serving with the Turkish Cypriot army, while another had been studying in Turkey but, unbeknownst to his mother, had come back to the island immediately before the coup and invasion. He had gone first to visit relatives in Limassol and there was taken prisoner. He would be kept for three months in a stadium that served as the Limassol prisoner-of-war camp, and from there he would be sent to the north. Şaziye's older sister insisted that their mother take the offered route to the north, and their mother left, taking a baby with her. Şaziye remained behind with her sister, who was then married, and her younger brother, who was only six years old.

³³ Although Şaziye says that the number of dead was eleven, other sources put it at six. Moreover, there seems to be confusion here about a Greek Cypriot entry into the enclave for the purposes of looting and a later attack in August 1974 that left six dead. See Murad Hüsni Özad, *Baf ve Mücadele Yılları* (Lefkoşa: Akdeniz Haber Ajansı Yayınları, 2002), 138, for details. The book also gives a daily account of persons sent to the north.

Şaziye remained effectively a prisoner for close to a year, but gradually their friends and neighbors began to find ways to the north.

We started to hear that people were leaving. Some would go over the mountains, some would pretend to be sick and be taken by the Red Crescent. It wasn't part of an agreement, just people trying to get north.

Her mother was anxious to reunite with her children, and she paid one hundred sterling per person to bring her young son and daughter to the north. They traveled in a group of 120 persons on foot across the mountains from Paphos.

There were small children, four years old. There were very old people. We experienced some terrifying moments. We would walk during the night and hide during the day. There was a two-year-old child who was crying, and they put bottle caps in his mouth to try to hush him. For three days and nights, we didn't have anything to eat. Whatever we had carried, bread and cheese and such, we threw out because of exhaustion. We couldn't carry them. Most people did the same. We had taken just a few pieces of clothing, and we threw those out as well. Because we were going across steep mountains, and we weren't used to this. Some of my school friends also came with us. We all came together... I remember there was a mother who was on this side, and she wanted her child to come. The child was only four years old, and he was forgotten on the mountain. I don't know what happened to that child.

They arrived in Lefke, and their guide said to them that when he told them to run, they should run as fast as they could towards the checkpoint. They ran quickly to the Turkish checkpoints, though she says that the Greek Cypriot soldiers only watched them and made no attempt to intervene.

Two of her brothers were waiting there to meet them. It was orange season, and they gave them oranges to eat, which hurt their stomachs after having gone hungry for so many days. Her mother by that time had found a house in Morphou/Güzelyurt, and her brothers took her there. Her younger brother, who was only six, was exhausted from so many days of walking without sleep. He immediately collapsed into a bed, and their mother, she relates, kept standing in front of him shouting, 'You're not dead, are you? Get up, let me see you!'

Şaziye says that although she had wanted to come to the north, she began to miss her home in Paphos as soon as she arrived. In addition, she suffered for several years from the effects of her experiences. She was beginning the third year of middle school, and she had difficulties adapting.

It was like my whole brain had been erased. I went from being good at school to not even wanting to go to school. The war had a real effect on your mind. I wasn't used to not being successful in school, but of course I hadn't gone to school for some time.... You would always think about the past. When you went to sleep, you'd always

see guns, you'd always see war. It lasted for three or four years. I was always in fear. Every time I heard a sound, I'd think it was a gun.

When she was eighteen, she left for England and remained there from 1979 to 2006. They had come on holiday to Cyprus in 2003 when she heard that the checkpoints had opened.

The first thing that came to mind was my home. We went, and I felt so strange, joy and sorrow at the same time. It was like I'd never seen another home. There's nothing like a person's home.... We went inside. An old man and woman were living there. They said that everything was the fault of Denктаş. We didn't say anything, because we didn't go as politicians.... In any case, we had a lot of problems that day. But the owners of the house behaved decently.... The house was very different. It was like the roads had grown, but the houses had shrunk. It seemed so small, and I didn't know how we had lived there. The garden seemed so small to me, and I didn't know how we had lived there.

She and her husband returned permanently to the island in 2006 after almost three decades abroad. Their children came with them with the intention of settling in Cyprus. They support the current negotiations, but when asked about her own intentions, Şaziye was clear.

Returning for the sake of a house doesn't make sense. No one would return only for a house.... My personal opinion is that people can't live together. After so much has happened, I don't see how people can live together. It's left a bad mark, and we can't go back from here. Two separate states, but one federal state—that's what we want.

Sami (59 years old) - from Flasou to Morphou/Güzelyurt via Lefke

Sami is a dentist now living in Morphou/Güzelyurt who is originally from the village of Flasou in the Solea region of the Troodos foothills. Because Flasou was a mixed village, he spent the first years of his life intermingling with Greek Cypriots. There were Greek Cypriot homes near theirs, and his father had many Greek Cypriot friends and acquaintances.

Mostly I played with Turkish Cypriot children. There was one Greek Cypriot boy my age named Lambros with whom I would play. It was when we were playing together that I learned to speak Greek. In our village there was a stream, and in the summer the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot children from the nearby villages would go there to swim. And I would also put things that my parents had grown and wanted to sell on a donkey and go from house to house selling them. My father was always playing cards in the coffeeshop with Greek Cypriots, and I would join them. In other words, there wasn't any 'Greek-Turk' difference between us, but on religious days and holidays, for instance at Easter they would make pilavuna and give it to us, and at other times we would make çörek and give it to them.



Image 13: Sami's father Salahi with his Greek Cypriot friends. Salahi is the second from the left.

This life was disrupted twice, when they fled the village in 1958 and again in 1963. In 1958, his family felt under threat from Greek Cypriot extremists from surrounding villages, and they fled on foot to Lefke. There they lived in crowded conditions in the housing of the Lefke mining company, with up to thirty people staying in one small house. They returned to Flasou in 1960 with the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, but they fled again in 1963 when violence occurred in surrounding villages, and they felt under threat. They again fled to Lefke, and this time their house was looted and ruined. This, he says, destroyed the chance of their returning to the village, despite the adaptation problems that he experienced in Lefke.

It's like when you tear a sapling out of where it's rooted and try to plant it somewhere else, and until it grows new roots it experiences an adaptation problem. There were certain differences between life in our village when I was little and the new places where we settled. So adapting took some time for me. Also, our being refugees meant that we were also treated like second-class people. At that time, the embargoes that Greek Cypriots placed on us made our lives difficult. On the one hand, there were economic problems, on the other hand there were problems getting food. We would get bread, milk, and other food with coupons from the UN. Distribution was done according to the number of children in a family.

The family remained in Lefke for the next ten years. His father went to work in the mines, and Sami finished his education there.



Image 14: A family picnic in Solea, near Flasou, after the easing of movement restrictions in 1968. Sami is on the right.

In his last year of high school, in 1969, Sami became a *mücahit*, or Turkish Cypriot fighter/soldier, and continued for a year after graduating. At the time, the Turkish government was giving university scholarships to young Turkish Cypriot men who finished two years of military service. He describes how, in his last year of high school, he would go to school during the day and take up guard duty at night, usually taking his schoolbooks with him. He left to study medicine in Izmir in 1971 and returned after exams only a couple of days before the coup d'état in 1974.

We arrived in Cyprus and two days later the 15 July operation began. They immediately took us as soldiers, and we experienced some difficult times until Turkey's operation on 20 July. Especially because Lefke was so far from everything, until the second operation in August we were under Greek Cypriot control. At that time, the Greek Cypriots who were retreating took quite a lot of Turkish Cypriot soldiers prisoner. I kept some money with me just in case they came for me, but they left so quickly they didn't go to every house. So I wasn't taken prisoner, but I lived the life of a captive for a month in Lefke. After the operation was finished, I returned to university in September.

By the time he returned to Cyprus, his family had been given a house in Prastio/Aydinköy near Morphou, and he began his dental practice in Morphou, near his family.

Even before the checkpoints opened in 2003, he was able to visit Flasou once. Since the opening, he goes to visit regularly and says that he still feels ties to the village.

I only lived there until I was eleven years old, and that was interrupted, but despite that today when I go to the village I'm still moved by memories of 'there I used to do this, here I used to do that.' For instance, when a dentist friend took me to my village 35-40 years later and we stood in front of our destroyed house, my eyes filled with tears, I was very moved, and my entire childhood passed in front of my eyes like a film. I remembered the tree I used to climb, the place where I fell, the donkey I used to ride, even the scar on my foot. The Greek Cypriot colleague who took me there understood very well how I felt, because he's a refugee from Morphou. The sadness and melancholy that I felt is hard to explain. Even if I no longer have a house and fields, I still go to my village. Sometimes my father wants to go to see people he knows there.



Image 15: The ruins of Sami's childhood home in Flasou village.

Despite these ties, though, he says that return is no longer possible. His life is now in Morphou/ Güzelyurt, in the north, and re-establishing himself both professionally and socially in the south would be very difficult. When asked about the issue of territorial adjustment and the possibility that Morphou/Güzelyurt would be incorporated into a Greek Cypriot constituent state, he expresses doubts.

Even more than whether it should be given back or not, overturning people's lives is really the issue. We were displaced three times, in 1958, 1963, and 1974. This area has always been discussed as one that might be given back, for instance in the Annan Plan it would have been. Even more than whether it should be given back, the real issue is people constantly being torn up and forced to go somewhere else. Can you imagine, all your investments, your home, your work are here, and they uproot you and take you somewhere uncertain? Seventy percent of the people here voted yes to the Annan Plan just so that this uncertainty would be resolved, but when the other side said no, of course it created disappointment, anger, and fear. People aren't thinking anymore the way they were thinking then in the Annan Plan period. They can't say so easily that it should be given back, because they can't see what's in front of them. A person when he's leaving a place wants to go someplace better, he wouldn't want to go to be in a worse situation.

At the same time, Sami supported the Annan Plan and is a strong supporter of a negotiated federal solution.

Öncel (51 years old) - from Magounda to Nikitas/Güneşköy

Öncel spent his childhood in Magounda village, in the Paphos district north of Polis tis Chrysochou. He is from a large family of eleven children, three girls and eight boys, which also owned several hundred dönüms of land around the village. With the proceeds of their land, they were able to put eight of the eleven children through university. Magounda was an entirely Turkish Cypriot village in a region with several small Turkish Cypriot villages and two larger Greek Cypriot villages, Argaka and Kynousa.

We had very good relations with Argaka village. They never saw us as enemies or behaved differently towards us. Kynousa was more chauvinist, there was a group of Greek nationalists, but Argaka being larger was an impediment to anything happening to us, that is, I don't remember any serious problem between 1963 and 1974.

In fact, he believes that despite serious events of violence in nearby Polis tis Chrysochou, it was the Greek Cypriots of Argaka village that prevented those events from affecting them.

[The violence in Polis] was important, but it really didn't affect us. The fact that the villagers from Argaka didn't behave in a chauvinistic way really changed things. I remember one time three or five Greek Cypriots tried to come to the village, and my father was a fighter [mücahit], and he fired a few shots at them at the entrance to the village. They went away and didn't come again. But what was especially interesting was that my uncle was working in the Limnitis mine at the time, and one day he saw that a Greek Cypriot coming to work there was missing an index finger. When he asked what had happened, he said that it was a souvenir of Magounda. It turned out that Greek Cypriot was one of those who had tried to enter the village, and one of the shots my father fired had hit his finger.

Apart from such minor incidents, Öncel says that Magounda was not directly affected by the conflict until 1974, when some of the Turkish Cypriot fighters from Polis who feared being taken captive took refuge in the village. Each family, he says, hid at least one of the fighters, while his family took in three. After the immediate violence died down, these fighters returned to Polis and eventually were sent to the north after the Vienna Agreement of 1975.

Öncel's own family tried twice to cross to the north, traveling on foot with others in groups of 100-150 persons. Both times, they made it as far as Yeşilirmak before being stopped by Greek Cypriot police and returned to Magounda. When his father injured his arm in a farming accident, he was brought to the north by the UN forces. So were Öncel's older brothers, who had been studying at university in Turkey when the fighting began in 1974. In order to continue their studies, the UN brought them to the north. By the time Öncel arrived with his mother and the rest of his family, his father and older brothers had already been given a house and settled in Nikitas/Güneşköy.

We came with the aid of the United Nations. Trucks came and took the belongings that we could carry. I remember quite clearly that we left our cows with a very close friend of my father's named Andreas [pseudonym] who lived in Argaka. In any case, when we were leaving we assumed that we'd be back in a few months, and Uncle Andreas said that when we returned he'd deliver the cows to us with any calves they had birthed. We boarded the buses and came with the trucks through the old Nicosia Airport road to the north.... We had this impression that like with the displacement in 1957 and 1963, once things calmed down, everyone would go home. And of course, we may have been thinking that way because no one had been displaced from our village before.

He says that they were only able to take a few personal items with them such as photographs and some books. When the checkpoints opened in 2003, they found some of their belongings under the ruins of their home. In fact, he says, the opening of the checkpoints was a disappointing and indeed shocking experience, since they had not anticipated that their home would be in ruin.

We were thinking, we came here and settled in Greek Cypriots' houses, and we've looked after them, that is, the condition of the houses has gotten better, not worse. My whole family and I were expecting that Greek Cypriots would have looked after our houses and that they would be standing, that there would be people living in them. But when we crossed to see our house, we experienced a huge disappointment when we found that it had fallen down from neglect, it was like a cold shower, and after that I didn't even want to go my the village again. I go to the south a lot, I have quite a few friends there and work on various projects there, one of them is still ongoing and I'm the project manager, but I'm just not drawn to the village anymore. It's a really different feeling, and I probably don't want to go because it will upset me. The place where I spent the first fourteen years of my life is now a heap of dirt that could fit in the back of a truck. I go to Argaka, I visit a childhood friend who owns a market on the road to Polis, but I only went one time to the place where my house once stood, and I haven't been again.

At the same time, he notes that he and his family never fully 'settled' in the north, as they were always anticipating a return to their village.

When we arrived, my father, four brothers, and my older sister were already here. There was a house, but it was like it wasn't our house. By the time we arrived, the house was furnished and clean. But the idea that we would return, that we were here only temporarily, was prevalent in all the members of my family, and it still is. At the moment, for instance, we are waiting for a solution to happen so that we can go to Magounda. We're expecting a solution that will allow us to go back and reclaim our properties in the south. In other words, in the period after 1974 we never had the psychology that we were settling here.

He says that while his own family has always wanted to return, the number of persons from Magounda wishing to return has risen in recent years. He attributes this in part to the fact that Magounda has recently been declared a tourist area, and its value has risen considerably. At the same time, the village where they now live would have been incorporated into a Greek Cypriot constituent state in the Annan Plan, meaning that those persons currently living in Greek Cypriot homes in the village would either have been moved to Kapouti/ Kalkanlı or allowed to return to their villages. He says that he would want to return to be able to realize the value of his family's four hundred dönüms, although he recognizes that this isn't the case for the younger generation.

Those who are our age who lived in Magounda before are now in any case reaching retirement. If I want, I could retire and spend my retirement there, where there's fresh air and nature, but on the other hand the children say, 'Dad, what are you going to do leaving us?' They don't have any attachment to the place, they aren't so

keen on going. My mother, for instance, spent forty years of her life there, and she wants to go even more than I do. She spent forty years with my father there and only eight years with him here, so clearly the desire to return depends on what people have experienced.

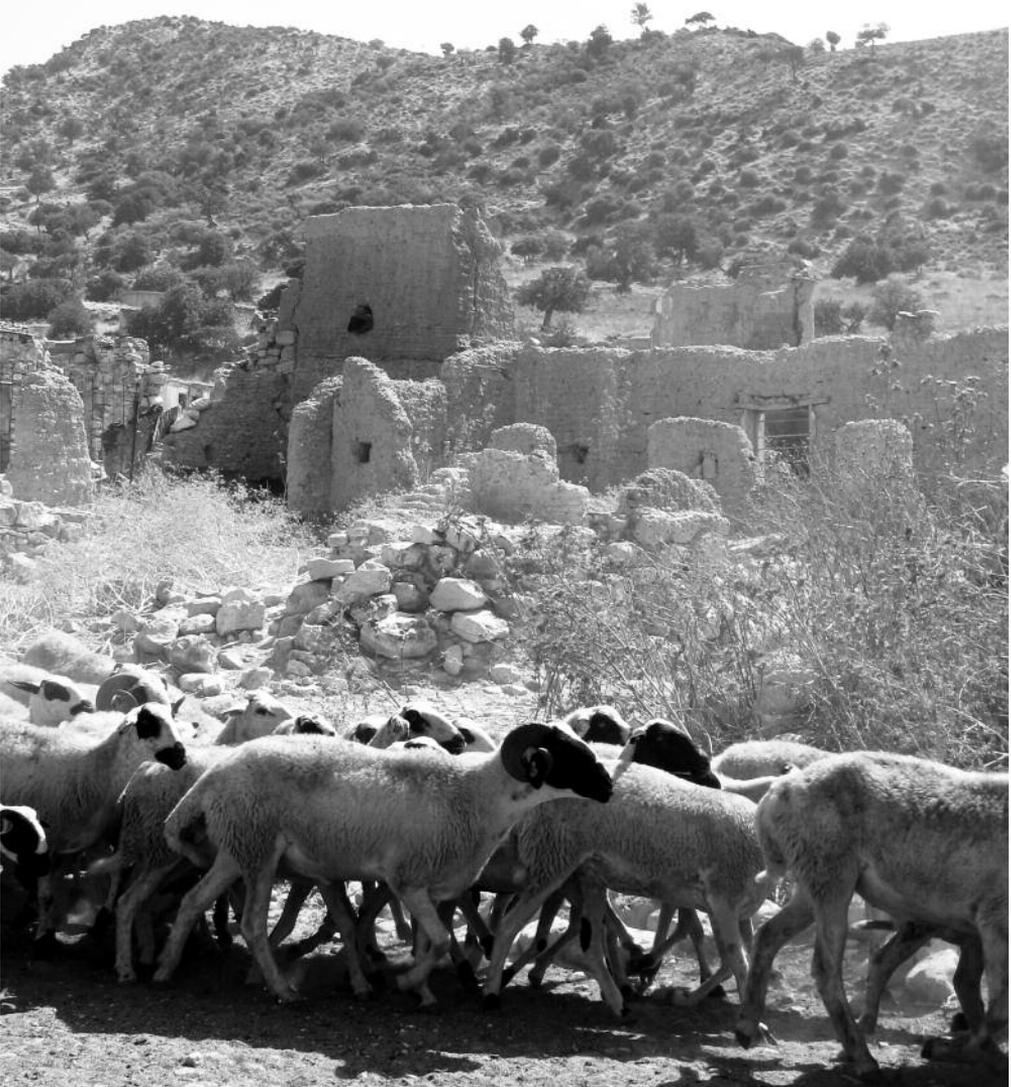


Image 16: Former Turkish Cypriot village in Paphos region now used for keeping herd animals.

Sultan (71 years old) from Dali to Argaki/Akçay via Luricina and Nicosia

In 1963, Sultan was married and living with her husband in Dali. Dali had a large Turkish Cypriot population, and she says that they left the village for Potamia/Dereliköy when they felt under threat. In that year, they had a large potato crop, but the start of intercommunal violence put their ability to sell their crop in jeopardy. Her husband decided to go to Nicosia in the hope of finding a buyer for their crop, but he was stopped near Louridjina/Luricina with two of his friends, and they were taken into custody by Greek Cypriot police.

Three days passed, five days passed, there was no one coming, and no one to bring us news. In those days, my brother-in-law was working in the Turkish Embassy. After twenty days someone came and tapped on the window and said that I was wanted urgently on the telephone. I went to the village square, and it was my brother-in-law on the phone. 'Sister-in-law, they've let my brother go and he's with me right now,' he said, and he gave him the phone, and we talked, and that afternoon he came back to the village.

She says that they had been taken to the prison, but there it became clear that there was no reason to keep them. The police sergeant in charge ordered them to be released. After her husband returned, however, they remained only one more night in the village.

At that time my oldest child was newly born, only six months old. They said there had been fighting in Arpalık [Ayios Sozomenos] village, and the next day we had to leave for Luricina, which was three kilometers away. At that time I had a younger sister who was studying in Ankara, and she had come for holiday. My sister and I took the baby and walked to Luricina. My husband followed us, because he was carrying the older people. They had said to us the young people would stay in the village, but the old people and the women and children would go to Akıncılar [Luricina].... Soon Dereliköy [Potamia] also left their village for Akıncılar. After we'd been in Luricina a few days, we got news that they had attacked Iskele and Arpalık, so my husband said we should take refuge in Nicosia. There were Turkish soldiers in Nicosia, and in any case, he said, if Nicosia falls that means there won't be any Turks left in Cyprus.

Sultan says that they went to Nicosia, where the family was scattered. They rented a house from an Armenian woman, but the house was completely empty, and they had no means to furnish it. After remaining there for some time, they returned to their village and began farming again in their fields near Potamia. She says that year they planted potatoes, cotton, and five hundred dönüms of wheat. But again troubles began, and they were forced to flee again to Luricina, leaving behind their five hundred dönüms of wheat and their tractor.

My husband became ill from fear. This man who had never been afraid, they managed to take him prisoner and frighten him so much he became ill. For several years we kept moving around until in 1974 we finally settled in Akçay [Argaki]. We found a place that was Turkish Cypriot property and we rented it, and my husband began to buy and sell wheat and barley and flour.

Although her family still has several hundred dönüms of land in and around Dali village, she says that they have no plans to return and have settled permanently in Argaki/Akçay.

Ayhan (63 years old) - from Yeroshibou to Kyrenia/Girne via Avdimou/Düzakaya

Ayhan is a watchmaker who was the last of five children in a family of modest means. His father was a traveling quilt salesman, while his mother cleaned houses and washed clothes. Only the middle child, a boy, was able to finish school, while the other boys acquired trades. Yeroshibou, where he spent his first years, was at the time a mixed village with approximately 3000 Greek Cypriots and a small Turkish Cypriot minority of about 150. In 1962, before intercommunal conflict began in the rest of the island, an incident in the village caused intercommunal tension. They first began sleeping in a neighbor's home, which they considered safer, and his older brothers kept guard over the home at night. He says that at first he did not understand why his brothers were keeping guard, until one night he saw a group of Greek Cypriots wandering the neighborhood with guns and sticks. His brothers had created a shield behind which they kept watch on the neighborhood, and he remembers one evening his mother taking him to the roof of the house.

My mother showed me the star and crescent in the sky, just like in the [Turkish] flag. I'm not particularly nationalist, but I'm explaining it because it affected me. Some time later my mother said that the next morning we would move to my sister's house in Evdim [Avdimou], and told us to get ready. I asked my mother why we were going there when we had our own home, and she told us that this was what was necessary. In any case, we got ready, and in those days we didn't have a lot of belongings, we just took a table and chairs and two beds. I remember that there was a wood-cased bus, and we tied my wardrobe to that.

They were staying with his sister in Avdimou when intercommunal fighting began in 1963. His brother-in-law was working in the English base in Dhekelia, and because it had become difficult for him to get to work, they decided to move to Limassol, where Ayhan's oldest brother lived.

Ayhan was only able to finish primary school, but he always had an interest in music. At the age of fifteen, he began to play drums in a pop music band, and they played in bars in Limassol, some of which were frequented by UN soldiers. At the same time, he began learning his trade at the side of the man who would become his father-in-law. In addition,

he served as a mücahit for four years, and after his original music group disbanded, he formed another group at the order of his commander. The group was an immediate success, and they became one of the most popular bands in the Turkish Cypriot community.

He married in 1972 and began to work with his father-in-law as a watchmaker. He says that life continued in this way until 1974. By that time, he had finished his military service but was called back on 15 July. They remained for almost ten days in a riverbed, where he says that they did not fire their weapons but were constantly in danger of being hit by mortar fire. When they were finally told to surrender, they were ordered to dispose of their guns and go to the hospital. There, he found his mother and sisters.

Around eight o'clock the Greek Cypriot soldiers came, they were frightened, and they rounded us all up and took us to a school. The next day they let the women and children and old people go. There was a road called By-Pass, and they walked us down that road. While I was walking, there was a man nicknamed Topçu beside me, and he took off his military boots and began to walk in bare feet on the asphalt. At that moment, there were Greek Cypriots who had come to watch us walking by, and one Greek Cypriot woman took off her slippers and threw them at him, and he put them on. In other words, there really are good people among the Greek Cypriots. They took us to a stadium, and they told us, you're going to die, you're Turkish dogs, but we really didn't care in that state of mind. We went to a stadium surrounded with barbed wire, and with the prisoners coming from Lefke, we were 700 people. The next day a bulldozer came and began digging a pit, and we were afraid they were going to kill us and bury us, but it turned out they were digging a toilet. The next day they came with a tanker and brought water, and the third day they came with a truck of grapes.

After a week, he says, they took them to a school, where they separated them into groups. He was a prisoner of war for a hundred days, after which they brought him to the Ledra Palace as part of the prisoner exchange. However, at the time his entire family, including his wife, were still in Limassol. His wife managed to get to the north with the help of the English director of the Episkopi base, where she was working. The director gave her a paper saying that she was to go to Dhekelia to sit an exam, and once she entered the base, she crossed to the north. His sisters later came by paying one hundred sterling each to be smuggled across by a Greek Cypriot minibus driver.

Although their watch shop in Limassol had been vandalized and looted, Ayhan's father-in-law managed to salvage some goods and smuggled them to the north several months later with the help of a Greek Cypriot policeman. They were given a house, which he says had only a refrigerator in it and which they subsequently repaired. Later he was given the shop where he still works.

After the opening of the checkpoints, he visited Yeroshibou but found their homes in ruins.

Our house in Yeroshibou had fallen down. It had two separate parts. One part was long and made of stone, and that part had fallen down. There was one part that my mother had built out of brick so that my brother could study more comfortably, and that was still standing. There's an old woman staying there, but I didn't go and knock on the door.

Although he wants a federal solution, he is of the opinion that Greek Cypriot society has not changed enough.

For instance, when the This Country Is Ours platform was formed, I supported it. I was thinking, both sides suffered, we lost our property, we lost loved ones, and now we're smarter. But later I saw that both the Greek Cypriots I had known before 1974 and the ones I met after the opening always look at you as a Turk, and they say things that are unacceptable. For example, they ask, 'What are Turkish soldiers doing here? Why did people leave here?' Like they don't know. 'The army's going to leave and you'll return to your homes,' they say. When I say I don't have a home anymore, they say we'll build one for you. Okay, but I came here when I was 25 years old and now I'm 63. I spent more of my life on this side than on that one. I can't return, and in any case my body couldn't take going back and starting again. I want a bicomunal, bizonal federation like the UN has accepted. We don't need to live together; let's live apart and get along well.



Image 17: Burned trees where the Turkish Cypriot village of Finike once stood and which today is a dam.

Kıymet (69 years old) - from Limassol to Kyrenia/Girne

Kıymet is originally from the Turkish neighborhood of Limassol, where she lived with her family until leaving to study at university in Istanbul in 1960. She was in high school in Limassol in the late 1950's when, she says, the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot neighborhoods became more clearly separated. 'There was no clear line,' she relates, 'but whenever anything happened, everyone went to their own side.' Her family home was just at the border between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot neighborhoods of the city. Their neighborhood became a place of refuge for Turkish Cypriots fleeing from surrounding villages and areas outside the city.

She relates the concern that she felt around her when the Republic of Cyprus was founded, around the time that she left Cyprus for university in Istanbul.

Actually, among the Turks nobody believed in the future of the Republic. They didn't think that the Greek Cypriots could be trusted, but still we were expecting it to last ten years, no one was expecting that it would last only two or three years. The only thing we trusted in was the 650 Turkish soldiers, we were thinking that if anything happened the Turkish army would save us. I remember my maternal grandmother and grandfather were very glad when the Republic was founded, because they were saying partition won't happen now, we'll all get to stay in our homes. My grandparents were living in Gilan (Koilani), and they were hiding in the mountains in fear that they were going to be killed. Finally they settled in Polemidia.

In 1963-4, when intercommunal fighting began in Cyprus, she was studying in her last year of university. At the time, she was unable to get news from her family because communications between Cyprus and Turkey were cut, and any news she received came to her via her relatives in England. At the time, Turkish Cypriot males were also not being allowed into the island, though in late 1964 she heard that females would be allowed to return. She had just graduated and was engaged to a Turkish Cypriot also studying in Turkey, but she decided to return to Cyprus to be with her family.

I was so glad when I saw my family, for six months I hadn't been able to get any word from them. When I saw them, they had all lost weight, they looked really terrible. Our house was in the Greek Cypriot neighborhood, but my family had been afraid and had moved to the Arnavut neighborhood on the Turkish side, they had rented a house with my brother and moved there.

She had studied to become a teacher and soon received word that she had been assigned to a school in Paphos. At the time, the Turkish Cypriot schools had been closed for almost a year, and in order to get the children caught up they attempted to teach two years in one. However, the biggest problem was that when she got to Paphos, she could not get back to Limassol again.

My family was in Limassol and my fiancée in Turkey. Actually, there were Turkish taxis between Limassol and Paphos, but there was no guarantee that when you got in a taxi it would actually make it to Limassol.

After some time her fiancée convinced her that the situation in Cyprus was not going to improve and that she should return to Turkey so that they could marry. She took her younger sister with her, and they went first by boat to Beirut, then on by plane to Adana. Her fiancée had graduated with a law degree but as a Cypriot was unable to practice law in Turkey, so he had taken a job with a pharmaceutical company and had been sent to Diyarbakır. They spent the next several years in Diyarbakır and Ankara, having their first child there, before returning to the island in 1968.

During the 1964-68 period, her parents and family had moved from their home on the border with the Greek Cypriot neighborhood and began renting a house in the Turkish neighborhood. Finally, they moved to another house below the UN forces station. When she returned to the island with her husband in 1968, he began working as a lawyer, and they built a house in the Çiftlik neighborhood outside the city. In 1974 they were living in this house when the coup d'état led them to take refuge with their relatives in the Turkish neighborhood.

My son was six years old and said 'Mom, I hope the Turkish soldiers come and we can see a war.' We were saying, we hope there's an agreement and the Turkish army doesn't come. The next day they were saying that Turkish soldiers were landing everywhere in the island, and because my mother's house was safe we were forty women waiting there, we waited all day but the Turkish army didn't come [to Limassol]. That evening an announcement was made that everyone should gather in the hospital garden, we were surrendering. We all went there, the weather was very hot, everything was black, there were burned cars everywhere. My son said at that moment, 'It's all my fault,' and he started crying because he had wanted there to be a war. I kissed him and held him so that he wouldn't cry.

The next day the women were released, but all men over sixteen years of age were taken prisoner. When they returned home, all the women of the neighborhood began to take refuge in their house, now that the men had been taken.

They were thinking that it was safer because of the UN soldiers. We all sat around crying for a while, until finally I realized that I was hungry, and probably everyone else was hungry. There was macaroni in the house, we had bought a lot thinking there might be a war. We were forty-one women, and as I was thinking how to cook that much macaroni for that many people, my mother's laundry basin came to mind, and we cooked the macaroni in that and covered it with grated hellim and served everyone. Everyone was very pleased, they cried, they prayed. All night we were on

alert and taking turns keeping guard, because we were afraid of being raped. We stayed that way until the second operation, that is until 15 August [almost a month], and after that some of those whose homes were close began going home during the day and coming back at night. It was very hard, going to the toilet, bathing were problems. After 15 August the Greek Cypriots started fleeing, Limassol became filled with refugees. They were walking around in the streets, in fact they were coming and asking, do you have a blanket? Do you have plates and glasses you would sell? In fact, one day they came and said to me that Greek Cypriots had entered my house and taken everything. I told the UN soldiers, and they told me to tell the police, but the police were Greek Cypriot, so how could I go to them? I thought, well it's better our possessions than our lives, and I didn't think about it anymore. But one week later, they came and told me that someone had moved into our house. Until that moment it hadn't occurred to me, but the Greek Cypriot refugees were coming and moving into empty Turkish houses.

They had a Greek Cypriot tenant who managed to help them repair the damage to their house and rent it to someone trustworthy. Their new renter gave them 120 Cypriot liras in rent, which she said they desperately needed, as they had no income.



Image 18: The Turkish quarter of Limassol today.

In the meantime, her husband and all the men in her family remained imprisoned in a stadium, and they visited them twice a week, taking them food and other necessities.

[My husband] was a prisoner 96 days. Our Greek Cypriot renter took me there several times to see him. When he saw me, he said, 'They're asking us where we want to be taken, what should I say?' 'You should go wherever everyone else is going,' I said. He said, 'Everyone wants to go to Nicosia, everyone's going to the north.' 'In that case, you go, too,' I said. He wanted to know what would happen to us. I told him we'd find a way to get to the north. So he came to the north, almost all the men did. The only ones left in Limassol were women and old people. After some time, we heard that the women were also starting to find ways across. At that time, taxi drivers were taking Turks to the north for one or two liras, but soon the Greek Cypriot police got word and began setting up roadblocks because they wanted the Turks to stay in the south.

She describes how at that time people were finding ways to the north in hay carts, trucks filled with trash and bricks. She hadn't wanted to cross that way and thought she was fortunate when a bus driver who knew her husband came and told her that he was planning to send his children across, and she should go with them. At the time, she had a six-year-old boy and a baby girl, and she gathered them with only as many belongings as she could carry. She paid 120 Cypriot liras to go in a small car that ended up taking on eleven passengers. They went through back roads and finally made it to the Ledra Street crossing in Nicosia, which their guide thought was the safest crossing point.

As we were trying to get down from the car, there was quite a lot of noise, and all of a sudden we heard a voice saying, 'Who's there?' When we heard the voice we all said at the same time, 'We're here!' They all came running, we got out of the car, they were asking us questions, and we couldn't answer for crying.

They had not been able to take many belongings, but her mother eventually brought photographs. They had also left three suitcases of books, diplomas, and photograph albums with their Greek Cypriot tenant, who brought them to the English bases. Her younger brother later arrived in a similar way, by a car that took the back roads through the mountains, while her younger sister came with a Turkish Cypriot driver. Her mother, on the other hand, came in a small rowboat that made the trip in choppy seas from Limassol to the Dhekelia base. Eventually, they rented a house in Kyrenia/Girne, and her husband began again to work as a lawyer. But she says that the effects of war remained with her for a long time.

I couldn't get over the psychological effects of the war for a long time. In my dreams I kept seeing the Greek submarines coming and bombing us, and that we couldn't escape because there were mountains behind us. I got a driving license but couldn't drive a car. For ten years I couldn't board an airplane. I was afraid of everything.

Around 1990, they built a large house in the hills outside Kyrenia and have lived there since. Even then, however, she still thought that they might return to Limassol.

When we came here I was always thinking that one day we would return to Limassol and be able to live there. But when the checkpoints opened in 2003 and we went there I understood that it wasn't just a matter of land, what made it what it was, were the people. When I went I couldn't find anyone I used to know. All the houses were empty and falling down. When I saw my own house I couldn't even knock on the door. It was like it wasn't Limassol, at least not my Limassol. The Turkish neighborhood was all run down. They hadn't even painted our house the way we had looked after things.... My friends are all here, my home is here, at this point Limassol doesn't mean anything to me.... Of course, it's a bitter situation, being displaced is horrible. We came of our own will, but because we were afraid for our lives. I pray that our children won't live through this, because being a refugee is hard.

Orhan (51 years old) - from Mari/Tatlısu to Kyrenia/Girne

Orhan comes from a large seaside village near Limassol that was entirely Turkish Cypriot before 1974. His father worked with an insecticide company serving the English base at Akrotiri. Although his village was not displaced in 1963-4, they received refugees from the neighboring villages of Maroni and Kalavason and later from Tochni/Taşkent. Because he spent his childhood in a Turkish Cypriot village that was also part of the Kophinou/Geçitkale enclave, he had no opportunities to meet Greek Cypriots. However, his grandfather who had worked in the mines and his father who worked on the English bases both spoke Greek and had Greek Cypriot friends.

My father knew Greek. If we had stayed and continued living over there and started working with the Greek Cypriots, we would have learned too, but it was hard to learn before about fourteen or fifteen years old. My father knew because he worked on the English bases, and my grandfather knew in any case. In fact, they would go out eating and drinking with Greek Cypriots. It was after the events of 1958 that this situation started.

He was fourteen years old in 1974, when they received many refugees from surrounding villages, especially from Tochni/Taşkent. Turkish Cypriot fighters at first took to the entrenchments surrounding the village, but within two days the UN forces came to the village and told them to surrender. Some young men refused and fled to the mountains, though they returned when calm had been restored. Within days all the males over sixteen were taken prisoner by Greek Cypriot forces and sent to a prisoner camp in Limassol. Later, they were exchanged to the north, where their families would join them. Because these prisoners were sent to the north, Orhan comments,

In fact, if they hadn't started taking prisoners, everyone was going to continue with their lives, they were going to go to their fields, they were going to look after their animals. I think that if this prisoner business hadn't happened on both sides, the division wasn't going to happen in Cyprus. It was after [the prisoner exchanges] that things became like this.

Although his brother was taken prisoner, his father was on the English base at the time and so remained there. He later sent a car for them and brought them to Akrotiri, where they stayed in a refugee camp set up in the base. Later, they were sent by plane to Adana, where they remained for fifteen days before coming back to Cyprus, this time by boat to the north.

The Mari/Tatlisu refugees were first assigned to Akanthou, but they found it too distant from potential sources of income.

They sent us to Akanthou and we went, but we didn't stay. At the time there were empty houses, but we didn't stay. Afterwards we went to Karavas and stayed there for a while. When first arriving here, a person felt a coldness, with the family on one side, and everyone dispersed. Afterwards we heard they were going to let people settle in Bellapais, so we went there. At least there were more of our own villagers there. By the time most of the Tatlisu people arrived, the Greek Cypriots had left, but when we got there we found Greek Cypriots still there.... There were four or five families, but gradually they were sent away.

Although they assigned houses by lot, in order to distribute the remaining property, he says that they established a commission to evaluate how much property refugees had left behind in the south.

At that time some of the leading older men of the village [Tatlisu, now in Bellapais] established a commission, and one of the members of that commission was my grandfather, who didn't even know how to read and write. A civil servant would come, and for instance he would ask the value of Orhan's fields, and if the commission said they were valuable he'd get, let's say 300 points.

He is of the opinion that the system established at the time mostly benefited those who were educated and knew how to take advantage of it, as well as those who had children of marrying age who qualified for homes of their own.

Although the first years were difficult, he attributes his own adaptation to his age:

We had difficulties in the first years, but probably children adapt more quickly, because they go to school, they learn a new environment, they make friends. It was really hardest for the older people, for instance a man's a farmer and is used to waking up at five every morning and going to his fields, and he comes here to Bellapais, and what's he supposed to do? For those people it was really hard.

Before 1974 his village was home to almost a thousand people, but he says that now it's empty apart from a handful of Greek Cypriot refugees. He has gone to the village only a couple of times since the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, because there is nothing left there for him.

We've seen our village, there's nothing left there. The houses are all destroyed; it's a mess. It's like one big ruin.... Even with the power plant, if you go to any of the other villages in that area, they're all very nice, they've been looked after, but because our village was Turkish it's a ruin, just destroyed.

He says that this is difficult to explain to Greek Cypriots that he has encountered. The owners of the house where his mother lives came several times to visit, and he relates that they argued with his mother about this.

They come sometimes, and they say, everyone should go back to their homes. Fine, but we don't have a home there anymore, so where are we supposed to go?... They said to my mother, 'Why don't you go to your own village, why are you here?' They said the same thing to me. For instance, I went with my son to the Greek Cypriot side, and we got in a taxi, and the taxi driver asked me where I was from. I said I'm from Mari. He said why don't you live in Mari, why are you living in Bellapais? I said, 'My son is from Bellapais. How am I supposed to go live there?' In any case, I don't remember the place well now. I think in two or three generations it's all going to be forgotten, because the new generation doesn't know anything about the south. My son and daughter, for instance, don't know anything.

He also emphasizes that at this point return is not an option for him or his family. And although he supports a negotiated solution, he emphasizes that it should be one that would not displace people again.

In any case if you give my family members money now, they wouldn't go back. A person's going to stay wherever their children are, and if your children don't want to go back, why should you?... At this point if there's going to be a solution to the property issue, we're going to have to forget about who got what and who took what. Because at this point almost forty years have passed, and there's going to have to be a solution that lets people stay where they are now.... In any case, there are people who've been refugees how many times, and maybe they're just now getting used to their life here, and you can't uproot them again and make them start over. If things stay as they are now, I think there can be a solution.

Vedia (71) and Nafiye (59) - from Alevga/Alevkaya to Yialousa/Yenierenköy via Kokkina/Erenköy

Vedia and Nafiye are sisters in a family of seven children originally from the remote Turkish Cypriot hamlet of Alevga/Alevkaya in the Tillyria/Dillirga region. Some of the men from the village used to travel to Lefke to work in the mines, and otherwise their family made a living from goat herding and their almond, apple, and fig trees. Both sisters remember the village as peaceful and their lives there as simple. The entire village was Greek-speaking, though Vedia remembers when they began to speak Turkish.

I remember when I began going to school, we had a teacher who always spoke to us in Greek. I went to school for three years, we carried the teacher's water, we did his chores, and we didn't learn a thing. In the fourth year a new teacher came, and he forbade us to speak Greek. Our mother didn't know Turkish, but our father did. Because we were forbidden to speak Greek, we would try to whisper the Turkish words to our mother. She understood, but she never spoke. I had a younger sister, the smallest one, she only knew Turkish. We always spoke Turkish with her. She understood Greek, but she didn't speak it. Our mother understood Turkish, but she didn't speak it.

Vedia remembers clearly when tensions began with the surrounding villages. She was a young girl when the EOKA rebellion began, but she remembers being afraid to take their animals to pasture. In addition, she says, the British soldiers forbade them to take their animals into the mountains in the belief that they might be taking food or weapons to the EOKA rebels.

It all started slowly. First EOKA shot some of our people in Lefke. We had men working in the mines, and while they were going there by car, EOKA stopped the car and shot them. Two people died, and one or two were injured. After that it really started. That event was 1957, before the war began. By that time things were heating up. We didn't have any guns at the time apart from a hunting rifle. During the religious holidays, the men would go to the mosque, and we women would wait outside with bottles and stones in case there was an attack. Things went on like that for two or three years, and then our people started trying to get weapons.³⁴ We went to our

³⁴ In 1958, the nearby village of Kokkina/Erenköy became the main bridgehead for smuggling weapons from Turkey into the island. Smuggling activities continued in the early 1960's, and with the outbreak of intercommunal violence in late 1963, Kokkina/Erenköy and surrounding villages came under attack from Greek Cypriot forces. In addition, in summer 1964 approximately 550 young Turkish Cypriot men then studying in Turkey and abroad made the trip across the water from Turkey and landed at Kokkina/Erenköy. In early August, a battle broke out in which Turkish Cypriot forces were pushed back into Erenköy, and villagers from the surrounding villages took refuge there. This was followed by the Turkish military intervention of 1964, when Turkish jets bombed surrounding Greek Cypriot targets and villages. Following this battle, those who had taken refuge in Erenköy were effectively trapped there for the next decade.

fields one day, and we saw two or three Greek Cypriots with guns. By that time we were really scared. Our people slowly started preparing, and so did their people, and slowly, slowly the war started.

Vedia married when she was in her late teens, and by early 1964 she had two small children. What is clearest in her recollection is the beginning of what is called in Greek the Battle of Tylliria and in Turkish the Battle of Erenköy. She and her sister invariably refer to this as 'war' (*savaş*). Certainly, this region was the only one during the period that experienced assault with heavy artillery and bombing from warships and airplanes.

The war started at that point, and we had no cave, no place to hide, we were on the top of a mountain. An order came from Erenköy that we should retreat, the forest was starting to burn, and the area around us was going to burn.... The men were in the mountains, and we were women and children, we didn't see a single male. We started fleeing down the mountain, down the riverbeds and through the brush and thorns. I had given birth only 17 days earlier. I was carrying the baby, and I had another one who would turn two in just a few days. I told this one [her younger sister], 'take the baby, I can't.' I couldn't walk, I was sick. I don't know how many others there were like me. We were two or three women who'd just given birth, and one was pregnant. And how the bullets were flying!

Nafiye adds,

You wouldn't believe how the bullets and mortars were flying around our heads! I don't know how we got down the mountain! And she was crying behind me, and I had tied the baby to my back. I still don't understand how we made it. I was just a child, and I was carrying a baby.

According to Vedia, they first went to the mosque and were taken from there to a large cave, where others who had taken refuge from the surrounding villages were hiding.

We were sleeping in the sand, hungry and thirsty. I hadn't even taken a diaper for the children. Because we thought we were going to return, so we didn't take anything!

They describe how their parents remained in the village thinking that in any case the children would return the next day. Nafiye relates how she cried for her mother, as she was only a child at the time. Finally, the UN forces brought their parents to Pyrgos, and from there they made their way to Erenköy. After three days staying in the cave, Vedia says that her children were starving. On the fourth day, there was a break in the fighting, and they were able to make their way to a relative's house, where they ate and bathed. When a ceasefire was declared, their parents made their way to Erenköy, and they began to search for some sort of shelter.

My cousin said, stay with us, but we were twenty people. My father went and found a house that was falling down. The roof had fallen in, and we moved into that. We were fifteen people sleeping all together on the ground. Later, they gave each of us a blanket, and because it was summer, we spread that on the ground and slept on it.

They describe a life over the next several years filled with a struggle for basic necessities. Nafiye says that they gathered dried seaweed and filled sacks with it to make beds. They became covered in lice and fleas, and they washed the blankets incessantly. For approximately a year, they were under a strict siege and on the verge of starvation, struggling to survive on their limited rations. Nafiye says,

They would give a small bread to four people. One little slice of bread, a few olives. We would slice the olives into little pieces.

All the men of fighting age were in the mountains, and they say that they did not see them for almost a year.

For one year we didn't see our men at all. We would see them from afar in the trenches, we'd go there and speak to them and run off. For a whole year they didn't come back to see their children. They would bathe with cold water in the mountains.



Image 19: Incense and flowers left on grave in Kokkina/Erenköy during annual ceremony to commemorate the battle of August 1964.

During that time, the women struggled to find adequate shelter. In 1965, the Red Crescent brought them tents, and they lived in these for three or four years. At one point, large pieces of driftwood washed up on the shore, and they mixed these with mud to build makeshift houses. Vedia says,

Later, I don't know how many years later, three or four years later, they built refugee houses, and they gave them to half of us. Most people stayed in the caves for four or five years. They would have their tent, but they would also use the cave.

For the first year of this existence, they also shared their supplies with the students who were similarly trapped there. However, in fall 1965 the students had been evacuated, leaving those trapped in the village to fend for themselves.

After 1968, they were able to leave the enclave on a limited basis, and some people began to go to Lefke and elsewhere to work. In 1970, when refugee housing was built for them, they began to rebuild their lives, though still unable to access their own homes and lands.

We fixed up our refugee houses, we put in beds, I had a refrigerator that I'd bought only three days before. I bought that refrigerator, it was new, and three days later the war started again. Bombs and mortars fell, and our house burned, it was just ash. There were seven houses side by side. My child was sleeping, I wrapped him in a blanket and ran to the cave, and when I turned around to look, there was nothing left.

At the age of thirteen, Nafiye became a *mücahide*, or female fighter, and worked as a wireless radio operator, transmitting messages between fighters in the enclave and the central command. She continued working as a wireless operator for more than nine years, getting married and having children in the meantime. While Vedia looked after her children, she would go to her job at the military headquarters.

During 1974, although the enclave was ordered to surrender, the villagers refused. The women were again trapped in the village and feared being taken captive. Nafiye says,

They told us we were going to surrender, that the Greek Cypriots were coming. We said, 'In that case give us a gun so we can shoot ourselves!' All of us knew how to shoot, how to use a gun. So instead they took everything we had, since they knew we were going to shoot ourselves! There was an old man, he had a hunting rifle. 'Don't be afraid,' he said, 'I'm going to come and shoot you all.' He swore to us. We were four girls. 'I'm going to shoot you, and then I'll shoot myself. Don't be afraid, I won't leave you to the Greek Cypriots.' And we would sometimes go outside, the toilet was outside, and in the dark the old man would show his cigarette as though to say, 'Don't be afraid, I'm here.'

Nafiye relates how she was so afraid of being taken captive that she would volunteer to deliver messages to dangerous places, because she wanted to be shot. Vedia adds decisively, 'We defended ourselves, we defended our country, and we defended our honor' (*Hem kendi kendimizi koruduk, hem de vatanımızı hem namusumuzu*).

Because the villagers refused to surrender, Erenköy was again isolated for the next two years, until the Turkish Cypriot administration ordered them to give up their weapons and be taken by boat out of what had become by then a Turkish Cypriot exclave. They were eventually resettled in the village of Yialousa, which they renamed Yenierenköy, or New Erenköy. Nafiye says that since that time they have had very few thoughts about what they left behind.

Over there, four or five villages had taken refuge in one little village, and just think, we were there for ten years. We were in that tiny place. Of course we liked it when we came here and could be free. We didn't have a real house here. It wasn't like it is now. It was Greek Cypriot property, but it was about to fall down. It was all in ruin. There were only five or six houses that were decent when we arrived. But in time we repaired them, we made them livable.

After the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, they went back to see their village, but there was nothing left. They say that their houses had been built of stone, but even the stones had disappeared. Nothing was left of the many trees that they remember from their childhood. When asked if they would think of returning, they both exclaim, 'No, never! We have no village anymore.'



Image 20: Goat among the ruins of one of two buildings still visible in Alevga/Alevkaya.

They relate that they have had visits from the Greek Cypriot owners of their houses, but Nafiye complains that the visits are not to the homes they left behind.

They come, and they say, this was mine, this was like that, that was like this. In addition, they exaggerate, as though they left it like this! As though it was like this before. We did everything! We repaired it! I swear to you, when it rained, we'd have to go outside, because we were afraid the roof was going to collapse on us!

When asked about their views of a political solution, they both say that there should be a bicomunal, bizonal state, but their interpretation of that is living side by side. Vedia says,

I hope they'll stay on that side and we'll stay on this side. It's better that way. Let's not mix up too much, or we won't be able to get along. We want two zones and two states.

CONCLUSION

The stories in this booklet represent a variety of experiences, as well as a spectrum of political views and orientations. We have tried to let persons speak in their own words, and to represent as accurately as possible their hopes for political futures in the island. While some believe in a future in which the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities will be more thoroughly integrated, most express the desire for a bizonal federal solution in which the two communities will be 'good neighbors.' While all express attachment to their former homes, almost all say that the passage of time has made return undesirable, even impossible. Moreover, reflection on events over the past decade has shaped the ways in which Turkish Cypriots today speak about their former homes and villages, as well as the process of displacement. As a result, we can note certain common themes that emerge from the stories that are important for thinking about Turkish Cypriots' current approaches to the political future.

1. Post-Annan uncertainties

Clearly the most important event shaping the ways that Turkish Cypriots today think about the past in relationship to the future was the easing of movement restrictions in 2003, followed only a year later by Greek Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan. For almost all of the interviewees, return to visit their neighborhoods and villages created shock and disappointment. Even in cases where homes were intact, they said that 'nothing was the same' and 'it wasn't the place I remembered.' Most experienced the pain of finding their homes dilapidated, in ruin, or covered with public works or other buildings. One response to this was not to cross south again; another response was to continue to cross but not to go to one's home or former village. Of those interviewed, only two persons who have good memories of their childhoods with Greek Cypriots and who are currently politically active in reunification movements continue to go to their villages, despite their homes having been destroyed. For most, however, visits to their former homes after the opening appears to have facilitated closing a last door onto the past.

Equally important was the Greek Cypriot rejection of a UN-brokered reunification plan in 2004. While for some who were actively involved in the reunification movement the Greek Cypriot rejection was itself a shock, for many others the shock came afterwards, when it became clear that their own support for the plan would not be 'rewarded' by the international community, and that they would not be rescued from the uncertainties of living in an unrecognized state. *Belirsizlik*, or uncertainty, is the primary anxiety, as it has made

it difficult for people to plan their lives and make investments in the future. As one interviewee said, 'Our parents tried to make our lives better and couldn't. We've tried to make our children's lives better and couldn't. Why are we always the ones being punished?' The continuing uncertainty about their political status, as well as a prevalent belief since the 2004 referendum that 'Greek Cypriots don't want us,' has now caused many people simply to want a resolution of their uncertain state, whether a federal solution or another option.

At the same time, the sense that their own willingness to compromise in 2004 was met with rejection has led many people to less compromising positions. Importantly, all seventeen interviewees from Morphou said that they believed it was better for Turkish Cypriots living in Morphou not to be displaced again and that any other plan would probably not pass at referendum. And although party affiliation plays an important role in perceptions of the past and future, even those leftists who tend to have more regular contact with Greek Cypriots today express concern that large-scale Turkish Cypriot displacement will be extremely difficult and that any displacement should be minimal, with a clear-cut plan to resettle communities and facilitate their socio-economic rehabilitation.

2. Meaning of a bizonal/bicommunal federation

It becomes clear from these interviews that the most common interpretation of a bizonal, bicommunal federation is a loose one, in which two ethnically defined states exist side-by-side under a federal umbrella. This is expressed by interviewees as 'two states and one federal state,' or 'they'll stay on that side and we'll stay on this side.' This coincides with the general unwillingness of interviewees to be uprooted again or to contemplate a solution that would uproot Turkish Cypriots from the places where they have lived for almost four decades. Even strong supporters of the Annan Plan may now say, as one of our interviewees did, that 'people shouldn't be forced to become refugees a fourth time.'

3. Difference between individual and community

The previous sentence also reflects a difference that may be noted in these interviews between what people are willing to contemplate for themselves and what they consider to be an adequate solution to the island's division. While a number of interviewees said that they believe that Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots can live together, and while some were willing to contemplate return, either of Greek Cypriots to their homes or of Turkish Cypriots to the south, they also attempted to reflect what they believe to be the general sentiment of the community, which they expressed as a desire not to become refugees again. This sometimes reflected fears for their parents, who are now too old to suffer another displacement. In other cases it reflected the desires of their children, who know little of the south and have made their lives in the north. In other words, the generational differences seen in narratives of displacement may nevertheless be overcome when thinking about a solution that would be best for families and communities.

In all of these life stories, then, interviewees not only narrate their life experiences but also relate these to the larger political and social context. In sum, we may conclude from these interviews that Turkish Cypriots today wish to remain as communities within a Turkish Cypriot constituent state, if a federal solution is put on the table. For certain communities, however, this would entail further displacement, as the areas where they would now live may be subject to territorial readjustment. Currently, the idea of further displacement is met with resistance. However, an even more important and overriding concern is that of 'uncertainty,' which many people understand as not only uncertainty for themselves but also for their children. A solution that they perceive as overcoming that uncertainty and guaranteeing a better life for their children may enable people to weigh individual sacrifices against the good of the community.

The report can be ordered from:
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Life Stories: Turkish Cypriot Community

Over the past half century, Cyprus has experienced several waves of displacement that have uprooted villages, severed ties of people and land, and remade the social geography of the island. For the more than 215,000 Cypriots who have been displaced, the flight from their homes and resettlement elsewhere is both a lasting personal trauma and, for many, a political cause. For some, there is a desire for return; for others, there is an insistence on remaining where they are and a refusal to be displaced again. These desires are reflected in media and political rhetoric and shape the ways that many Cypriot displaced persons perceive not only the political future but also their own experiences of loss and uprooting. Moreover, the division of the island led to almost three decades in which Cypriots on either side of the Green Line emphasized their own suffering and loss while unable to see what those in the other community had experienced.

The PRIO project 'Displacement in Cyprus: Consequences of Civil and Military Strife' brings together the life stories of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who underwent displacement. Our aim is to enable a better understanding of what members of the other community experienced, as well as how those experiences shape their lives today and their hopes for the future. This report summarizes the findings of thirty life history interviews with Turkish Cypriots displaced from the island's south to the north. Part I provides an introduction to Turkish Cypriot displacement, including a brief history of that displacement and a summary of factors shaping the ways in which Turkish Cypriots think about and recount that uprooting today. Part II then provides summaries of ten of those stories in order to give the reader insight into the variety of experiences of displacement and resettlement. And while routes of displacement and modes of resettlement are varied, there are certain convergent visions of the future as a result of these experiences, which are summarized in Part III. In that concluding section, the report addresses ways in which Turkish Cypriot displaced persons are now envisioning the future, including their own potential displacement in the event of a negotiated settlement.

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