

Greek has fought Turk for years in Cyprus. Now there could be peace. Mark Ottaway reports on an interview with Makarios

Nicosia, July 6

TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO, when they ordained him Ethnarch of the Greek Cypriots, Archbishop Makarios vowed undying allegiance to the principle of Enosis. Since then, that principle—the union of Cyprus with mainland Greece—has had much British, Greek and Turkish blood poured on it.

Enosis was the passion which sustained Grivas and the EOKA guerrillas. Turkish Cypriot fears of Enosis inflamed the intercommunal fighting which has kept United Nations troops in Cyprus since 1963.

Yesterday, in a private talk, the Archbishop told me quietly that he would be prepared to renounce the principle of Enosis if that were to be the price for a peaceful, unified Cyprus. "I would be very unhappy of course," he said. "But when such a day comes I shall consider it."

The Archbishop's change of mind is reluctant: it derives clearly, from changes in the attitude of the Greek Government on the mainland.

The interview took place while fresh talks were starting between the Greek and Turkish communities. Officially these talks, which have to succeed if Cyprus's uneasy peace is not to be blown apart, are not about Enosis at all. They are about the division of power inside Cyprus.

But Enosis has always been the real barrier to agreement. The Turks have always feared that any concessions on their part would open the way for a Greek takeover. As Rauf Denktash, the Turkish negotiator puts it: "Enosis never is the whole psychology behind our negotiations."

The Colonels decide

Before yesterday's interview, Makarios had been hinting at his loss of faith in Enosis. But Turkish fears are not to be assuaged by hints—"I do not trust a single hair of Makarios's beard," says Denktash bluntly.

Even the Archbishop's signature on a treaty may not be enough. And no one knows whether the Turkish side can suppress their paranoia sufficiently to make the necessary concessions on their part. (One cannot resist noting that one of the Law Faculty at Istanbul—is named Orhan Aldikacti, which means "Grab it and run.")

Up to now, the chief Greek negotiator, Glafcos Clerides, has been seen taking a tougher line than President Makarios. But Clerides (who is leader of the Greek majority party in Cyprus) told me yesterday that if all other differences with the Turks can be resolved, then he would be able to "recognise the reasons which might compel the President to sign, providing the Greek Government is of the same opinion."

Why would the Greek Cypriots now be prepared

THE END OF ENOSIS?



President Makarios: "I am not a party leader, I rely on the people as a whole without discrimination"

Foreign Ministry in Ankara, and were startled to hear the Greek Ambassador to Turkey tell them: "We have tried to get rid of Makarios, and we couldn't. Now we are going to have to learn to live with him, and so are you."

President Makarios, of course, has not been slow to sense the powerful new accord between Greece and Turkey. "We do not have the right," he told General Grivas, "to involve Greece in a war with Turkey over Cyprus." He now believes that if the Cypriots fail to agree, then Greece and Turkey will continue to partition the island.

Nobody expects Grivas to like the turn of events. "The General," says one of his friends, "is here to see that no excessive concessions are made to the Turks," and the renunciation of Enosis would certainly strike him as "excessive." Equally certainly the Right-wing Enotist movement places more faith in force of arms than in democratic procedures (it is quite without

parliamentary representation).

But if Enosis were renounced with the consent of the mainland Government, the Cyprus National Guard—officered by mainland Greeks—would stay loyal to Makarios. And against the National Guard, Grivas would be powerless.

The General's only feasible revenge would be assassination. And even his supporters do not believe that Grivas wants to go down in history as the murderer of the Ethnarch.

Arguing over the police

NONE OF THIS means there is actual affection between Makarios and the junta in Athens. Hand-picked officers from the mainland continue to indoctrinate National Guard recruits with anti-Communist and anti-Makarios propaganda. The Archbishop blandly ignores this, while declining to reject the support of AKEL the Cyprus Communist Party.

"They gave me support for

their own reasons," he said. "As Archbishop, I cannot be a communist, but I have always held that communist theory is not incompatible with Christianity."

"Sometimes I used to ask myself am I Right or Left, but I know what I am. . . . I am not a party leader, I just rely on the people as a whole without discrimination."

The Archbishop is prepared to see the Turkish Cypriots have autonomy in areas like religion and cultural affairs. "But I will not agree to autonomy within the central government from top to bottom."

The toughest argument will probably be over the police. If the Greek Cypriots are to give up Enosis, they will certainly demand that the Turkish Cypriots give up the idea of separate police forces. "How can there be two police forces?" says Clerides. "Who can pay for two police forces?" says Makarios.

"I tell the Greeks," says Rauf Denktash, "that I don't want to give up my police force because I know what your police forces have done to us." It is not the only point upon which collision is possible (this week, the whole Turkish community was thrown into panic by a false report that Turkish was to be abolished as one of the official languages of Cyprus).

And the talks are all the more complicated because there are five parties present (mainland Greeks and Turks, plus Ribiano Sorio Tafal of the United Nations, as well as the Cypriot communities). Sources of complaint are innumerable: the Greeks supply the Turks with electricity, and claim that Turks don't pay their bills; the Turks claim to pay £5 million a year in import duties, and say they never see a penny of it again.

But before I saw President Makarios, Rauf Denktash told me: "If only Makarios would seize the opportunity and abandon Enosis, then a package deal on the constitution might well be possible."

It appears that Makarios may do just that: and it now seems possible that peace could come to Cyprus.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop is still playing his cards as foxily as ever. If the intercommunal talks were successful, I asked, would he stand again for the Presidency? "I don't want to answer that question," he said, "since I would not like to cause anxiety to the many candidates."

same opinion."

Why would the Greek Cypriots now be prepared to abandon the whole basis of their struggle for independence? Not all the reasons are clear—but some of them emerge from the details of President Makarios's conversation yesterday, and in particular from his revelations about the rather mysterious meeting he had with General Grivas on March 29.

THE PRESIDENT wore a simple blue robe with a gold cross. He sipped orange juice and smoked a cigarette—he never smokes in public—while he described the meeting with Grivas. "He suggested that I should resign from the Presidency and that we should together support an acceptable candidate who would support Enosis.

Can Grivas take revenge?

"I told him that there were many feasible solutions, but that Enosis was the one feasible solution which needed the co-operation of the Greek Government, and we would not have it." This is the essential clue to the new situation: the Greek military regime in Athens has made up its mind against Enosis, and as Makarios rather wryly admits, "you cannot have a marriage if only one party is willing."

No democratically-based Greek government could have made such a decision, of course. But the colonels are in a position to do so. They can see that Enosis would mean war with Turkey, and it seems this is a price they will not pay. No doubt they are well aware that the Americans, on whose tolerance they must depend, do not desire a war on the eastern flank of NATO.

The colonels' outlook has indeed changed dramatically. Only two years ago, a group of officers from mainland Greece were plotting very seriously to assassinate Makarios. Their reason was that he had not been pursuing Enosis with sufficient vigour: there can be little doubt that they were operating under orders from Athens, where an aggressively nationalistic foreign policy was in favour.

Ten days ago, members of the Turkish-Cypriot community attended a lunch at the Turkish