

**An addition to the Turkish translation of Dr. Volkan's *Cyprus-War and Adaptation*, 2008**

**PART: II**

**CYPRUS: WAR AND ADAPTATION, 2008**

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**Back to my dream of seven layered oriental rugs**

The book published in English in 1979 that the reader has just finished reading in Turkish begins with my dream of seven layers of oriental rugs, a dream to which I make free associations throughout the book. The reader will note that in the last chapter I return to it again, stating that the number seven might also be related to the seven bullets which were used by the EOKA terrorists in 1957 to kill my former roommate. I describe how, when I began writing my book I did not realize the strength of my “survival guilt” that stemmed from my outliving someone who called me “abi,” meaning “older brother.” Since I only had sisters and no brother, I too considered Erol to be my brother. It took me many, many years to understand fully how his death influenced me, especially in my professional identity.

Massive traumas at the hands of “enemies” affect both individuals and societies for decades. To illustrate this, I will start this addition to the Turkish translation of my book by telling the story of how Erol’s death decades ago continued to influence my individual psychology after I finished writing, *Cyprus: War and Adaptation*. Then I will describe the massive societal trauma experienced by the Cypriot Turks in the 1960s and 1970s and the consequences it continues to have on their large-group psychology. I will suggest that at the present time the Cypriot Turks are experiencing a kind of large-group identity confusion.

After receiving the news of Erol’s death early in 1957 I felt numb. I did not cry. I had just come to Chicago and in this foreign environment I was close to no one, so I did not share the news of Erol’s murder with any other person. Even when I was undergoing my personal analysis some years later, I did not dwell on losing Erol. My “hidden” mourning process, I believe, largely remained just that—

hidden. As a young analyst I felt close to the late psychoanalyst William Niederland even though he lived in New York far away from me. I thought of him as a mentor and communicated with him whenever I could. At the time it never occurred to me that my seeking out Dr. Niederland, who had coined and described (Niederland, 1961, 1964, 1968) the term “survivor syndrome,” as my mentor might have something to do with my losing Erol and my own “survival guilt.” In 1979 I published my book, “*Cyprus: War and Adaptation*,” in which, as mentioned above, I briefly described Erol’s murder. During the same year I began my involvement in international affairs. After working with Arabs and Israelis for over six years, I was involved in bringing together Soviets and Americans, and later Russians and Estonians, among others, to find peaceful solutions for their large-group conflicts. At the same time I was trying to understand the psychology of ethnic, national, religious or ideological conflicts that are associated with massive losses. During these years I also visited Cyprus on many occasions, but it never occurred to me to visit Erol’s family or find out where his grave was.

Thirty-some years after Erol’s death I once more visited Cyprus. One summer night some friends took me to a garden restaurant called “Grapewines” in Kyrenia, and one of them who knew Erol’s story pointed out a bearded man behind the bar and told me that this man was Erol’s younger brother. I spontaneously got up from my chair and approached this man and said to him: “My name is Vamik. Does this name mean anything to you?” He began to cry and I found myself also crying, right in the midst of people dining with soothing classical music playing in the background. This event activated my mourning process which lasted for many months. This time I was very aware of it.

I do not know if my reaction to Erol’s death can be called pathological or if it would be considered normal. My focus here will be on the fact that losing him also initiated reparative efforts in me. I became fully aware of this after my mourning process was activated in the restaurant. I realized then that the main reason for my choosing, as a psychoanalyst, to study the topic of mourning in individuals and societies for many years (Volkan, 1981; Volkan and Zintl, 1993) was connected with my previously unconscious response to Erol’s death. I was fascinated with my new understanding that my spending considerable time in conflicted areas of the world and refugee camps where victims constantly deal with losses was connected with my own reparative efforts. I can say that I

felt, first unconsciously, a kind of obligation to work on behalf of Erol's wishes. As time passed I realized that in my mind his main wish was for himself to remain alive and not to induce guilt in me. If Erol had not been killed, I might still have been interested in trying to understand the influence the so-called "Cyprus problem" has had on the island's population, since it created other traumas for me in my life besides Erol's murder. But, I believe his murder became my personal symbol for this historical tragedy.

I wished that people under the influence of ethnic, national, religious or ideological conflicts would not kill others belonging to opposing large groups. Instead, I wanted them to make peace. I studied, along with Norman Itzkowitz (Volkan and Itzkowitz, 1994) the centuries-long history of Greek-Turkish relationships from a psychoanalytic angle. I became fascinated with the realization that I had chosen a Greek-American psychiatrist, Dr. Demetrius Julius, as my primary co-worker in our international efforts. For decades Dr. Julius and I presented ourselves as a Greek and a Turk working together to tame aggression between warring parties in the world. I also realized that I was partnering with a Greek in another arena as well. I co-chaired the American Psychoanalytic Association's so-called Sexual Deviations Study Group with the late Charles Socarides, another Greek-American, for ten years. I co-edited several books with both of my Greek-American colleagues. I was not fixated on the past; I was able to find other "brothers," and some of them were even Greeks.

During the fall of 2007 I spent three months in Turkey teaching political psychology at Bahçeşehir University and psychoanalysis at Cerrahpaşa Medical School, both in Istanbul. While in Turkey, I was also involved in a major meeting in Ankara that brought together American, Turkish, Iranian, Israeli, Jordanian, Russian, Northern Irish, Austrian, and Indian representatives for unofficial diagnostic work on the so-called Western World-Islamic World split. I was also on various television talk shows, and during one such occasion I mentioned Erol's story. The next day a woman called me and told me that Erol was her uncle. We had an emotion-filled meeting. She told me that she was four years old when her uncle was murdered, and she wanted to know more about him and his life in Ankara as a medical student. A few days later she came to see me again, accompanied by a much younger woman, her niece, who also wanted to know about Erol and his world. During my moving encounters with these two women I noticed how transgenerational transmission of trauma (Volkan,

Greer and Ast, 2001) was certainly at work at the individual level. Furthermore, my meeting with them reactivated my mourning process.

After briefly describing how the influence of a trauma, issues of mourning, and reparative efforts continue in an individual—in this case me—for decades, I now turn my attention to the consequences of massive trauma at the hands of others on a societal level. Unfortunately, not all consequences are reparative; they may also include negative and harmful outcomes.

### **Cypriot Greeks' and Cypriot Turks' most devastating societal traumas**

On many occasions, since the publication of the English edition of *Cyprus: War and Adaptation*, I have been present when Greek and Turkish scholars, diplomats or students met unofficially to discuss the “Cyprus problem.” It is beyond the scope of this chapter to list and describe events that took place between my writing the book and the present. My focus here is on the Cypriot Turks' long-term adaptation to the traumatic events that took place in the 1960s and 1970s.

When Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks, and in fact Greeks and Turks in general, speak or write about what happened in Cyprus during the last five decades, they select and highlight two different events respectively as the most traumatic and devastating for their communities. Greeks rank the landing of the Turkish army on the island in July 1974 and the dividing of the island by a *de facto* border into northern Turkish and southern Greek sections as their most devastating societal trauma during the “Cyprus problem.” When Turks speak or write about the “Cyprus problem” they go back to 1963 and recount their horror story as originating when the Greek Cypriots, who outnumbered Cypriot Turks four to one, forced the Cypriot Turks to live in subhuman conditions in enclaves geographically limited to three percent of the island. They lived this way, surrounded by their enemies, for eleven years.

To this day, the Cypriot Turks' experience of living in the enclaves continues to influence their present-day large-group identity issues. Following Erik Erikson's (1956) remarks about an individual's identity, I define large-group identity, whether it refers to religion, nationality, or ethnicity, as the subjective experience of millions of people—tens of thousands of people in the case

of Northern Cyprus—most of whom will never meet during their lifetimes and are linked by a persistent sense of sameness while also sharing some characteristics with others who belong to foreign groups. I will suggest that, other historical and political factors aside, the Cypriot Turks' present identity confusion is a consequence of the massive societal trauma that occurred during the initial decades of the "Cyprus problem."

The landing of the Turkish army on the northern part of Cyprus in July 1974 is usually described by Greeks as "all hell breaking loose," a time when many young Greek soldiers on the island were killed, others were captured and still others became missing persons. Tens of thousands of Cypriot Greeks were forced to escape to the southern part of the island as the Turkish soldiers took the northern part. Greeks sometimes speak or write about "systematic rapes" of Greek women by the Turkish soldiers who, according to their perceptions, also killed hundreds of civilians. The Cypriot Greek economy, which is flourishing at present, also collapsed at that time.

What happened during the summer of 1974 obviously massively traumatized Cypriot Greeks. When describing this disaster, Greek speakers or writers refer to the war that summer as a "Turkish invasion" and as an example of an outbreak of what they refer to in general as centuries-old Turkish aggression against Greeks. Greeks lived under Ottoman rule for about four centuries, and this long history of Turkish-Greek relations has given rise to a dominant feeling by Greeks of being victims, feelings that also find expression in relation to the "Turkish invasion" of the northern part of Cyprus.

For the Cypriot Turks, their massive trauma that started in 1963-1964 when they were forced to live in enclaves (Gazioğlu, 2007), became a long-lasting chronic trauma. Since between 25,000 and 30,000 Cypriot Turks became internally displaced persons during 1963-1964, and since at that time the island's Turkish population was only 120,000, it would appear that a fifth of those living in enclaves were refugees. As I described in the original book, the eleven-year history of the Cypriot Turkish enclaves may be divided into two periods: during the first (1963-1968), Cypriot Turks were virtually imprisoned in these enclaves, which covered only three percent of the island. During the second, between 1968 and the summer of 1974, they were "allowed" to move out of them and pass through the Cypriot Greek territory to visit other enclaves, but the land they were forced to flee in 1963-1964 was not available to them for resettlement.

When Turkish scholars, politicians or students speak and write about the Cypriot Turks' life in enclaves, they directly or indirectly refer to their humiliation and dehumanization at the hands of Cypriot Greeks, as well as many human rights deprivations. They also describe their perception that they would have perished without the presence of the United Nations peace-keeping force and without the political and military interference of Turks from mainland Turkey.

According to the Cypriot Turks, the events of the summer of 1974 were initiated by the Cypriot Greeks. There was a bloody coup among the Cypriot Greeks just before the Turkish army landed on the island. The coup was organized by the Greek military junta which overthrew Greek Cypriot President Archbishop Makarios with an aim to unite the island with Greece. The leader of this movement on the island was a Cypriot Greek named Nikos Sampson. Photographs of him holding a gun and standing in the pose of a safari hunter, with one foot placed on the corpse of a Cypriot Turk, were concrete evidence giving credence to Cypriot Turkish expectations of annihilation at the hands of Cypriot Greeks (Atakol, 2003). At the very least, Sampson's photographs illustrated the dehumanization of the Cypriot Turks. Turkish spokespersons on the "Cyprus problem" describe the eleven years of living in enclaves as being the Cypriot Turks' main massive trauma. They also reference it to support their position in the existing political agreement among Greece, Turkey and Great Britain that justifies allowing Turkey to interfere and to argue other legitimate legal reasons that would allow the Turkish army's coming to the island to save the Cypriot Turks from being annihilated. They also accuse Greeks of not telling the truth when they sometimes attempt to influence world opinion by referring to "systematic rapes" which, according to the Turks, never occurred. Cypriot Turks living the southern part of the island escaped to the north under dangerous conditions (Oberling, 1982). But in the end, when the island was *de facto* divided into the northern Turkish and the southern Greek sections, Cypriot Turks felt safe due to the presence of the Turkish military on the island.

Enemies perceive and present historical events differently. It is not surprising that Turks and Greeks also perceive and present the "Cyprus problem" from different perspectives. In my decades-long experiences bringing various enemy representatives—such as Israelis and Arabs, Russians and Estonians, Serbs and Croats, and Georgians and South Ossetians—together for years-long series of

unofficial diplomatic talks under the auspices of the University of Virginia's Center for the Mind and Human Interaction (CSMHI), I have become keenly aware that spoken or written histories are both real and imagined (Volkan, 1988, 1997, 2004, 2006a). Historian and psychoanalyst Peter Loewenberg (1995) states that when one examines history, sometimes it is difficult to figure out when reality ends and fantasy begins. Nevertheless, it is clear that the war during the summer of 1974 massively traumatized Cypriot Greeks. The most traumatizing event for the Cypriot Turks, however, was a long-lasting, eleven-year state of humiliation, dehumanization and annihilation anxiety, in spite of their continued hope that one day mainland Turks would save them.

### **The establishment of an “invisible enclave”**

Historical developments after the summer of 1974 have continued to traumatize Cypriot Turks in a slow and often unrecognized fashion. A world opinion accepting the Cypriot Greeks as victims and the Cypriot Turks (or Turks in general) as aggressors has been established. Although this was perhaps due to the failure of Turkish diplomacy, psychologically speaking it might also be due to the Western World's stereotypical perceptions of Turks as the heirs to the Ottomans who were the enemies of the West. The Greek side of the island was recognized legally as a state by all nations, except Turkey, while only Turkey accepted the Turkish side as a legal entity. This reality created an *invisible enclave* for the Cypriot Turks.

Cypriot Greeks managed to convince international organizations to impose severe embargoes on the Cypriot Turks. Accordingly, trading directly with foreign countries became impossible, and travel documents issued to the Cypriot Turks by the northern Cypriot Turkish authorities were not recognized by the international community. No direct flights to the Turkish side of the island were permitted and mail to and from the Turkish side could only travel through Turkey. Cypriot Turks were not allowed to compete in sports in foreign countries (except in Turkey). Furthermore, there were no major foreign investments in the Turkish side (Atakol, 2003). These embargoes have continued to the present day. In other words, the northern part of Cyprus is inhabited by people who do not have typical human rights, who do not have a large-group identity that is *legally* accepted by billions of others surrounding them (except Turks on the mainland) and who, in a sense, are second-

class human beings. After living in actual enclaves for eleven years, the Cypriot Turks from 1974 to the present time have continued to live in an invisible enclave.

Official diplomacy makes little room for noticing and caring about emotions. The people in the international organizations do not even consider feeling ashamed about having treating the Cypriot Turks as second-class world citizens for decades while accepting the Greeks in the south of the island as regular human beings. At the present time the Cypriot Turks in their day-to-day lives are not constantly aware that they are still living in a symbolic enclave. Most of the time, their experiences of second-class world citizenship are denied or repressed as they seemingly have felt safe since 1974, and they, like people everywhere, have turned their attention to earning money, competing for work and prestige with others in their communities, taking care of their families, educating their children, and so on. It is difficult to think about oneself as having an identity unrecognized by the world community when there are many universities in northern Cyprus, and students from at least forty different countries attend them. Tourists, also from many countries, sightsee and visit gambling casinos and other entertainment centers there. During recent years a building boom has occurred in the northern part of the island that, in fact, is damaging its natural beauty. Nevertheless, there has been endless political discussion of the “Cyprus problem” by local leaders and international bodies that have been trying to find an ultimate solution to this “problem” for decades, and the reporting of such endless discussions in the news media has constantly reminded the Cypriot Turks that they are, after all, not yet recognized as world citizens equal to other human beings. The word “isolation” is the current term used by the diplomatic world to describe the Cypriot Turks’ invisible enclave.

I became keenly aware of the ongoing existence of the Cypriot Turks’ symbolic enclave about twenty years ago. I was living in Charlottesville, Virginia when I got a call from a Cypriot Turk who identified himself as a friend of a friend of mine in Cyprus. He said that our mutual friend had urged him to visit me when the caller came to the United States on a world tour with his wife and daughter. They had visited many locations and then rested in Japan for a few days before coming to Florida. He was calling me from Florida, asking if he and his family could visit with me and my family on their way to New York from where they would fly to Turkey and then to Northern Cyprus. I said that I would be happy to welcome them to our home. Two days later a very fancy car stopped in front of

my front door and the Cypriot Turkish man, much younger than I, and his family emerged. I noted that he was able to rent this luxury car to travel from Florida to New York, and I almost felt ashamed that my own car, next to which he had parked his rented one, was modest and old. In our living room this man, who was obviously a rich person, began to tell me about their fantastic travels in Japan and Florida, inducing, I admit, some envy in me. I was curious about their passports since I wanted to know how they could take a world tour using passports unrecognized by all countries except Turkey. He assured me that they had Cypriot Turkish passports, but indeed traveled to faraway places. I do not know the details of how they managed to do this, but what I wish to focus on here is the rage this man exhibited in my presence when the issue of passports came up. With great anger, emotion and sadness he described how horrible it was for them not to have identities easily accepted by others. I remember thinking that he had no right to be so upset and sad while he had traveled around the globe in a rather luxurious fashion. Soon they left our house. Slowly I came to the realization that while showing their “unrecognized” passports at various borders, he might have had some actual difficulties and felt humiliated. Even though my encounter with this man was brief, it remained empathetically in my mind and evolved as a vivid illustration that represented Cypriot Turks who are still living behind an invisible border, in an invisible enclave.

In April 2004 the island’s population voted for a United Nation’s proposal to settle the “Cyprus problem,” the so-called “Annan Plan,” which was supposedly designed to remove this “isolation.” The plan was approved by 65% of the Cypriot Turks and rejected by 75% of the Cypriot Greeks. The invisible enclave continued to exist. This led to re-traumatization of the Cypriot Turks.

### **“Erasing” history**

My experience in various international unofficial diplomatic meetings during the last twenty-nine years points out that the recent history of Cyprus that is typically accepted by foreigners primarily follows the lines of history as defined by Greeks. In the minds of most of these foreigners, 1974 appears as the beginning of the “Cyprus problem.” In the international political and scholarly arenas what happened on the island before 1974 only gets lip service. What is *very strange* is that this perception also has spread within the new generation of Turks within the Turkish Republic of

Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Before I describe my view of why and how this has happened, I first want to illustrate that there is visible evidence to support my perception that Cypriot Turks themselves—I am making a generalization here—are “erasing” parts of their history.

On March 30, 2007 a news item appeared in the Turkish daily newspaper *Milliyet*. It reported that the Cypriot Turkish government had received \$69,000 from the European Union to fund their suggestion for further development of a peaceful existence between Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks by modifying the social science books in the elementary schools. Accordingly, TRNC’s new social science book for sixth graders does not mention the chronic massive Turkish Cypriot trauma or even the Turkish military’s coming to the island in 1974. It contains one picture of Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, while the first president of TRNC, Rauf Denktaş, is not even mentioned. Denktaş undoubtedly is the main political figure whose name was associated with the struggle of the Cypriot Turks during their lives in the enclaves and during many years following 1974. In my mind, to erase his name along with the many significant aspects of what happened to the Cypriot Turks during the long history of the “Cyprus problem” equals erasing history. Before going further I should also mention that Cypriot Greeks, according to this news story and according my own investigation, refused to modify their school books.

After reading this news story, during the summer of 2007, I wanted to know what Cypriot Turkish young people knew about what had happened to their grandparents or parents in 1963 or 1964 and during the subsequent eleven years. I began to interview Cypriot Turks in their late teens or early twenties, boys and girls, whenever I could. I should say that I was not conducting scientific research; I simply wanted to develop a clearer general impression of their views. The results of my interviews surprised me. All of the young people I interviewed seemed unaware of their ancestors’ recent history. I also learned that, since the opening of the borders between the Greek and Turkish sides after the Greek side became a member of the European Union, more than 250 Turkish Cypriot families began sending their children to secondary or higher schools on the Greek side where no lessons are given on the massive and chronic Cypriot Turkish trauma. I was also informed that 10-20 Cypriot Turkish children are also attending Cypriot Greek *elementary* schools. The Cypriot Turkish parents’ justification for sending their children to schools on the Cypriot Greek side is their perception that the Cypriot Turkish schools are inferior to the schools in the south, which are part of

the EU system. Some parents were aware that their children might experience humiliations after crossing the border to the Cypriot Greek side, but in spite of this they continued to send them there.

Psychoanalysts who have studied the transgenerational transmission of massive social trauma inform us that if the impact of such trauma is denied or repressed, it will still manifest itself in various ways in new generations (Volkan, Ast and Greer, 2001, Brenner, 2004). The “therapeutic” way of dealing with previous generations’ massive social traumas is not to deny or repress what happened to the ancestors, but to be aware of the history and the nature of the devastating events faced by the previous generations and to observe their influence on the new generations. When the historical continuity is available for new generations, they have a better chance of strengthening their large-group identity and a better chance of having a rapprochement with their ancestors’ enemy’s offspring. According to a high-level Cypriot Turkish official with whom I spoke, the modification of the school books had taken place with a belief that pointed in the opposite direction. According to her, “erasing” aspects of the recent Cypriot Turkish history from the school books was in the service of not provoking enmity in the Cypriot Turkish children against the Cypriot Greeks. Such a “noble” thought had developed from suggestions by individuals who belonged to various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that had been active in “conflict resolution” on the island. What they did not understand is the reality of transgenerational transmission of trauma. When such a factor is not recognized and is not dealt with openly, its influence may include the development of splits within the descendants of the victims, as some of them become involved in denying the ancestors’ humiliation, while others hold on to a transmitted task without denial and are preoccupied with reversing the ancestors’ negative fate. This may be a part of a large-group identity confusion within the affected society. In present-day Cyprus most of the new Turkish Cypriot generation seems to hold on to a denial of the past to a greater extent than they accept being reservoirs of their ancestors’ misery and associate tasks to reverse it. Nevertheless, the young generation is only a part of the total population. The presence of parents and grandparents who were directly traumatized in the society causes more problems and splits. Some of them, psychologically speaking, still “live” in the 1960s and 1970s, while others strongly deny the past and do not wish to remember the horrors associated with it.

### **Reasons for “erasing” part of history**

How did the younger generation of Cypriot Turks—again I am generalizing here—began to “forget” the history and the dramatic nature of their recent ancestors’ experience? First, let me suggest that strong *external* pressure and political propaganda have played a significant role in this denial and repression of the massive trauma of the ancestors. In the original book (see: chapter 2) I describe how, soon after 1974, some American diplomats were thinking of creating an integrated society on the island as a solution to the “Cyprus problem.” I particularly remember one American diplomat’s outburst demanding that Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks get together and create a new nation. He said: “What is wrong with people who cannot get together and be a nation the way we have in America?” For many decades official and unofficial policy in the USA and in European countries concerning the “Cyprus problem” seemed to center around the creation, if you will, of a new large-group identity called “Cypriot” (“Kıbrıslı,” in Turkish), minimizing the existing ethnic identities of being a Turk or a Greek. Historically speaking there has never been a “Cypriot” ethnicity or nationality (Ortaylı, 2007). Nevertheless, uniting the total population under the term “Cypriotism” received much attention and energy. According to Khan (2002) “The term ‘Cypriotism’ broadly refers to the idea that Cyprus has its own *sui generis* character and thus must be viewed as an entity independent from both the motherlands of the two main communities - Greece and Turkey. This contrasts sharply with the view that dominates nationalist ideology (Greek or Turkish Cypriot) and views Cyprus as an extension of motherlands” (p.45). Khan also states that the concept “Cypriotism” was “raised more in the context of nation-building discourse” (p.40) and considered “as an evolutionary process of mutual accommodation in ‘societal’ and ‘political’ culture” (p.44).

Since 1974 many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been active on the island supporting this policy, sometimes openly and sometimes in hidden ways. There was a perception that if the divided populations on the island were linked by a common large-group identity, there would be a kind of integration of the opposing sides and even an assimilation of the Cypriot Turks by Cypriot Greeks. According to this perception, the Cyprus Republic which is recognized by the other countries, except Turkey, would be able to house everyone in Cyprus in a peaceful fashion. The Cypriot Turkish population, especially the younger generation who now can connect themselves electronically with the rest of the world more than their ancestors could ever imagine doing, are hungry for a legally recognized large-group identity and are readier than the Cypriot Greek

community to be influenced by this seemingly international wish and propaganda. The Cypriot Greeks are eager to “accept” such a solution when everybody being a “Cypriot” would mean that they, the Cypriot Greeks, would be in power, rule the total island and put the Cypriot Turks once more in another invisible enclave called a “minority status.” Anyone can observe this perception in the unchangeable political stance of the present Cypriot Greek leaders. For the Cypriot Greeks, being “Cypriot” would be equal to being “Greek,” or they would not be at all ready to put their Greek identity behind a “Cypriot” identity. (The Cypriot Greek reaction to “Cypriotism” has been examined by Mavratsas, 1997). From a psychological point of view, to attempt a common identity for Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks is to chase an illusion. After all, both Greeks and Turks have their own long idealized histories, and to create one new “nation” by fusing them is as unrealistic as it would be to create a new nation by linking or merging Arabs and Israelis.

For some time now, especially after the failure of the Annan Plan, the Americans and other foreigners who are assigned the task of finding a solution for the “Cyprus problem” have become more and more aware that the “logical solution” of creating “Cypriotism” described above is only an illusion. The present focus seems to be on a more realistic strategy to find a way for the Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks to hold on to their national identities while living side by side. Nevertheless, the influence of the long-lasting illusionary strategy to get rid of the “Cyprus problem” through an emphasis on “Cypriotism” has had an impact on the Cypriot Turks who were hungry for a legal identity that would not be humiliating. It helped to create identity confusion among the Cypriot Turks, especially the younger generation, which Cypriot Greeks were spared.

### **Identity confusion**

After experiencing an initial increased “we-ness,” and exaggerated nationalistic feelings and excitement over “being free” during the years following 1974, large-group identity splits began to appear clearly in TRNC. There are “Turks” who see themselves as the natural extension of their brothers and sisters in mainland Turkey. There are Turks who defensively feel more Westernized and superior to the Turks who settled on the island from mainland Turkey after 1974. And, there are those who emphasize their being Cypriots over their being Turks. There are simply “Cypriots” who feel closer to Cypriot Greeks than to mainland Turks, in spite of being rejected by the Cypriot

Greeks again and again. A few of them are seen wearing silver crosses around their necks, even though they have no education in or interest in being Christians. There are those wanting salvation through being “citizens of the European Union.” (According to reliable sources, 80,000 Cypriot Turks have obtained EU passports after going to the Greek side and applying for them.) There are those who remain grateful to the Turkish military that saved their grandparents and parents from a horrible fate. And, there are those who see the Turkish military as an unwanted dominant power in Northern Cyprus. Unfortunately too, at the present time religion is being used by the ruling political party in Turkey as a tool for political gains in Turkey, creating, in my mind, a dangerous “religious” versus “secular” debate. This direction seems to be a deliberate attempt to weaken the established modern Turkish identity that came about after the Atatürk revolution of the 1920s. Cypriot Turks are likely the most secular Moslems in the world, but if the struggle in the mainland is brought to Northern Cyprus, the identity confusion there will be monumental. I believe that soon there may be “secular” Cypriot Turks versus “religious” ones.

Large-group identity issues among the Cypriot Turks have begun to exhibit themselves in some universities in Northern Cyprus, creating serious concerns among the university authorities. For example, it has been observed that Cypriot Turkish university students have begun to segregate themselves from their fellow university students from mainland Turkey. If a young man or woman from a Cypriot Turkish group starts dating someone from among the students from Turkey, or vice versa, the couple becomes socially isolated. Cypriot Turkish university students refer to students from Turkey as “extreme religious” or “extreme nationalist” individuals and attempt to differentiate their large-group identity from that of those from mainland Turkey. This situation, according to some university authorities whom I interviewed, could conceivably lead to violence.

### **The influence of massive trauma**

The *external* international players wishing to find an illusory solution for the “Cyprus problem” have found a psychological *internal* atmosphere among the Cypriot Turks that initiate large-group identity problems for them. This atmosphere was created because of the Cypriot Turks’ massive

trauma at the hands of Cypriot Greeks. But before focusing more on the identity confusion in TRNC, let us have a closer look at what I mean by a massive social trauma and examine its consequences.

Shared catastrophes are of various types. Some are natural, such as tropical storms, tsunamis or raging fires. Even though they cause societal grief and anxiety, when nature shows its fury, victims of massive destruction tend to ultimately accept the event as Fate or the will of God (Lifton and Olson, 1976). Some societal catastrophes are due to accidental man-made disasters, like the one that occurred in 1986 in Chernobyl. Sometimes, the assassination of a political leader causes a shared trauma, as happened after the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King in the USA and Yitzak Rabin in Israel. My focus here is on massive traumas due to *deliberate* actions by an enemy group as occur in wars or war-like conditions.

When a massive trauma results from war or war-like conditions, there is an identifiable enemy or oppressive large group that has deliberately inflicted pain, suffering and helplessness on its victims. Such a trauma affects the victimized society in ways that are different from the effects of natural or accidental disasters or the unexpected loss of a leader. In such situations large-group identity issues automatically become inflamed (Volkan, 2006a). Enemies hurt, kill people and destroy their environments because the affected large-group has a different large-group identity.

When one large group traumatizes another group, many traumatized individuals may suffer for years to come. We have names for such individuals' sufferings, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Large groups are made up of people. Thus, shared responses to massive trauma reflect aspects of individual responses. But once large-group responses begin to appear, they take on lives of their own and exhibit themselves in societal, cultural or political processes (Volkan, 2006a). Imagine a large group as thousands or millions of people living under a huge tent. The tent's canvas is their large-group identity. When there is wear and tear on this canvas, everyone under the tent (except some minority dissenters) becomes involved in the reparation and maintenance of the canvas. If the helplessness continues, they experience the following (Volkan, 2006b):

- 1- Shared sense of shame, humiliation and victimization.
- 2- Shared sense of guilt for surviving while others perished.

- 3- Shared (defensive) identification with the oppressor.
- 4- Shared difficulty or even inability to mourn losses.

When such experiences continue and the people cannot find adaptive solutions for them, they become involved in a fifth shared experience:

- 5- Shared transgenerational transmission of trauma.

During the last decades, the mental health community has learned much about the transgenerational transmission of shared massive trauma and its influence on the mental health and societal issues of future generations. This development owes a great deal to studies of the second and third generations of Holocaust survivors and others directly traumatized under the Third Reich. (For a selected list of such studies see: Kestenberg and Brenner, 1996 and Volkan, Ast and Greer, 2001.) It is beyond the scope of this presentation to delve deeply into how this transgenerational transmission occurs. Briefly, tasks for finding solutions for the unacceptable influences of the first four shared experiences listed above are unconsciously given to the next generation(s). According to the existing historical, societal, legal, economic conditions, the next generations unconsciously attempt to carry out these tasks. Their attempts manifest themselves in various societal and political processes, or at least are linked to such processes. If the historical conditions are not suitable for the offspring to bring these tasks to conclusions, such as reversing humiliation and completing mourning, such tasks are passed to future generations. They may undergo a change of function. For example, unsuccessful attempts at reversing ancestors' humiliation may become an idealization of and preoccupation with victimhood. The identification with the oppressor may evolve as aggressive acts turned inward. Maurice Apprey (1993, 1998) illustrates how the massive trauma experienced by the ancestors of the African-Americans plays a major role in Black-on-Black crimes in the USA. Some observable characteristics that are associated with large-group's identity issues are linked to the unfinished tasks associated with the ancestors' massive trauma at the hand of "Others."

### **Cypriot Turks' massive trauma and its influence on their present identity confusion**

Cypriot Turks who lived in enclaves for eleven years shared an intensive sense of humiliation, shame, victimization, survival guilt and difficulty mourning. They experienced inability to be assertive, identified with the oppressor, could not mourn their losses and were involved in

transgenerational transmissions. After 1974 they continued to live in an invisible enclave. The new generations' attempt to resolve the harmful influences of previous generations' massive trauma has not always been an adaptive one. This plays a role in the present identity confusion described above. The attempt to erase the parents' and grandparents' history in the enclaves is connected with denial that they are offspring of humiliated, shamed and victimized parents, as well as a general denial of their losses. Data I collected in my interviews confirm this perception. Some young persons I interviewed who preferred a "Cypriot identity" and a psychological closeness with the Cypriot Greeks told stories reflecting their refusal to identify with degraded parental figures. Some others whose grandparents played a significant role in raising them and who repeatedly told them heroic tales of the Cypriot Turks during the struggle, were holding on to an opposite large-group identity feeling; they were more nationalistic. I heard how the grandparents defensively instilled in them an exaggerated "Turkishness" which reflected a denial of humiliation, shame and victimization.

The large-group confusion also reflects identification with the aggressor and turning aggression inward. The society treats itself the same way the enemy did. This process tears apart the cohesion within the society and splits the shared sense of "we-ness" within the people under the same metaphorical big tent. The divisions within the Cypriot Turkish society go beyond expected typical investments usually found in competing political parties. At the present time, in TRNC members of competing political parties are perceived *as if* they belong to different large-group identities. While speaking with some persons in authority in Northern Cyprus during the fall of 2007, I realized that these individuals with political authority are aware of these rather malignant divisions in Northern Cyprus and wish to do something about them. The large-group identity confusion among the Cypriot Turks, furthermore, is related to another psychological phenomenon which can be described as an "enclave mentality."

### **Enclave mentality and its modification**

While experiencing life within the *actual* enclaves, people felt close to one another; they were "brothers and sisters" facing the same unbearable fate. But this togetherness had certain peculiarities. In a group with an enclave mentality no one can improve his or her status without envy and contempt. To have a "shining star" in an enclave disturbs the large-group identity associated with

masochism, humiliation and helpless rage. When an enclave mentality continues to be present after the traumatic environment no longer exists—as happened in TRNC—the community still cannot have a jewel in the middle of mud. The society directly or indirectly, and often without being aware of the process, attempts to sink the shining person (or organization) into the shared humiliated and shamed mess in order not to disturb the shared enclave mentality. I observed this not only in the Cypriot Turkish real and later invisible enclaves, but also in other locations in the world where refugees or internally displaced people are located (Volkan, 2006a).

During the 1974 war some Cypriot Turks found many valuable items (called *ganimets* in Turkish) left by Cypriot Greeks escaping to the south. People wondered who had *ganimets*, and, in a sense, who became jewels in the mud. Later Cypriot Turks who had escaped from the south and Turks who were associated with the mainland Turkish forces involved in the 1974 events and granted permission to settle in North Cyprus were “given” properties, houses and fields left behind by the fleeing Cypriot Greeks. The reality of *ganimets* and the property distributions disturbed the enclave mentality, modified it and infused it with envy and selfishness. Some people became “rich” while others remained “poor.” Stories were circulated about how one man benefited greatly after the war, while his brother remained poor. Feelings of injustice and envy created splits within the Cypriot Turks and in turn this became connected with identity confusion.

### **Last words**

There is no question that, since 1974, there have been societal processes in Northern Cyprus that can be seen as successful movements. By all indications TRNC, a state not recognized by the world, except Turkey, is a place where democratic principles are held strongly during political elections and where sharing secular ideas is typical. During recent years the TRNC’s economy also has improved. Driving around in TRNC on newly built or vastly improved roads one sees countless villas, beautiful gardens and swimming pools. As one of my late teachers used to tell me, “Good things have their own silent ways of taking care of themselves.” Accordingly, I will not dwell on the good things that are happening in Northern Cyprus. It is the “bad things” that need our attention. What is needed is to find ways to erase the influence that enclave mentality in its original or modified versions has on the society. The recent international inclination to move away from the illusory concept of “Cypriotism”

and approach the resolution of the “Cyprus problem” by bringing together two parties as equals without disturbing their large-group identities is hopeful. But as this book was getting ready to be sent to the printer, a new development has occurred which may complicate the steps toward finding a solution.

During the fall of 2008 three Cypriot Greeks competed for the presidency of the Greek side, known internationally as the Republic of Cyprus. The incumbent president, Tassos Papadopoulos, was ousted during the first round of the elections in November. This was a big surprise. After the second round of elections one of the two other candidates will become the political leader of Greek Cyprus. Both of them are perceived to be “pro-solution” candidates.

On February 19, 2008 *Cyprus Mail*, the prominent daily newspaper which is published on the Greek side in English, printed an important news item. The newspaper learned that the United Nations had been making plans to extricate itself from the Cyprus quagmire had Papadopoulos been re-elected. This would have meant international acceptance of a permanent partition of the island. Now there appears “new hope” for further negotiations. What I know about the psychology of both sides discourages me from being excited about the possibility of finding an international solution. I also fear the resurgence of the old “Cypriotism” concept. Unfortunately, I believe that Cypriot Turks will continue to live in an invisible enclave for some time to come. If I am correct, I welcome seeing the Turkish translation of my 1979 book. Looking at the past should not inflame an affected society to become revengeful, but it should provide a realistic foundation for a psychologically informed and workable strategy for co-existence as neighbors.

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