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The Berlin meeting of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots: joint statement

The Berlin meeting of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots

Costis Ahniotis

This meeting took place in West Berlin on 13-16 May. About 20 people from both sides took part. The composition of this group was deliberately not representative. For example, in the Greek Cypriot group, there were only two people from AKEL, despite the fact that AKEL represents the key rapprochement-independence views of the Left, on the grounds that the members of this party, at least, can meet their Turkish Cypriot counterparts at various conferences in the Eastern countries and can even, if they want, initiate mass meetings of their members in these countries. Generally, there were also no senior party members, on the grounds that these members hold their own meetings.

The hopes that one can pin one's hopes on such a meeting are the liberation of bicommunal communication from the stereotype and rigidity that tradition has given it (essentially the tradition of the governmental diplomatic establishment), as well as the hope that possible alternatives for the reunification of Cyprus will come from such a practice. It is through such a practice, where people operate by starting from their own needs and desires, that, in my view, the expression of an inter-communal, anti-establishment-independence discourse is born and evolves. In Berlin, there were no leaderships haggling over what each would give and take, seeking the 'golden' compromise. In Berlin there were people striving to find the way forward for the struggle, the way for victory for at least part of the following.

The victory of bicommunal coexistence, the victory of the reunification of Cyprus, the victory of the eviction of the foreign armies, the victory of the conquest of the right to determine our fate united, the victory against the historical falsification imposed by the nationalist establishments of the right, the church, but also the left, the victory against the contradiction between communal bourgeois interests.

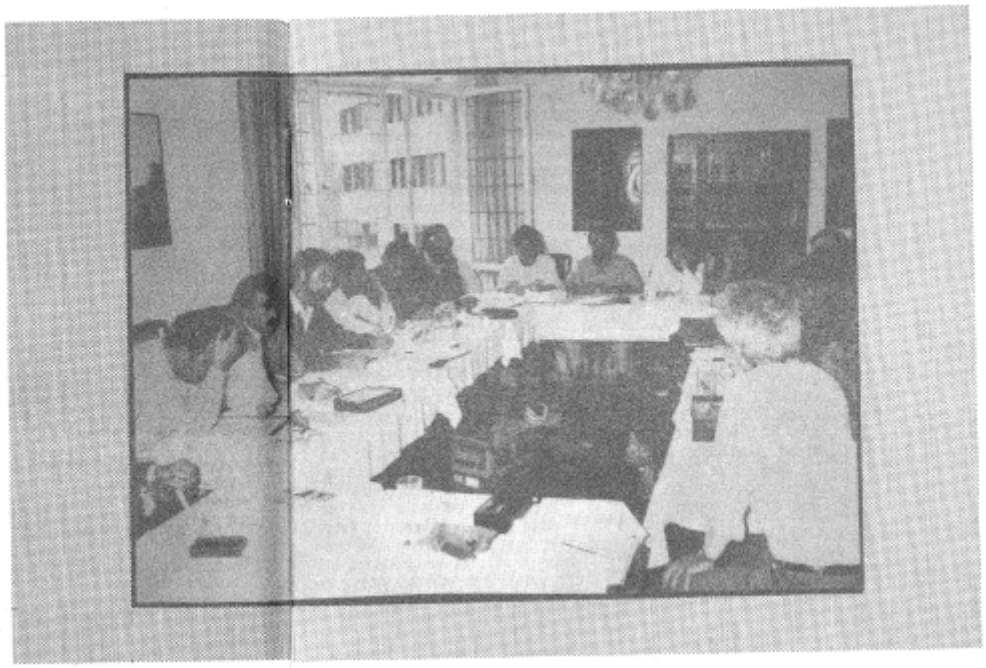
The fact that we did not come out of the meeting with substantial new proposals does not negate the intention or the dynamics of such a function. The meeting could not replace processes that have not yet developed in the political life of the communities. But I believe that alternative paths will only be born on a cross-community basis. For it is precisely such a basis that can displace national or even community subjectivism and finally give birth to a synthesis of this permanent contradiction.

But the intended composition was not only intercommunal. Various forces of the left were jointly confronted with the problematic of precisely this intercommunalism. This practice can therefore also help in at least fragmentary cooperation between, at least, individuals on the left and in joint reflection.

Another fact should also be noted. That the meeting is an important intervention of the West German Greens in the Cyprus Problem. The 'Foundation for Democracy and the Environment' which financed and organised the meeting (which is affiliated with the Greens) has so far had major internationalist

interventions on a number of global issues, from Latin America to Eastern Europe and Asia. We can consider it remarkable that the European alternative milieu concerns itself with the Cyprus Problem, and we should certainly push things in that direction. Europe's engagement with Cyprus so far has very rarely escaped the governmental and party establishment. However, there are a number of 'out-of-control' movements there that can also be useful through their influence on Cypriot politics.

A reverse effect may also be useful. Despite the fact that the Cyprus Problem has been impoverished through the few slogans that have prevailed, it remains a problem that is quite peculiar, complex and multilayered. Knowledge of it can be extremely useful to the European movement.



he participants (in alphabetical order): Ibrahim Aziz, Mustafa Aktunç, Aydin Mehmet Ali, Costis Ahniotis, Christina Valanidou, Christakis Georgiou, Neşe Yaşın, Themos Demetriou, Hasan Ertsiakitzia, Yiannis Ioannou, Christos Iliades, Ulus Irkat, Pektaş Keze, Niyazi Kızılyürek, Zenon Stavrinides, Arif Tesen Taksin, Huren Tilka and Panicos Chrysanthou.

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common statement

Responding positively to the challenge posed to us by the 'Educational Foundation for Democracy and the Environment', we met in our personal capacity in Berlin between the 13th and 16th of May and discussed and expressed our views on a number of key issues of the Cyprus Problem.

We, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who took part in the meeting, in an effort to understand each other's feelings, ventured to identify the political forces and developments that caused the conflict in Cyprus and the subsequent separation of the two communities that was imposed as well as the partition of our country.

Within this framework, some vital aspects were discussed:

1. A critical approach to the recent history of Cyprus.

2. Various proposals for the principles that should govern the solution of the Cyprus Problem.

Various views were expressed and critically examined in a constructive and fruitful manner. The participants of the meeting committed themselves to continue discussions and meetings in the near future. Among other things, the meeting emphatically recognized the problem of security of the two sides, which can be solved within the framework of a united independent state with a federal structure through the joint struggle of the two communities.

The meeting has underlined that the fate of Cyprus must be in the hands of the Cypriots themselves.

The Greek Cypriot participants in the meeting have emphatically rejected 'Enosis' and similarly the Turkish Cypriot participants have rejected 'Partition' (TAKSIM) as possible solutions to the Cyprus problem in any form. Both sides have condemned chauvinism as an obstacle to the reunification of the island today. This was cultivated by the ruling classes of both communities and imperialism to serve their own interests.

We emphatically reject any kind of foreign intervention in any form in the internal affairs of the Cypriots, whose human rights have been violated for many years.

The meeting has also agreed on the need for a united, independent federal state, which can be realized as a result of joint and intensive efforts by all democratic parts of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

We note with regret that this meeting had to take place hundreds of miles away from Cyprus. We therefore demand the immediate recognition of our basic right to meet freely in our homeland and the creation of the conditions for its implementation.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude and thanks to the organisers, the'Educational Foundation for Democracy and the Environment', which made every possible effort for the realization of this meeting.

*c.a.

West Berlin, 16 May 1989*

Needs Turkish Translation, Within the Walls (Issue 41), Decade 1980-1989, 1989, Nicosia (south), Nicosia, Cyprus Problem, Rapprochement Movement

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