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FEDERATION OR DEATH

because even if federation did not exist we would have had to invent it

This text was written in the electoral period, but remains relevant in an era where the “district fellowships” of the political parties insist on ignoring the 70-80% of Cypriots who voted for federation in the first Sunday of the elections.

It is a fact that cannot be questioned, that every time we approach some form of resolution to the Cyprus Dispute, or when (even) some signs of a solution become -as we are accustomed to say- visible in the horizon, all sorts of “fronts” make their appearance, whether they are called “ethnic” or of “national salvation”, their aim is to destroy any hopes of co-understanding and co-habitation in this country. And unfortunately for all of us, they usually succeed. The situation in which we find ourselves today, is unfortunately also their success. All those who wave the banners of nationalism and hate - from both sides- have managed in just two decades to divide the island and to bring us in a situation where a possible war with all the known consequences (of which we know who is affected each time; and of course since 1974), lingers threateningly over our heads.

Today, through specific procedures -procedures which we do not necessarily agree with- we again find ourselves in front of the possibility of a coming solution. A solution that is this time based on federation. And as it was more or less expected, a new front of “national salvation” is making its appearance. A front that in fact openly declares that its only goal is blocking the signing of this possible solution. This front, with an admittedly mysterious composition, as it begins from the EDEK and DIKO parties and concludes, through the archbishopric, to ex-members of EOKA B, holds, depending on the case, Enosist fantasies, but above all, fantasies that have to do with the pre-74 situation, when we literally had total Greek Cypriot domination, with the Turkish Cypriots in the role of the supporting actor squeezed in a corner -the enclaves- paying in poverty and misery for the whole situation. This front also has, whether it wants to or not, whether it admits it or not, the love of Denktaş and his clique, as they also -for their own reasons of course- do not want a federation.

This is why, by trisecting a hair, they try to convince us with national cries and unfounded arguments that in front of us we do not have a solution based on federation, but one based on co-federation and for this or that reason it will not work, but after all you know we do not want it to work, and after all it would be better to leave things the way they are until we find the opportunity to get the upper hand again and you never know, we may will, everything can happen in this world, in time and in years [this is satirical reference to the hardly translatable Greek nationalist phrase, “πάλι με χρόνια με καιρούς πάλι δικιά μας θα ναι”, roughly translating to “in time and years they will be ours again”]...

Cyprus is neither Greek nor Turkish. No matter how many blue-white flags we wave on the green line, this fact will not change...

For many, even among the supporters of federation, the pre-74 situation, with the island supposedly unified, is a desirable arrangement, that is, an ideal, and if they stand in support for federation, it is because they recognize that a return to that arrangement is now impossible. This approach is completely mistaken. We have to finally understand that there exists on this island another community which wants to; and has the right to live, and that a return to the pre-74 arrangement is not only unattainable but also undesirable and catastrophic, because it would again lead, in a short period of time, to clashes, destruction and death. This is why we have to comprehend, beyond the fantasies of “national completion” and other such nonsense, federation as not a solution out of necessity but as an ideal solution. The faster we understand this, the better.

It would of course had been a wishful project if a real federation, in a free society of free individuals, could exist. This would mean the decentralization of power and the self-rule of the different communities (not merely the ethnic ones). This possibility has been destroyed (for the time being) by the very logic which creates today the fronts of “national salvation”. The only realistic adaptation, or even approach towards this desirable goal today, is bi-communal federation, where the “national enemies” who created the nationalists, will be able to at least co-exist together and rule themselves. There is always of course the possibility of failure. But this attempt is the risk we have to take if we do not want to live constantly as captives of the fantasies and the thirst for power of the nationalists. Federation (even in bi-communal form) is the only way for the reunification of society and the formation of possibilities for a real interaction between the two communities, and the challenging of the powers which oppress them through their claims of protection from the national enemies.

In a more practical and direct level -particularly in an era when nuclear weapons will soon be sold, as it seems, at convenience stores; and an era when those who happen to have the same surname go to war demanding secession- federation is an answer to the mania of armament supplies and the possibility of war: because no war ever solved any problem, because despite all the “heroic” ravings of the general secretary of EDEK in parliament, war means nothing other than dead, amputated, disabled and missing people, because war means hunger, cold and misery and finally because war means unprecedented and unrecoverable ecological catastrophe! (this is a gift to the “nationalist ecologists” -the only ones around the globe- of Greece and Cyprus).

Federation is therefore an imperative necessity for a number of reasons but also for life, laughter and eroticism. It is the need to feel all people as fellow humans without dividing them into Greeks and Turks, compatriots and barbarians and Europeans and Orientals. Federation is a necessity because there is no other prospect for the inhabitants of this island, if they want to create a future as peaceful and happy as possible, in these hard times we live in. Even if federation did not exist anywhere in the world, we would have had to invent it. In fact we are late, very late, we should had invented it long before 74. What happened, happened though. At least let us not destroy this prospect by being fixated in emotions and driven by nationalist slogans. Because the issue is not which nationalism and which community will triumph and dominate, but if we are all going to survive by the end.

Marios Trotsky

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