# The Broken Olive Branch: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and the Quest for Peace in Cyprus

**By *Harry Anastasiou***

Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008, *Vol. I: The Impasse of Ethnonationalism*, 2008, 254 pp., ISBN, 0815631960 & *Vol. II: Nationalism Versus Europeanization*, 2008, 313 pp., ISBN 0815631979.

*The Broken Olive Branch* is a two volume book wherein the author analyses the Cyprus question through the prisms of ethno nationalism. In the first volume, through his interpretation, the author evaluates the historical origins of the Cyprus issue. According to the author, the uncritical adoption of ethnocentric nationalism is an fundamental factor in evaluating this conflict. The author points to the importance of the physical separation of the two communities on the island since 1964. The author argued that the Greek Cypriot nationalist aspiration of establishing a union with Greece (Enosis) and the Turkish Cypriot aspiration for the ethnic partition of Cyprus created the outcome of a divided island. Greek Cypriots wanted to establish a Hellenic state in which the Greeks of Cyprus would secure state power for themselves alone. Turkish Cypriots also aimed to have a territorially separate Turkish state in which they would have monopolized state power. (vol 1, p.44-45) While explaining the historical reasons of the division of Cyprus, the author underestimated the suffering of the Turks of Cyprus from 1963 to 1974 during which Turks were attacked, killed, and forced to leave their homes. In fact the alienation of Turkish Cypriots goes back to 1955 when the EOKA started its armed struggle for union with Greece (Enosis). However, even before that date problems existed between the two communities. The author argued that it was not until the 1990s that Turkish and Greek Cypriots began to overcome nationalist rationals with direct citizen based contacts. Through these initiatives members of both communities shared their experiences and this helped to overcome prejudices. The author acknowledged the difficulties of direct dialogue, since there are issues that led to a breakdown of communication. Both communities' perception of certain events is quite different. For example, the author indicated that the Turkish side considered the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus a historically justified, legitimate independent state, while the Greek side considered it as an illegitimate breakaway state. While Greek Cypriots claimed the right of refugees to return to their homes, Turkish Cypriots considered it as an attempt to retake the northern territory, leaving the Turks without shelter. (vol.1, p.155-56) These differences of opinion on key issues were reflected in the endless negotiation process, which the book explains in detail. For example, the author states that the Greek Cypriots approach to the political settlement is based on the foundations set up by the Republic of Cyprus of 1960. The Greek side wants to maintain a strict legal continuity of the current state to any future settlement. (vol. 1, p. 186) However, for the Turkish side this approach to the negotiations is opposed to a bicommunal

and bizonal federation, which it supports. The Turkish side's arguments are based on the principle that no federation can be attained without first recognizing the existence of two state entities of equal legal status. (vol. 1, p.188) The first volume of the book concluded with the Helsinki Summit in December 1999. The author argued that the summit's decision to grant Turkey the status of an EU candidate opened the door to a new political environment on the issue of Cyprus. Since Turkey's candidacy to the EU, the terms of references by which Turkish and Greek Cypriots negotiated have changed.

In the second volume of the book, the author explains global trends and the impact of the EU as a catalyst for political and civil changes in Turkey and Greece. The negotiation process through the Annan Plan and political realities of the post referendum era were discussed in the book.

The impact of globalizing trends began to function as a vital catalyst of socio-political change, reducing the impact of nationalistic politics of unilateralism and isolationism. While stressing that global trends encourage integration, the author neglected to discuss that global trends of fragmentation and etno-nationalism are also very real today. This latter group of global trends may have had a great impact on the Cyprus question, particularly, after the failure of the Annan Plan. As he correctly pointed out the failure to resolve the Cyprus problem (with the Annan plan) was perhaps the greatest political setback in the history of the island. (vol. 2, p. 140) The Annan plan failed at a time when even nationalist Greek Cypriots like Marios Matsakis talked about a two-state solution. (vol. 2, p. 189) Turkish Cypriots were very disappointed by the failure of the Annan Plan to be approved

by their Greek counterparts. And they may have interpreted this failure as meaning that the Greek Cypriots do not want to live in a bicommunal and bizonal state. Turkish Cypriots were also disappointed by the process after the referendum of the Annan Plan, since despite the Greek side's 'no vote' for the plan, Greek Cypriots became a member of the EU and the comprehensive embargo against the Turkish Cypriots still continues. It should be added here that the Greek Cypriots were rewarded by the EU, while the Turkish Cypriots continue to be punished.

In the two volumes of the book, the author's objective is to find and evaluate the ways and options in which the two communities can live together in the same state. However, in the first volume of the book, the description of the history of Cyprus and particularly the increase of tensions and conflicts since the1950's would lead the reader to question whether the two communities of Cyprus can run a common state as envisaged in the Annan Plan and other previous UN plans. As the author indicated, in 1963 the Greek Cypriots pushed forward constitutional amendments aiming to abrogate the 1959-1960 agreements in order to open the way for 'Enosis.' It should be noted that besides the Greek Cypriots' goal of establishing 'Enosis,' the Greek Cypriots felt that the 1959-1960 agreements were imposed by the international community and they wanted an out at the first occasion. Realistically, we should acknowledge that any international agreement on the Cyprus question would have to be imposed by the international community. And even if the both sides accept a plan for a solution, there would still be a danger that history would repeat itself. Meaning, that the only reason either party

or both would accept a plan would be because of the pressure from major international powers. Always leaving the possibility open that the unsatisfied side would try and change and/or reverse any potential future agreement.

In the two volumes of the book, the author gave an insightful and comprehensive analysis and he showed goodwill in his intention and recommendations for the solution on the questions of Cyprus. If the author had explained and analyzed the impact of international developments on the Cyprus question after the post Annan era, the work would have been more thorough

and relevant. Because the question of Cyprus can be compared to the continuing global trend towards separation of certain nations today, like the independence of Kosovo. Despite his lack of emphasis on the terror faced by Turkish Cypriots, particularly in the period between 1963-1974, and the extreme hardships the embargo continues to impose on Turkish Cypriots, the author did try to objectively understand and evaluate the arguments and positions of Turkish Cypriots.

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# Turkey's New European Era: Foreign Policy on the Road to EU Membership

By *Burak Akçapar*
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The European Commission, once asserted that "even before Bulgaria and Romania joined the Union, Turkey and Croatia, had begun joining the EU. Negotiations with Croatia may be concluded within a few years, while those with Turkey are expected to take considerably longer."[1] Yet the crux of the matter is that Turkey's full membership negotiation in the EU was not fruitful over the previous four decades. Debates over Turkey's full membership in the European Union (EU) have been gaining salience not only as a matter of scholarly interest in Europe but also as a major issue in Turkey. Akçapar's book sets out to examine the optimal future of the EU membership process for Turkey. The book seeks

to address the wide dimensions of the relationships between Turkey, Europe, and the United States (US). The major hypothesis that gives substance to the book is to engender the policies for Turkey, Europe, the US, and the neighbours of Europe.

Akçapar's book aims to fill the gap between the EU and Turkey's full membership perceptions. His purpose is to study and analyze from various perspectives the benefits of Turkey's membership in the EU. In terms of Turkey's full membership in the EU, however, Akçapar seeks to elucidate a pivotal argument convincingly perceiving his book as an account of a case study for Turkey joining the EU as a full member. Indeed, as Akçapar claims in the first chapter,