

institutional recognition of self-government rights within a state – the character of the federal state. (The problem we have experienced tends not to be concerned with devolved powers or with decentralization – even if there are different first-preferences, like federation or confederation.) Minority national groups are aware of their minority status (i.e., of the lack of security that stems from being a minority) and have typically demanded some kind of political equality with national groups at the centre. This has been a demand of Quebec, which typically rejects the majoritarian vision of equal Canadian citizens or equal Canadian provinces and conceptualizes Canada as constituted from two founding peoples – French and English – and seeks constitutional recognition of this historiography. Perhaps, some version of these questions may arise in Cyprus – about what kind of institutional mechanisms at the centre can reflect the bi-cultural character of Cyprus in those aspects for which the federal government is responsible.

Symbols and the New Generation

Giorgos Kentas (University of Cyprus) said that the Republic of Cyprus was created to maintain the balance of power among Great Britain, Greece and Turkey. The will of the people in Cyprus was ignored in the process. Therefore, one may understand the foundation of the Republic as an act of external powers rather than a result of self-determination. As a result [Greek Cypriot] “generations came to experience the consciousness of inequity.” This sense arose most importantly from the equal status accorded by the 1960 Constitution to the Greek and Turkish communities, despite large numerical differences in the population of each (80% of Greek Cypriots, 18% of Turkish Cypriots).

According to Giorgos Kentas, prior to 1960, the two communities lived together, accepting their religious, linguistic, and historical diversity. The educational systems and symbols of each community were different. The communities began to live separately when in December 1963, President Makarios proposed “13 points to make the Constitution more functional” and the Turkish government in Ankara rejected his proposal. He went on to say that “in July 1974, Turkey took the advantage of the coup d’etat against the President of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally invaded the country...” He repeated Costas Melakopides’ point that the Cyprus Question is a classic case of clear violation of “international law and international morality.” He reiterated points made by other speakers about the illegal status of the TRNC founded in 1983 and the need for Cyprus to become a part of the EU.

Turning to education, Giorgos Kentas said that “the primary role of education, not only in Cyprus but all over the civilised world, is to study correctly...the case of the Cyprus Problem...” He expressed his dismay at the continued separation of Cyprus in the context of growing European integration.

He insisted that the future of Cyprus is not in the hands of young people, instead politicians hold the key. He drew attention to the “bi-communal, bi-zonal federation” solution discussed in more detail by Toumazos Tselepis and Kypros Chrysostomides.