

The Cyprus Issue in Australian Politics: PASEKA & SEKA (SA) Perspectives

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While the ALP supported the decolonisation and independence of Cyprus in the 1950s, the Menzies Liberal-Country Party coalition government, with the escalation of the Cold War, condemned Cypriot freedom fighters of the late 1950s as terrorists. However, Menzies' commitment to mutual Anglo-Australian loyalty and Commonwealth cohesion led him, on Britain's recommendation, to accept Cyprus as a fellow Commonwealth member once it gained its independence in 1960, as this suited Britain's vested interests (Goldsworthy, 1997:104–8).

The relationship between the two major ethnic groups in Cyprus (Greek and Turkish Cypriots) was difficult and problematic from the outset and conflict broke out between the two groups in 1963. Australia supported the establishment of a UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on 4 March 1964. On 24 April 1964 Menzies offered Australia's participation in the peacekeeping force (Brown, Barker & Burke, 1984:12–22). A civilian police contingent's operations as part of UNFICYP began in 1964 (Clark, 1980:160–61). Labor willingly continued this policy (Evans, 1993:11 and 103).

As many Greeks, Greek Cypriots and Turks had come to Australia, the events in Cyprus in 1974 opened the way for newer influences on Australia's foreign policy (Whitlam, 1986:126; Jupp, 1983:40–43). On the whole, however, the Greek and Greek Cypriot communities have not had any significant impact on the established mainstream of Australian foreign policy of loyalty to a powerful protector, once Britain and now the USA (Grant, 1972:1).

In the 1980s the Greek and Greek Cypriot communities of Australia exerted some marginal influence in the formulation of foreign policy on the Cyprus issue (Theophanous & Michael, 1990:1–4). Specific organisations were established to lobby Federal and State members of parliament to support the cause of justice for Cyprus. Justice for Cyprus Co-ordinating Committees (SEKA) were established in nearly all Australian states soon after the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus with the objective of supporting the restoration of the territorial integrity and independence of Cyprus, and the removal of Turkish occupying forces. The Pan Australian Justice for Cyprus Co-ordinating Committee (PASEKA) was established in 1978 as an overarching federal body to co-ordinate the efforts of all the State SEKA organizations.

Cyprus, as an “out of region issue”, was considered fairly low on the Department of Foreign Affairs’ (DFAT) list of priorities (Theophanous & Michael:15–16). The influence of the Greek and Cypriot communities, however, created an increasingly stronger commitment by the Hawke government to the Cyprus issue (Theophanous & Michael, 1990:14). In June 1983 the ALP government reversed the previous government’s position and instructed the Australian ambassador to the UN to vote positively on the Security Council Resolution 534 on Cyprus (Theophanous & Michael, 1990:17). The 1984 ALP National Conference adopted a key resolution on Cyprus (ALP Platform, 1984:98–99).

The Hawke government and DFAT were not, however, prepared to support measures such as an international conference on Cyprus that would open the way for USSR interference in NATO affairs. Many Greeks believed that the ALP had succumbed to western alliance pressure for strategic Cold War reasons (Theophanous & Michael, 1990:18–22). In March 1987 Australia, in order not to offend either the Americans or the Greek Australian communities, abstained on the Cyprus Resolution at the UN Human Rights Commission although it would clearly have been supported by the non-aligned countries (to which Cyprus belonged) and the socialist countries (Theophanous & Michael, 1990:22–27).

A more pro-western reorientation by the Republic of Cyprus and a grow-

ing intransigence on the part of Turkey and Denktash led to an apparently more positive response from Australia. In 1988 the ALP accepted a new and much stronger resolution on Cyprus. However, by the early 1990s the Australian political parties were not prepared to commit themselves to policies and practices opposed to those of the USA (Theophanous & Michael, 1990:27–30).

Politics and the Cyprus Question: SEKA (SA) 1997–1999

SEKA (SA)'s initiatives in the 1990s were supported and stimulated by SEKA's two patrons, the Hon Mike Rann, the ALP leader of the opposition in SA, and the Liberal MHR for Adelaide, the Hon Trish Worth, Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister for Health. The Australian Hellenic Council (AHC) awarded them the "Nike" prize in 1997 for outstanding services to the cause of justice for Cyprus.

Mike Rann had raised the Cyprus cause in the SA parliament frequently, had presented submissions to the USA Senate (Rann, June 1997) and had sought support from the British Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair (Rann, 6 May 1997). He was turning to international law as a way of compelling Turkey to become more flexible (Den Xecho, 1996:3). In 1998 he strengthened the ALP's resolution on Cyprus, claiming, "This resolution is totally consistent with Labor's historic role in supporting human rights and international law" (Rann, 23 Jan 1998). The continuing division of the island was unacceptable and all foreign troops and settlers were to be withdrawn. The ALP called for "the repeal of the secessionist declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, an act Labor considers illegal and invalid" (ALP National Conference, 1998). Australia had to be more forceful in implementing the right policies on Cyprus, including assistance for Cypriot refugees to take legal action in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) against the Turkish government for violating their human (property) rights in 1974 (Rann, 23 June 1998).

In an open letter to Mr Umut Arik, the ambassador for Turkey, on 15 July 1999, Rann accused Turkey of not abiding by international law and of not observing human rights. He urged the Turkish government to consider

its international reputation and take some bold steps towards resolving the Cyprus problem, including complying with the decisions of the ECHR (Rann, 15 July 1999). In September he accused the western nations of treating Turkey with kid gloves because of their vested interests (Rann, 9 Sept 1999).

While there can be no doubt about Rann's commitment, as the ALP opposition leader in SA since 1994, he could not exercise any significant influence on Australian foreign policy towards Cyprus. He strengthened the Federal ALP's policy, but it also has been in opposition since 1996. While Rann has been critical of the role of both Britain and the USA, his federal counterparts, even when in office, did not give vent to such views.

Through Trish Worth's efforts the Liberal Party of Australia adopted a formal policy on Cyprus, which committed it to a more active role (Downer, 12 Mar 1998). The Liberals have never revised or reaffirmed this formal policy statement. In the 1997 adjournment debate all expressed the view that Australia's support for a just and viable solution must have high priority and the major players should be made aware of Australia's interest in the outcome of negotiations (Hansard, 1997). After lobbying Downer and Howard for some time, Trish Worth announced on 26 June 1998 that the Federal government had decided to appoint John Spender as its special envoy to "convey Australia's views direct to the parties involved in the Cyprus problem" (Worth, 26 June 1998). Spender stated that his principal role would be to support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General (CHC Press Release, 1998).

Spender's approach mirrored DFAT's: Australia was an "out of region" power whose influence could only be minimal at best and whose role would be largely supportive of the major players (General Preparatory Points, 1998). This hardly auspicious approach had Downer's support. While some felt that Downer still supported the Greek Cypriot position (*Neos Kosmos*, 25 Jan 1999:1), the fact that he chose not to refer to any of Spender's recommendations seemed ominous.

Having decided not to release the Spender Report, Downer instructed the special envoy to brief the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on the

results of his endeavours. Spender's pro-USA stance favouring the Turks had become well known. His report was heavily reliant on pro-Turkish British academics and Spender himself seemed deeply influenced by the views of US envoy Richard Holbrooke and British envoy Sir David Hannay. He simply wanted the Greek Cypriots to accept "existing realities" (Ganzis, 12 Aug 1999). In October Arthur Sinodinos, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, was informed of PASEKA's estimate of Spender (Toumazos, 7 Oct 1999). Pessimistic about any solution in the near future, Downer believed Cyprus had to take into account existing realities and certainly not join the EU before Turkey. A loose type of federation with considerable autonomy for the constituent parts seemed the only feasible outcome. These views coincided with the position of Turkey and the USA.

It was clear that Worth's initiatives had only resulted in DFAT spelling out clearly its long held views that essentially Cyprus was not a major Australian concern and that Australia would support the initiatives of the major players, the USA and Great Britain.

The representatives of the two major political parties reinforced the bipartisan approach to the Cyprus issue. In principle support from Australian political parties for a just outcome to the Cyprus cause and the verbal condemnation of Turkey had been evident for some time, but there was little movement in practical terms (Hansard, 1998). Political bipartisanship seems to have led to a state of affairs where the limits of support for Cyprus seem to have been reached and there appeared to be little incentive for the major parties to push far beyond impotent verbal criticism of Turkey. Neither the Howard government nor the Federal ALP seemed inclined to push in any serious way for Turkey to comply with international law, to stop violating human rights in Cyprus and to comply with the judgements of the ECHR, whose jurisdiction she acknowledged.

One of the major difficulties faced by SEKA in convincing Australian political parties to be more active in the pursuit of justice for Cyprus was the lack of political will in the international community to enforce even the decisions of such courts as the ECHR that held Turkey responsible for the violation of the human rights of Greek Cypriots (Council of Europe, 6 Oct

1999 & Council of Europe, 24 July 2000). Apart from a temporary embargo on the sale of USA military supplies to Turkey immediately after the invasion, there have been no sanctions imposed on Turkey by the international community for her invasion and continuing occupation of more than one third of Cyprus. The sanctions imposed on the occupied part of Cyprus have become increasingly ineffectual.

SEKA (SA) adopted a new position in relation to the political parties. Its intention was to support vigorously those politicians who were active in supporting the Cypriot cause. Merely being a member of a political party whose policies supported the Cypriot cause did not automatically entitle all members of that party to the same level of support (Ganzis, 11 Sept 1998).

Politics and the Cyprus Question: SEKA (SA) and PASEKA, 1999–2002

Properties in Turkish Occupied Cyprus

In 1996 the ECHR determined that Mrs Titina Loizidou was the legal owner of her Kyrenia property in the Turkish occupied area of Cyprus and that Turkey was the governmental authority responsible for preventing her from resuming possession of her property; in 1998 the Court awarded both costs and damages (Aus \$1.5 million) to Mrs Loizidou. The Office of the Attorney General, having reviewed the *Loizidou v Turkey* case (Ganzis, 5 Mar 1999), acknowledged on 19 July 1999 the significance of the legal precedent, but pointed out that while Turkey ought to comply with the judgement of the ECHR, Australia, which had no legal standing before that Court, did “not have any right to require that Turkey comply with obligations that arise under the European Convention”. Australia could, however, urge Turkey diplomatically to comply.

Australia accepts that people with property in the Turkish occupied area do have legal standing before the ECHR and are not specifically precluded from seeking financial assistance from the Australian government through the Special Circumstances (Overseas) Scheme to pursue actions in the ECHR (Attorney General, 1999). This response opened the way for a campaign to

convince the Commonwealth government to provide financial assistance for those whose human (property) rights had been and are being violated by the Turkish invasion and continuing illegal Turkish occupation.

On 9 March 2000 Rann wrote to Alexander Downer suggesting that the Foreign Minister give his full support for financial assistance to those Cypriot Australian citizens wishing to take legal action against Turkey (Rann, 9 Mar 2000). Downer replied that submissions for assistance should be lodged if it was believed that the cases fell within the guidelines for assistance (Downer, 5 Apr 2000). In June 2000 Downer stated to an AHC/PASEKA lobby group that neither he nor his department would raise any objections to Cypriot Australian citizens making submissions to the Office of the Attorney General for financial support from the Special Circumstances (Overseas) Scheme in taking legal action against Turkey at the ECHR. Shadow Foreign Minister Laurie Brereton seemed somewhat sceptical. Moreover, he demurred at the suggestion that the ALP should consider promising financial support, because this might open the sluice gates to a flood of applications from elsewhere.

The fact that the Australian government makes considerable funds (Downer, Jan 2001) available to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) that used some of these funds to advertise financial compensation from German governmental and private industrial sources for those people compelled to do unpaid labour by the Nazi regime during World War II, seemed to be a powerful precedent for Cypriot Australian citizens (*Neos Kosmos*, 16 Nov 2000:27). The violation of the human rights of these slave labourers had occurred before they became Australian citizens.

During his address to the PASEKA and Cypriot Federation Conferences (27 January 2001) Rann reaffirmed his December 2000 pledge that when elected to government in South Australia he would provide financial support and legal advice to some SA Cypriot Australian citizens who wished to commence legal action against Turkey for the protection of their property rights and for compensation. This he would do should an Australian Federal government of whatever political persuasion fail to take such action after the federal elections due at the end of 2001 (Rann, 23 Mar 2001).

Following the intensification of its campaign on the property issue, PASEKA sent a formal application to Prime Minister John Howard requesting that the Australian government provide specific funds in the form of conditional loans for those Greek Cypriot Australian citizens so that they could commence legal action against Turkey at the ECHR for the restitution of their property, for compensation for the violation of their human rights and for international recognition of their rights to their properties in the Turkish occupied area of Cyprus. The amount being requested for each case was approximately AU\$3,000 (Ganzis, 9 May 2001). A similar letter was sent to Mr Beazley, the Federal ALP leader (PASEKA, Aug 2001), and this was followed by an open letter to the leaders of the Federal government, the ALP Federal opposition and the Australian Democrats (PASEKA, 7 Sept 2001) that was published in *Neos Kosmos (Neos Kosmos English Weekly)*, 1 Oct 2001:6).

With the approach of the Federal elections, PASEKA reminded the major political parties of the request for financial assistance for displaced Greek Cypriot Australian citizens who wished to commence legal action against Turkey at the ECHR. Laurie Brereton, Shadow Foreign Affairs Minister, stated that his party could not see any obstacle to Cypriot Australian citizens seeking financial assistance from the Special Circumstances (Overseas) Scheme and that

a Federal Labour Government would be prepared to give sympathetic consideration to [financial support in the form of conditional loans for legal action at the ECHR] subject to evaluation of test cases initiated by South Australians of Cypriot origin with funding provided by the South Australian Labor Government (Brereton, 24 Oct 2001).

It seemed unusual for the ALP to determine its foreign policy on the initiative of a probable State Labor government and to await an evaluation that might take three years. In effect this was a case of procrastination not too distant from the position of the Liberal Party that declared:

The Coalition is still considering assistance to the Australian Cypriot community to bring cases against Turkey in the European Court of Human Rights (Crosby, 25 Oct 2001).

Paradoxically, the Attorney General, responding to a letter from the Hon Alan Cadman, a Liberal MHR (30 August 2001), stated (4 January 2002):

Although the Australian Greek Cypriot community has a well-established connection with Australia, the proposed proceedings would be private civil proceedings, against a foreign government, for the recovery of property by people in their capacity as citizens of Cyprus, not as citizens of Australia (Williams, 4 Jan 2002).

It took a four months gestation period to come up with this response **after** the federal elections. As far as the Attorney General was concerned these people had no right to claim financial assistance, as they were Cypriot citizens. In effect he stripped them of their rights as Australian citizens.

The only political leader prepared to make a firm commitment to financial support for cases against Turkey at the ECHR has been Mike Rann, who reiterated his pledge of support in the pre-election campaign for the South Australian State elections on 9 February 2002 (Rann, Jan 2002). With the formation of a Rann Labor government in SA, the process of realising the very specific and signed pledge of the Hon Mike Rann to support financially seven cases at the ECHR and to provide legal advice has been set in motion. It is the first case of a government, apart from the Cypriot government, providing financial support for its citizens to take legal action against Turkey at the ECHR.

Australia's Special Envoy on the Cyprus Issue: the Hon Jim Short

The Federal government had decided to replace Spender as Australia's special envoy on the Cyprus issue. It was well aware of the deep dissatisfaction felt in the Greek and Greek Cypriot communities with Spender's views. Mr Short, the new special envoy, consulted widely with the interested communities and State political leaders.

At the meeting between Mr Short and a Greek Cypriot delegation in NSW, Mr Kyriakoudes, President of the Cypriot Federation, indicated that the Federation supported the position of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. Australia should support strongly the formation of an Eminent Persons Group from the Commonwealth of Nations. Mr Short felt that such

an initiative could be beyond the parameters of the Australian government's policy to support the initiatives of the United Nations. The previous special envoy's assertion that the two communities could not live together harmoniously was rejected vigorously (Kyriakouides, 12 Mar 2001).

The SA delegation on 14 March 2001 stressed the centrality of human rights, the withdrawal of all Turkish forces and the repatriation of the Turkish settlers. Any just settlement of the Cyprus question must be in accord with the UN Charter of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights as well as the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union (Short, 14 Mar 2001).

In September 2001 Mr Short briefed those he had previously contacted on his proposals and recommendations (Short, 21 Aug 2001). While the Greek and Greek Cypriot organisations in NSW and Victoria seemed by and large pleased, the SA representatives expressed their disappointment with his recommendations (General preparatory points, 2001). PASEKA's President, in a lengthy analysis of the Report (Ganzis, 30 Sept 2001), made a number of critical comments particularly on Short's recommendation that the Greek Cypriots "reduce wherever possible recourse to the courts in respect of property issue" (Short, 21 Aug 2001:20). This flew in the face of individual human rights. His preference for a political solution, after 27 years of failed political initiatives that had no bite, suited precisely the vested interests of Turkey and the USA. Further discussion of the points of difference was put on hold because of the Federal elections (Short, 24 Oct 2001). The Turkish and Turkish Cypriot organisations of Australia rejected the Short Report outright.

Cyprus South Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group

A debate in the SA House of Assembly on the Cyprus issue (Hansard, 1999: 1819–24) served to reinforce the initiative of the Hon Carmel Zollo MLC at the end of June 1999 in establishing a Cyprus SA Parliamentary Friendship Group (Cyprus Group). The Cyprus Group would pursue justice for Cyprus actively by increasing awareness of the issue among politicians and by highlighting for the broader Australian public the on-going injustice

in Cyprus (Zollo – Georgiades, 1999). At the inaugural meeting on 28 July 1999 a bipartisan agreement recommended that the Prime Minister support the Cyprus issue becoming a keynote item on the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) agenda at Durban, South Africa and the creation of an Eminent Persons Group from the Commonwealth of Nations to address the Cyprus issue. In the letter to the Prime Minister reference was made to the recent debate on the Cyprus issue that had taken place in the House of Assembly (Zollo, Aug 1999). The Australian government responded to Carmel Zollo's request to include Cyprus on the CHOGM agenda, stating that the UN seemed to be the best avenue for handling this matter (Heffernan, 1999).

N. Ganzis informed the Cyprus Group of PASEKA's plans to exploit the *Loizidou v Turkey* precedent here in Australia so as to increase pressure on Turkey in negotiations over Cyprus and to provide justice for those Cypriots whose rights had been and still are being violated (Ganzis, 12 June 2000 b). The impact of a large number of outstanding court cases, each of which could be very costly to Turkey, could very well affect Turkey's credit standing internationally as well as politically (Demetriades, 2000). Rann had supported this approach consistently over a long period (Rann, 8 July 1999). On 5 July the Cyprus Group announced that as all Australian parliaments have consistently recognised the violation of human rights of the Cypriot people, the Commonwealth had a moral obligation to support the action of Australian citizens in seeking redress in the ECHR, in the form of financial support, under the Federal Special Circumstances (Overseas) Scheme. Despite the opposition of the Turks and Turkish Cypriots of SA (Turkish Petition, 1999), Carmel Zollo sent this recommendation, which had bi-partisan political support, to the Prime Minister (Zollo, 21 July 2000). There was no response from the Federal government.

Following Carmel Zollo's resignation from the Chair of the Cyprus Group at the end of 2000, there have been few initiatives though the Group has continued to support the activities of PASEKA and SEKA (SA) through the provision of venues for the briefing of Federal and State politicians as well as local government and community leaders.

The Federal Political Parties and the Cyprus Question

The Liberal Party of Australia's policy towards the Cyprus issue has been noted for its lack of detail and its inconsistency. PASEKA considered the initiatives of the Federal government on the Cyprus issue, such as that at the 1999 CHOGM of leaving the initiative to the Commonwealth Secretary General, to be at best luke-warm and its support of human rights internationally to be selective and inconsistent in its promotion of the Cyprus cause (Howard, Dec 1999). It showed a lack of firm leadership on more sensitive and difficult international issues (Ganzis, 10 Feb 2000; Rann, 26 Nov 1999).

In the case of Fiji Mr Howard's categorical condemnation of the abrogation of democracy showed the kind of leadership needed when the Prime Minister stressed that the replacement of a democratic constitution by one that was racially based "is always unacceptable, no matter what the country is and no matter what the circumstances are" (Ganzis, 12 June 2000 a). Yet no similar comment was forthcoming on Cyprus. To have supported Cyprus at the CHOGM Conference and to have raised the Cyprus issue with the Turkish Prime Minister are inadequate initiatives (Cole, 23 June 2000). On the other hand, Spender, as Australia's special envoy, and DFAT had been exerting pressure for the acceptance of "existing realities" by extending some form of recognition to the Denktash regime (*Kosmos*, 1 July 2000:11).

In matters that fell within the ambit of Australia's domestic politics, the Howard government was prepared to act with more apparent decisiveness on minor issues associated with the Cyprus question, but even here its approach was inconsistent. Through Trish Worth's initiative advertisements for scholarships to and degrees from the "tertiary" institutions of the illegal regime would not get approval (Worth, 23 Aug 1999), yet the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition has since the early 1990s regarded qualifications gained in the occupied area of Cyprus as Turkish-accredited qualifications. The government hastened to add somewhat credulously that this "in no way constitutes an endorsement of the legality of the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (Worth, 10 Aug 2001).

The Australian government, and particularly DFAT, had been sending mixed messages concerning Turkey and the Cyprus issue. On the one hand Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer has condemned the Turkish invasion and occupation, but is fulsome in his praise of Turkey when referring to her strategic significance and the role of the 1915 Gallipoli campaign in forging the nationhood of both countries (Downer, 6 June 2001). Downer's announcement of the appointment of a new ambassador to Greece was rather bland by comparison (Downer, 25 May 2001).

Mr Frank Ingruber, Australia's High Commissioner to Cyprus, was sent on a mission to head off the attempt to get governmental financial assistance for cases at the ECHR, despite Downer's pledge not to interfere (Toumazos, 19 June 2001). His advice to all was that the pursuit of legal action against Turkey at the ECHR, particularly with financial assistance from Australian governmental sources, State or Federal, might not be in the best interests of Cyprus and could prove to be counter-productive to the efforts of the UN Secretary General.

The position of the Liberal-National Coalition seemed to be to avoid any concrete commitment to action on the Cyprus issue with a preference for ambiguously worded statements that would not take Australia far from the position spelt out by Downer and Spender at the beginning of 1999.

Unfortunately for the ALP, it had many detailed and well-developed policies on the Cyprus issue that made it much easier to perceive the various sea changes taking place. The 2000 ALP policy was much less truculent towards Turkey than the 1998 one and more inclined towards "adapting to the existing realities" despite some positive points and the praise heaped on it by Brereton as its progenitor. The demand for the withdrawal of all Turkish troops and Turkish settlers from Cyprus had been removed (Ganzis, Sept 2000). Nevertheless, the ALP's policy stirred Turkish opposition (Genc & Eken, 21 Aug 2000).

Divisions were appearing in the Federal ALP over the Cyprus issue. ALP frontbencher Laurie Ferguson sought approval from the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the establishment of an office to represent the "TRNC" (Ganzis, 7 Dec 2000). He had also accompanied Turkish Cypriot visitors

from Cyprus, purporting to have some official parliamentary status, on an official parliamentary tour. Trish Worth exploited this situation to criticise the ALP for abandoning a bipartisan approach to the Cyprus issue (Worth, 4 Dec 2000:20405–06). Downer rejected Laurie Ferguson’s request on the grounds that acceding to it would be tantamount to the legal recognition of an internationally acknowledged illegal regime. Shadow Foreign Minister Laurie Brereton and ALP opposition leader Kim Beazley distanced themselves from Ferguson’s position (Ganzis, 20 Feb 2001) especially as there had been a very strong reaction from the Greek communities (Greek Press, Dec 2000). Laurie Ferguson has now become the Shadow Minister for Ethnic Affairs and Multiculturalism in Simon Crean’s ALP shadow cabinet following Labor’s defeat at the November 2001 federal elections. Another prominent ALP frontbencher, Senator Stephen Conroy, went illegally via Turkey to the Turkish occupied area of Cyprus where he met “parliamentarians” of the so-called “TRNC”. This was interpreted as an attempt to acknowledge the legitimacy of the “TRNC” (*Neos Kosmos*, 29 Mar 2001:1,5,3; *Nea Patrida*, 31 Mar 2001).

Brereton simply dismissed PASEKA’s concerns on the ALP’s Cyprus policy and he denied any attenuation of the Party’s policy. Though he claimed to have consulted widely on the Cyprus issue (Brereton, 22 Mar 2001), he did not accept a proposal to discuss developments with the PASEKA executive. Most of the problems facing the ALP on the Cyprus issue at this time were of its own making.

The view was expressed in some quarters that both major federal political parties had expressed what the disenchanted might call the bipartisan abandonment of Cypriot Australian human rights, since neither Federal party was prepared to support in any practical way the human rights of Australian citizens of Greek Cypriot origin whose rights had been and are continuing to be violated.

While in principle the two major political parties have been prepared to support the cause of justice for Cyprus and have been prepared publicly to condemn Turkey’s actions in July 1974 as an invasion and its continuing presence in Cyprus as one of occupation, they have not been prepared to

take any action to make their stance mean something internationally. Rationalisations aplenty have been propounded to justify inaction. There has been much sound and fury signifying nothing. The human rights of Australian citizens have been and are being violated. More pertinent is Australia's concern not to implement policies that could earn the displeasure of the USA, which considers Turkey to be of paramount strategic geopolitical significance for its vested interests.

The statement made by Mr Constantine Stephanopoulos, the President of the Hellenic Republic, at Luxembourg on 10 July 2001 sums up the approach of most nations, including Australia, to the cause of justice for Cyprus:

Let us acknowledge, making an admission that is not always to our credit, that international law is not implemented in the same way in all circumstances. Many times it is not implemented at all, because international vested interests, which have the capacity to displace it (if not to abrogate it), predominate. But even when the principles of international law are implemented, many times they are implemented selectively again according to vested interests, to preferences and to sympathies (*SBS*, July 2001).

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