

Neo Nazi of Cyprus: Hrisi Avgi

Diplomatic efforts to achieve permanent peace in Cyprus have been going on for 40 years. One could say that a significant phase is reached within the settlement process carried out under UN auspices. Both international circumstances and political balances of the two peoples living in the island, point out a period during which a settlement might be more likely.

If a settlement is to be reached, it would certainly not be easy.

At the same time, active efforts will be required so as to secure permanent peace when a settlement is reached.

Notably, racist, chauvinistic and aggressive groups constitute one of the threats before the creation of a real peace environment in Cyprus. Just on the verge of the simultaneous referenda carried out both by the Turkish Cypriot society and the Greek Cypriot society in 2004, an organization, whose name has never been heard until then, emerged. The name of this organization is Hrisi Avgi, meaning Golden Dawn...

There exists a political party named as such in Greece. However, no one was aware that such an organization existed in Cyprus which is a separate country. Once the organization appeared, it made public that its target was the `Turks in Cyprus`. Being qualified as `racist`, even `fascist` did not cause it any discomfort, and this has been openly stated in its own bulletins. As a matter of fact, the party symbol and flag of Hrisi Avgi Party in Greece incorporated a swastika symbolizing Hitler's party.

Hrisi Avgi used to oppose a settlement in Cyprus. It could openly refer to Turkish Cypriots as `people to be eradicated`. It threatened people among Greek Cypriots who supported living together with Turkish Cypriots and a federal partnership such as the DISI Party, which decided to say `yes` to the referendum for a solution within the framework of the UN plan and was thus the most significant enemy of Hrisi Avgi. Hrisi Avgi continued to exist on the stage after the referendum period. It used to make demonstrations with supporters holding wooden sticks and chains in hand, at the border gates where Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots cross over to the other side, and damage the cars of people wanting to cross to the other side. The organization tried to beat and threaten Turkish Cypriot children and Greek Cypriot children who made friends with them, physically attacking for instance the English School where Turkish Cypriot children study together

with Greek Cypriot children. Two young Turkish Cypriots who have crossed over to South Cyprus were beaten and insulted by members of this Organization.

It also suddenly attacked the commemoration ceremony for two young Greek Cypriots killed at border events experienced in 1996, and shouted slogans hailing racism and hatred.

A Turkish Cypriot woman journalist was verbally and physically attacked at the Ledra Palace border gate. Another Turkish Cypriot journalist's car was deliberately and intentionally vandalized on the same day. All these demonstrations and attacks were arranged by Hrisi Avgi.

The Hrisi Avgi organization bearing the same name in Greece, although not very numerous in numbers, threatens the permanent peace environment and the right to have a decent life in Cyprus through its fanatic, racist, fascist members appearing now and then in their black shirts, and through its Neo Nazi line.

Greek Cypriot authorities need to take the strictest measures as regards such racist organizations, and to introduce severe legal sanctions against the responsables.

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