

### Akinci : "WE NEED TWO "YES"ES"

Mr. Mustafa Akkinci, President of the T/C Peace and Democracy Party (BDH), was the guest speaker of the New Cyprus Association (Neokypriakos) on the evening of April 7 in Limassol. He spoke to an audience of about 150 G/C and T/C at the Cultural Center of the Coop Bank on the subject "How does a T/C politician approach the questions of G/C pertaining to the Annan Plan?"

Mr. Thoukis Thoukidides, President of the New Cyprus Association introduced Mr. Akkinci as the most well-known and popular T/C politician in the South at this juncture and asked him to express his views by putting himself in the shoes of the G/Cs vis-à-vis the Annan Plan.

Mr. Akkinci started his speech with an evaluation of the New York meeting between the two leaders of the G/C and T/C communities and stressed that it was impossible to stop this process which will end with the two referenda.

"I prefer to concentrate on the need of having two 'Yes'es" observed, Mr. Akinci. If not, there will be no solution to the Cyprus problem. There can never be an ideal solution which will satisfy the needs of all sides. What can be achieved is what is feasible under the given circumstances. The continuation of the status quo is not a solution for either side.

The T/C politician went on to look upon the plan from the T/C perspective, stating that for the T/C community political equality, bizonality of a solution, an end to the isolation of the T/Cs and the self-rule of the T/C community were important. Mr. Akkinci told the audience that if the people of Cyprus would say "No" to the provisions of the Annan Plan, then they would probably stand to lose another 15 years. Most of the T/Cs would leave the island for a better life and more mainland Turkish settlers would be coming to the occupied areas.

As Mr. Akkinci looked into the problem from a G/C point of view, he observed that G/Cs had among others lost their properties, but under the Annan Plan 92 thousand of them would be able to return to their own properties under G/C rule. The security concerns of the G/Cs would be satisfied by the phased withdrawal of the Turkish troops. He concluded that a "Yes" vote would also help the Greek-Turkish rapprochement as well as stability in the broader Eastern Mediterranean region.

Replying to questions put to him by G/Cs, Mr. Akkinci said that a new culture of mutual understanding and empathy were needed, to overcome the difficulties on the days after the solution. He went on to say that it was his conviction that Turkey would try to be on good terms with both the new re-united Cyprus Republic and Greece, since she was aspiring to become a member of the EU. Moreover, Turkey can be a big market for G/C industrialists, merchants and entrepreneurs hence the G/Cs have to change the way they view Turkey.

Mr. Akkinci went on to say: "There is a time-limit until 1 May, the date of Cyprus's formal entry into the EU and we know that there are good and bad sides of the Plan. But we should bear in mind that it is not a case of black or white. The colour of the Annan Plan is grey. If Cypriots do not say "Yes" to the Annan Plan then they will go on having a divided country. The majority of the people are mature, but we have to be aware of and very careful about the extremists. The maturity and awareness of our respective communities will be the best guarantee for us".

22/04/2004