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Ethnic Conflict in the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey's Cyprus Policy: Constitutional Crisis, Violence and International Politics (1960-1963)

Translated from: Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti'nde Etnik Uyuşmazlık ve Türkiye'nin Kıbrıs Politikası: Anayasa Krizi, Şiddet ve Ulusla<mark>rarası Siyaset (1960-1963)</mark>

Şevki KIRALP

TCE

CTAD Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi

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Abstract

This study emamines the Cyprus Question within a historical period beginning in 1960 and ceasing in 1963. It sheds light on international actors', particularly Turkey's attitudes towards Cyprus. It reaches to the conclusion that Turkey and Turkish Cypriot leadership aimed for preservation of the constitutional order as well as the international status quo provided by Zurich-London treaties. Nevertheless, the Greek Cypriot leadership was displeased with the treaties and constitutional order. It aimed for fundamental revisions in Zurich-London treaties as well as significant constitutional amendments to pave the way for Enosis. The political tension on the island had, since the very beginning, been considerably high. In November 1963, Greek Cypriot leadership demanded a set of constitutional amendments that would terminate Turkish Cypriots' status as the equal partners of the state. This led to a sharp political conflict, an international crisis and ethnic violence.

Entrance

During the Ottoman Period, which started in 1571 in Cyprus, the Orthodox population was granted freedom to preserve their own identity and the island acquired a bi-communal

character. 1 According to the census conducted by the Ottoman Empire in 1831, 33 percent of the island's population consisted of Turks. 2 In 1878, the Ottoman Empire signed an agreement with London to prevent Russian expansionism threatening its lands and transferred the administration of Cyprus to England; However, the island remained legally Ottoman territory. 3 According to the first census conducted by the British in 1881, 24 percent of the island's population (approximately 45,000 people) consisted of Turks. During the British rule, while the Greek population coming to Cyprus from different geographies increased, there were Turkish migrations out of the island. On November 4, 5, 1914, Britain announced that it had annexed Cyprus and cited the Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I as Germany's ally as the reason for this. 5 In accordance with the Lausanne Peace Treaty signed in 1923, Turkish Cypriots were given the opportunity to choose between British or Turkish citizenship; However, those who chose Turkish citizenship were required to leave Cyprus. 6 It is estimated that the number of Cypriots who acquired Turkish citizenship after the Treaty of Lausanne is between 6,000 and 9,500 people. 7 Turkey, which entered the restructuring process after World War I and the War of Independence and was busy with vital problems both internally and externally, did not have the opportunity to implement an effective Cyprus policy at that stage. 8 Turkish Cypriots closely followed and implemented Ataturk's reforms in the 1920s and 1930s. 9 The Greeks, on the other hand, adopted Enosis (the joining of Cyprus to Greece) as a national goal. 10 While Makarios demanded the right to self-determination to connect the island to Greece; 17 In response to the activities of EOKA, supported by the Greek Government, the Turkish Government established the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) in November 1957. 13 Self-Determination is the right of peoples to determine their own status within the international system. Although it has found a place in international law and the UN Charter, it is a principle that remains significantly vague. There are serious disagreements within the international system about which groups can exercise this right, under what conditions and for what purpose. See Manuela Melandri, Selfdetermination, International Law and Post-conflict Reconstruction: A Right in Abeyance, Routledge, London, 2018. 14 Fausto Scarinzi. "Force structure and counterinsurgency outcome: the case of the Cyprus Emergency (1955)(1956)(1957)(1958)(1959)." Defense Studies, Volume 21, Issue 2, 2021, p. 204-225. İsmail Şahin, "From Thought to Action EOKA", Recent Turkey Research, Volume 37, 2020, p.21-49. 15 Hüseyin Tufan, Mete Özsezer, Ali Efdal Özkul, "An Important Correspondence Between Suat Hayri Ürgüplü and George Brown Regarding the Cyprus Problem During the Republic of Cyprus Period", Journal of Republic History Research, Volume 17, Issue 34, 2021, p. 904. 16 "Zorlu Had a Meeting with Eden Yesterday", Milliyet, 6 September 1955, p.1. 17 TNA, FO 371/123904/1081/1450G, "Cyprus and self-determination: views of Sir John Harding", 1956; Chares Demetriou, "Divide and rule Cyprus? Decolonization as process ", Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, Volume 57, Issue 4, 2019, p. 403-420, supported, TMT, two leading figures of the Turkish Cypriot community, Rauf Denktaş and Dr. It was founded by Burhan Nalbantoğlu and Kemal Tanrısevdi, who worked at the Turkish Consulate on the Island. 18 Turkey and Turkish Cypriots defended Taksim, that is, the sharing of the Island between Turkey and Greece, in the face of the Greek side's Enosis demand. 19 The violence that started between the Greeks and the British spread to the Turks in the following years and turned into ethnic violence between the two communities of the island. Washington, disturbed by the tension between Turkey and Greece, encouraged the parties to compromise and contributed to a ceasefire on the island in 1958. The parties later reached an agreement within the framework of the "independent Cyprus" model proposed by the USA, which excluded Enosis and Taksim. On February 20, 1959, the parties accepted the Zurich and London Treaties, which created the Republic of Cyprus. 21 After its failure in the Suez Crisis (1956), Britain concluded that it was pointless to retain all of Cyprus. Britain's continued existence on the island through base areas meant "getting what it wanted". 22 The agreements did not fully satisfy Ankara, which renounced Taksim, nor the Turkish Cypriot leadership, nor Athens, which renounced Enosis. However, these actors saw that a "lesser evil" compromise was necessary in terms of the conjuncture. The actor who displayed the most negative attitude towards the treaties was Makarios, who had to sign the texts under the pressure of Athens. 23 In the presidential elections held in Cyprus in 1959, Makarios was the President and the political leader of the Turkish Cypriots, Dr. Fazıl Küçük became the Vice President. In the same year, the last census under British administration was conducted and the Greek population was found to be 445,000 people and the Turkish population was 105,000 people (18 percent of the island's population). 24 32 TNA, FCO 141/4627, "Cyprus: Constitution, Transitional Committee", 1959Committee", -1960 Kıralp, "1967-1974 It should not be forgotten that Turkish Cypriots were the main and dominant element on the island with the status of "dominant nation" during the Ottoman period. See Ioannis Moutsis, "Turkish Cypriot identity after 1974: Turkish Cypriots, Turks of Cyprus or Cypriots?", Synthesis: an Anglophone Journal of Comparative Literary Studies, Volume 10, 2017, p. 116-130. 38 Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa, "Greco-Turkish relations and the questions of Cyprus and Aegean Islands according to British Documents 63 "The Turkish Government attaches great importance to the full implementation of the treaties and the constitution", Akın, 12 January 1963, p.1. 64 "President Our deputy was carried on shoulders in Ankara", Halkın Sesi, 8 January 1963 p.1. 65 "President Makarios in Ankara", Halkın Sesi, 23 November 1962, p.1 66 "Turkey sent a definitive note to Makarios", Halkın Sesi, 4 January 1963, p. 1, 67 "Telegram from the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State", DS, no: 279, 27 April 1963, Cyprus (1960Cyprus (-1974, PhD Thesis, University of Oulu, Finland, 2010. 75 "Telegram from the Department of the State to the Embassy in Cyprus", Department of State (DS), no: 268, 9 January 1963, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v16/d268 (Access Date: 9 June 2023). 76 "Erkin expressed his opinion on the Cyprus issue", Nacak, 17 May 1963, p.1. 77 92 A ceasefire was signed on 27 December and the wire fence called "Green Line" was opened in Nicosia on 30 December. It is divided into Turkish and Greek sections by a barricade line. These measures did not bring a permanent solution and violence flared up again in a short time. 93 The Soviet Union is sympathetic to Makarios because of his permission to AKEL's activities and his non-aligned foreign policy. 94 When the stability on the island deteriorated at the end of 1963, Pravda (Truth) newspaper, which defended the theses of the Soviet Union Government, evaluated the Zurich and London

Treaties as an "imperialist design" that caused discord between the communities in Cyprus, and the flights carried out by Turkish jets over Nicosia were protested by Moscow. 95 [Republic of Cyprus 1959: State and deep state, prisoners of a lost cause-political and ideological evaluation], Papazisis, Lefkosia, p.157. 111 Kızılyürek, A History of Ressentiment and Violence, p. 286-292. 112 "Uden shedion efirmosfi" [Nothing about the plan was implemented], Patris, 21 April 1966, p.1; p.4. 113 "İ elliniki kivernisi ke i kipriakipolitiki krisi" (The Greek Government and the political crisis in Cyprus), Fileleftheros, 14 April 1961, p.1. It says. 114 The basis of the distrust of a significant part of the revolutionary government in Turkey towards the Turkish Cypriot leadership is that they see Küçük, Denktaş and TMT as collaborators of Adnan Menderes". 115 After May 27, 1960, arms aid from Turkey to TMT stopped and could only start again in the autumn of 1961. 116 In a speech he made in February 1962, Yorgacis said that the "small portion" of the Turks who withdrew from all Ottoman lands and remained in Cyprus were "blackmailing" the Greeks because of the Zurich and London Treaties. In addition to the Greek right, AKEL, which held its 10th congress in 1962, also violated the Zurich and London Treaties. AKEL described these agreements as "the fiction of imperialism" and signaled that they would try to unilaterally determine the future course of the struggle within the framework of principles such as "national liberation", "independence" and "anti-imperialist struggle". The main discomfort they felt was the agreements in question and They see the Republic of Cyprus, based on the political equality of the two communities, as an "injustice" to the Greek community. In addition, the Greek elite cannot match the political system that emerged on the island with the ideals of Greek nationalism and they react against it. Municipalities, tax, army and public employees of the two communities rates have created serious disagreements between the parties. When Makarios brought up the idea of changing the constitution, both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership opposed it; They warned that disrupting the stability on the island would cause serious problems. Although the USA designed a formula to reconcile the parties, it could not implement this formula due to Makarios' disbelief in the Zurich and London Agreements. The Karamanlis Government in Greece tried to prevent the Greek Cypriot leadership from breaking these agreements, and after the resignation of Karamanlis, the country was plunged into deep instability and Athens could not play a sufficiently effective role in the Cyprus Problem. England, on the other hand, initiated a secret negotiation process with Makarios regarding reviewing the treaties and the constitution, and this process extended to the British High Commission's involvement in Makarios' constitutional amendment efforts. Since a large part of the constitutional amendment requested by Makarios is related to the "unchangeable articles" of the constitution, the issue directly concerns the founding treaties. Therefore, Turkey and other guarantor countries are parties to these discussions both politically and legally. Makarios' most strategic move in foreign policy was to ensure international support against the aforementioned agreements by making Cyprus a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Although moderate relations and mutually beneficial cooperation moves were

occasionally observed between the politicians of the two communities in Cyprus, mutual skepticism and disagreement dominated the political arena throughout the examined period. When Makarios took action to change the constitution in 1963, he was supported by both the Greek right and AKEL. On the other hand, there were significant disagreements between the Greek and Turkish sides in Cyprus regarding the functioning of the state, and neither politics nor the judiciary could provide a solution to these disagreements. The Greek side is obstructing the Turks in order not to implement the right given to the Turks by the constitution to constitute 30% of the public servants. The constitutional amendment requested by Makarios has the quality of eliminating principles such as the Vice Presidential veto given to the Turks on some vital issues and the requirement for two separate majorities in the legislature, leading to the state being governed within the framework of the Greek will. Moreover, in line with the Akritas Plan, bringing the constitutional amendment to the agenda in the first place is a camouflage used to hide the ultimate goal, Enosis. As a result, the Cyprus state, which was established with the aim of bringing stability to the Eastern Mediterranean and Turkish-Greek peace, could not achieve the desired results.

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Archive Resources

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