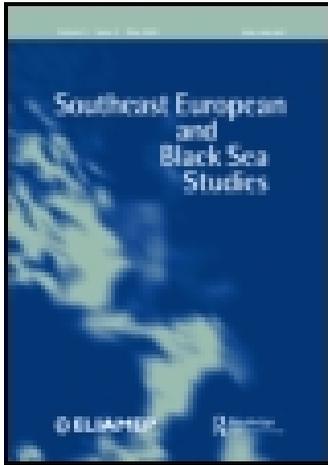


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## Making Cyprus a national cause in Turkey's foreign policy, 1948–1965

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As the global wave of decolonization that began after 1945 reached the island of Cyprus, the Cyprus question turned into an issue of paramount importance for Turkish nationalists and for the Turkish people in general. Long before, Turkish foreign policy architects – who had previously taken the line that ‘Turkey does not have a Cyprus problem’ – came to portray Cyprus as a ‘national cause’. Three different geopolitical discourses were instrumental in legitimizing Turkey’s claims over Cyprus and in leading Turkish society to believe that it had a crucial stake in the fate of the island. Naturalized geopolitics represented Cyprus as a natural extension of the Turkish heartland, while ideological geopolitics put forth that Greek Cypriots were responsible for the spread of communism. Finally, civilizational geopolitics characterized Turkey and Greece’s rivalry in Cyprus as the latest chapter in the centuries-old conflict between Turkishness and Hellenism.

**Keywords:** geopolitics; Turkish nationalism; national homeland; Cyprus; Turkish foreign policy

### Introduction

The prominent role of nationalist and anti-communist ideology in Cold War-era Turkish politics and foreign policy is well-illustrated by the case of Cyprus. Lying outside the borders of the 1920 Misak-ı Milli (National Pact) – through which the last Ottoman parliament had defined the geographical objectives of Turkey’s national self-determination – Cyprus remained outside the scope of Turkish politics and foreign policy until the end of the Second World War. This study analyses how successive post-WWII Turkish governments moved away from their official stance that ‘Turkey does not have a Cyprus problem’, investing the island with great strategic importance by exploiting its geographical proximity to Turkey. Such governments represented Cyprus as a *yavru vatan* – a ‘baby homeland’ – which urgently needed to be united with its *anavatan* or motherland. This constituted Turkey’s primary national cause during the early Cold War period.

The notion of the *vatan* (which can be translated as ‘homeland’ in English) has always been a keynote of Turkish politics and foreign policy, one that has been periodically reconfigured by ruling elites according to changing internal and external political and social conditions. By bestowing a conscious territorial identity upon those who live within its borders, the *vatan* solves ontological problems like

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ownership and belonging. Moreover, the concept of the *vatan* fulfils an important political purpose for ruling elites, allowing them to draw the physical and mental borders of the space inhabited by the country's citizens. By claiming that they are protecting the 'sacred' *vatan* from internal and external 'enemies' on behalf of the entire people, ruling elites are able to legitimize their own power. Groups which contest or criticize this power can be eliminated from the political realm by being accused of national treason. Thus, it is the ruling elites who determine how the borders of the *vatan* are drawn, as well as which groups are included within these borders and which are excluded. Those in power strive for 'unity' and 'cohesion' by erasing any differences among the individuals and communities within the *vatan*. After Turkey's transition to democracy following the Second World War – and the increasing political rivalry that accompanied it – a common argument held that the Turkish *vatan*, being located in a 'dangerous' part of the globe, was under threat from internal and external enemies: 'The well-established nationalistic stance in Turkish politics and society argues that since people in Turkey's 'dangerous' geography are surrounded by enemies, they have to prepare themselves to live in a continuous state of emergency. The only way to maintain Turkey's integrity in this state of emergency is to embrace the *vatan* as the most precious asset of the Turkish nation and to be ready to defend it for any sacrifice' (Özkan 2012, 7). Similarly, Turkey's foreign policy is not the 'external orientation of a pre-established state' defending its people and *vatan* against external threats and dangers (Campbell 1998, 42). On the contrary, these very threats and dangers are brought into existence through the practices of foreign policy.

This article seeks to analyse how the manufacturing of threats and dangers to the *vatan* was crucial in formulating Turkey's Cyprus policy during the early Cold War. It does not recognize the ontological validity of notions like 'the Greek danger' or 'communist expansionism' in this context, arguing that terms like 'danger', 'security' and 'threat' are not objective entities that exist 'independently of those to whom they may become a threat' (Campbell 1998, 1). Rather, their signification is contingent upon the contemporary dynamics of foreign policy discourses. The construction of dangers is central to foreign policy-making in order to control the political struggle over questions of identity and power. This article focuses on Turkey's shifting foreign policy approach towards Cyprus, from its stance that 'Turkey does not have a Cyprus problem' to its designation of Cyprus as 'an inseparable part of the Turkish *vatan*'. From the first half of the 1950s onwards, official discourse in Turkey began describing Cyprus as a 'national cause', using Turkish nationalism in order to legitimize this element of its foreign policy and have it accepted by society at large. In addition, anti-communism played an important role in Turkey's Cyprus policy. Accordingly, this study also examines how Turkish politics and foreign policy – in line with the exigencies of the Cold War – depicted Cyprus as a vital front in the struggle against communism and Soviet expansionism.

### **Making Cyprus a national cause: foreign policy and geopolitics**

It is not surprising that the process of formulating a Cyprus strategy in Turkey dates back to the late 1940s, when the country's first free elections were held and rivalries developed among competing political parties. What is striking, however, is that the Cyprus question was put on the public agenda by journalists, writers and

scholars, rather than by Turkey's ruling elites. Some of the intellectuals trumpeting the cause of Cyprus were Cypriots who had emigrated to Turkey and still felt attached to their place of birth. The majority of them, however, were intellectuals who had never been to Cyprus, but were attempting to ride the wave of nationalism which had gathered force in the anti-communist climate following the Second World War. Along with its founder, Sedat Simavi, the fledgling daily *Hürriyet* was closely associated with the cause of Cyprus, providing sensational news reports about current events on the island. With the growing circulation of *Hürriyet* and other newspapers which exploited the masses' nationalist sentiments, politicians began to turn their attention to Cyprus.

During this nascent phase of Turkish democracy, the governing class recognized the Cyprus question's potential for controlling and manipulating the people, whom politicians now had to treat as politically involved citizens rather than docile, susceptible masses. The creation of fictitious threats and dangers to the *vatan* was crucial in forming a political bloc to exert control over the Turkish people and eliminate any challenges to the power and hegemony of the ruling class. Although Turkey had renounced any claims of sovereignty over Cyprus in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, foreign policy experts sounded warnings about 'losing' Cyprus in order to ensure that citizens would rally around the government.

As argued by Campbell (1992, 13) in his book *Writing Security*, foreign policy is devised in order to safeguard the interests of a state against the outside world: 'The constant articulation of danger through foreign policy is thus not a threat to a state's identity or existence: it is its condition of possibility'. In this sense, foreign policy is an integral part of the 'discourse of threat' that shapes the state and constitutes its *raison d'être*. A threat must exist for there to be a state. Foreign policy provides well-defined and clear-cut answers to ambiguous questions such as who we are and whom we should fear. Its goal is to eliminate threats by distinguishing what is internal and what is external to a country and making sure that these boundaries remain visible. In doing so, it ensures that the citizens of a society rally around the state and its foreign policy, embracing the identity which has been constructed for them. All attempts at criticizing or questioning the state's foreign policy, or the identity which has been built up around it, are labelled as treason on the part of agents working for external enemies. Any potentially 'dangerous' foreign policy issue is excluded from critical debate and brought under state control. The state determines how the national interest is to be defined and against whom it shall be defended, and it does not tolerate any challenge to its authority (Cameron 2013, 62–96).

The main dynamics of Turkish politics and foreign policy after 1945 were the 'threat' of the Soviet Union, the struggle against communism and Turkey's entry into an alliance with the West. Between the end of the Second World War and Turkey's entry into NATO in 1952, the country saw a transition to multiparty democracy with free elections; at the same time, there was a silencing of the opposition, especially the left. In the course of this witch hunt, many leftist academics were dismissed from their posts, unions were declared 'treasonous' and shut down, and left-leaning newspapers were closed. Thus, during the 1950s – when the 'Soviet threat' was no longer such a pressing issue, and all types of left-wing political activity had been eliminated – the Cyprus question provided common ground for Turkey's ruling elites and nationalists. Cyprus was represented in anti-communist and nationalist discourse as a security concern and a threat to

Turkey's national interests. By portraying Cyprus as an 'existential threat' to Turkey, Turkish foreign policy architects staved off any criticism of their Cyprus policy. As a result, the Cyprus issue no longer belonged in the realm of normal politics, but rather in the 'politics of exception'. Cyprus was used to construct a national consensus as well as an authoritarian system which silenced opposition (Booth 2004, 5–8). The supposed threats that Cyprus represented to Turkey's national identity played a key role in integrating the Democrat Party – which had come to power in the wake of the CHP's 27-year-long single-party rule – with the state and the nation. Through its defense of a 'national cause' against an external foe, the Democrat Party won legitimacy, not only with the masses, but also in the eyes of the army and the bureaucracy. At the same time, by struggling against Turkey's 'enemies', nationalist and conservative groups saw an opportunity to regain some of the political power and influence of which they had been deprived since 1923.

As a 'baby *vatan*' requiring protection against Greece – which by the 1950s had come to be described as a 'threat' and an 'enemy' – Cyprus played a crucial role both in Turkey's foreign policy and in its self-definition as a 'we'. The Greek presence in Cyprus was described sometimes as part of the struggle between Turkishness and Hellenism (with specific reference to the wars waged against Greece during the Turkish War of Independence) and sometimes as a battlefield in the purported conflict between Christianity and Islam. At the same time, Turks who took a hawkish position on Cyprus pointed out the role the left had played in the Cypriot independence movement; in this way, Turkey's claims over Cyprus were portrayed as an anti-communist struggle.

The Cyprus question was at the forefront of Turkish foreign policy during the 1950s. Explaining it to the public and bringing about its acceptance and legitimization required the construction of a new geopolitical discourse and, by extension, a new geopolitical imagination. Prior to the 1940s, there were virtually no newspaper articles or books printed about Cyprus. Accordingly, the public was almost completely ignorant about this 'inseparable part of the mother-*vatan*', as Cyprus was described from the 1950s onwards. Therefore, foreign policy experts needed to construct a geopolitical discourse explaining why Turkey should be concerned about Cyprus and to see to it that this information was digested by the citizenry. Building on Foucault's theory of the construction of knowledge in the interests of power, O Tuathail (1998, 3) has argued in favour of what he terms 'critical geopolitics', a method of inquiry which

does not assume that 'geopolitical discourse' is the language of truth; rather, it understands it as a discourse seeking to establish and assert its own truths. Critical geopolitics, in other words, politicizes the creation of geopolitical knowledge by intellectuals, institutions and practicing statesmen. It treats the production of geopolitical discourse as part of politics itself and not as a neutral and detached description of a transparent, objective reality.

Thus, to deconstruct Turkish geopolitical discourse regarding Cyprus is to uncover the political relationship between the powers that be and society at large; the ways in which Turkey's foreign policy has been proselytized to society; and the role of Turkish journalists, intellectuals and scholars in this process. This study examines geopolitical discourse in terms of both 'practical geopolitics' and 'popular geopolitics'. Practical geopolitics 'refers to the geographical vocabularies used by political

leaders in addresses to help their citizens make sense of the world' (Dittmer and Dodds 2008, 441). Through the lens of practical geopolitics, we will see how state leaders and the foreign policy bureaucracy in Turkey constructed a political discourse about Cyprus. Popular geopolitics, on the other hand, will help us understand the role played by newspapers, journals and other publications in proselytizing Turkey's Cyprus policy to its citizenry and causing the Turkish people to view Greek Cypriots as a dangerous 'other'. According to Ó Tuathail (1999, 110), 'popular geopolitics refers to the geographical politics created and debated by the various media-shaping popular culture. It addresses the social construction and perpetuation of certain collective national and transnational understandings of places and peoples beyond one's own borders'. Until 1950s, Cyprus had not been an issue in Turkish public opinion; thus, slogans, maps and charts representing the island as part of Turkey were used to great effect by the media in order to put Cyprus on the agenda and legitimize Turkey's Cyprus policy.

Geopolitical discourse is made up of various 'geopolitical imaginations', which reflect how societies position themselves in their immediate region and in the world at large. A geopolitical imagination depicts the history of a society, as well as the space within which it is located, in national terms; different groups within the same society may produce different geopolitical imaginations. An evaluation of Turkey's Cyprus policy reveals three different geopolitical imaginations: naturalized, ideological and civilizational (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, 52–77). Naturalized geopolitics considers 'states with 'biological needs' for territory/resources and outlets for enterprise, a 'closed' world in which one state's political-economic success was at another's expense'. As for ideological geopolitics, one of its main characteristics, for Agnew and Corbridge, is 'a central systemic-ideological conflict over political-economic organization ... and the naturalization of the ideological conflict by such notable concepts as containment, domino effects and hegemonic stability'. Civilizational geopolitics, on the other hand, creates an imagination in which the world is divided among different faiths and/or civilizations. Thus, while naturalized geopolitics, constructed in Turkey during the late 1940s, envisioned Cyprus as a natural geographical extension of Turkey, ideological geopolitics defined Turkey's quarrel with Greece over the island within the framework of the struggle against communist expansionism. Finally, Islamic media organs of the era preferred to consider Cyprus in terms of civilizational geopolitics, which viewed the issue as a struggle between Turkishness and Hellenism and, in a broader sense, a continuation of the supposedly age-old struggle between Islam and Christianity.

### **Bringing Cyprus within the orbit of Turkish nationalism**

As Britain's colonial empire rapidly disintegrated after World War II, Greek Cypriots began to voice their claims for self-determination and *Enosis* – unification of the island with Greece – under the leadership of the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) and Archbishop Makarios. Until 1954, when Greece asked the United Nations for the principle of self-determination to be applied in Cyprus, Turkey opted for continued British colonial rule over the island. At a time when most colonies in Africa and Asia were demanding and/or gaining their independence, Turkish foreign policy ran counter to the prevailing *Zeitgeist*. Thus, in an irony of history, the Republic of Turkey – which owes its founding to an anti-imperialist struggle – supported Great Britain on the issue of Cyprus. As early as 1948, Alasya

(1948, 18), a prominent figure in the Cyprus debate, stated that Turks did not have any objections to British colonial rule: 'We do not wish to see any change in the status quo on the island. We are content with British rule under a democratic system. However, if the island is to be abandoned by Britain, then we believe that Cyprus should be returned to Turkey, its former and real possessor'.

As the Soviet Union consolidated its power in Crimea and the Caucasus towards the end of the Second World War, the nationalist camp in Turkey abandoned its pan-Turkist ideals. Nevertheless, in the late 1940s, the issue of Cyprus became a new preoccupation for nationalists such as Nihal Atsız, who wrote (1949, 10): 'The Green Island [Cyprus] is ours and will remain ours ... Crimea – where the Red atrocities have left no Turks – is our ancestral heritage; so is Cyprus with its 90,000 Turks. Cyprus belongs to us, and its 350,000 Greeks do not outstrip its 90,000 Turks in importance. They never have and never will'. Nationalists strongly condemned Greek Cypriots' ideal of *Enosis*, while paradoxically seeking to counter their claim by annexing the island to Turkey. These groups considered Makarios's policy of non-alignment as a serious threat to Turkey's interests. In their view, the 'Red threat in the North' (i.e. the Soviet Union) was attempting to encircle Anatolia by establishing a communist regime in Cyprus under Makarios's leadership.

On January 18, 1950, the Millî Türk Talebe Birliği (Turkish National Student Union) held a rally in Ankara on the issue of Cyprus. A few days later, the Cyprus question was addressed in Parliament. Cevdet Kerim İncedayı, a deputy from Sinop, came to the podium holding two bottles. One was filled with soil from every region of Turkey to mark the tenth anniversary of the Republic, while the other contained blood which had been donated by Turkish Cypriot youth studying in Istanbul in 1933. Having made this suitably dramatic gesture, İncedayı gave a speech warning the government of the consequences of a potential British departure from the island.

The response of Foreign Minister Necmettin Sadak effectively sums up Turkey's policy towards Cyprus during the first half of the 1950s, which was predicated on the continuation of British colonial rule:

There is no such thing as a Cyprus question ... This is because today, Cyprus is under the sovereignty and administration of Britain, and we are certain that Britain neither intends nor is inclined to hand Cyprus over to another state. Whatever happens in Cyprus, the British government will not abandon the island to another government. (*TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 7, 1955, 288–90)

These remarks – aimed at pacifying Turkish youth only a few months prior to the first free and democratic elections in Turkey – are significant in two respects. First, they indicate that politicians like Sadak were unaware of what a potent force nationalism could be in manufacturing and manipulating public opinion. Second, they illustrate a common pattern in foreign policy in which a smaller country is content to take its cue from a great power rather than risk pursuing an independent course. Taking the floor after Sadak, İncedayı stated that Cyprus 'is geographically a part of Anatolia', declaring that if the island – 'which had been a Turkish land for about three and a half centuries' – ever fell out of British control, it should be returned to the 'Turkish nation'.

Turkey's position was that it would not intervene in Cyprus as long as it was administered by the British. Nonetheless, from the early 1950s onwards, newspapers saw an upsurge in nationalist writings about Cyprus. Simavi (1951, 11), the

founder and editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Hürriyet* and a media advocate for Turkish nationalist claims over Cyprus, cited European colonial precedents to argue for the annexation of the island: ‘An extension of Anatolia into the Aegean Sea which washes its shores, the Dodecanese is 1500% Turkish. Just as Malta and Cyprus belong to the British even though they do not live there, or just as Corsica, Algeria and Tunisia belong to the French despite the fact that they are in a minority there, so the Dodecanese belongs to Turks, despite the fact that the Greeks forcibly expelled them from those islands’. Notably, Simavi – who did not object to Cyprus remaining under British rule – staked a claim to the Dodecanese islands, which Italy had left to Greece following the Second World War. Similarly, echoing Turkey’s support for the West amidst the anti-colonial movements of the 1950s, Simavi did not oppose France and Britain’s colonial regimes. From 1954 onwards, rising nationalist sentiment about Cyprus was visible not only in the media, but also in the streets and universities of Turkey. The protesters demanded that if there were any change in the status quo in Cyprus, the island should be given to Turkey.

Starting in 1954, the dream of annexing Cyprus became a national cause in Turkey. Immediately following Greece’s request to the UN in August 1954 to apply the principle of self-determination to Cyprus, the Turkish National Student Union set up the ‘Cyprus is Turkish Committee’ with more than hundred branches opening up around the country in less than a year. Afterwards, Fazıl Küçük, the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, changed his party’s name from the Kıbrıs Millî Türk Birliği Partisi (National Turkish Union Party of Cyprus) to the Kıbrıs Türktür Partisi (Cyprus is Turkish Party), evidence of the close cooperation between Turkish nationalists and the Turkish Cypriot leadership. It is striking that even the motto *Kıbrıs Türktür* (Cyprus is Turkish), which became a familiar slogan in rallies and demonstrations in Turkey, was modelled on Greek Cypriots’ rallying cry *Elliniki Kipros* (Greek Cyprus) (Örnek 1949, 4).<sup>1</sup> This act of appropriation illustrates the non-spontaneous character of Turkish political arguments regarding Cyprus, which were mainly based upon anti-Greek sentiment.

Thinking it would strengthen their hand in negotiations with Greece and Great Britain, members of the ruling party in Turkey supported nationalist demonstrations about Cyprus during the 1950s. The Turkish government acted as though every position it took on Cyprus was absolute and irrevocable, as can be seen, for example, from the slogan ‘partition or death’ (referring to the scheme to divide the island between Turkey and Greece). However, over time, it became impossible to rein in the public’s nationalistic fervour, resulting in disasters like the pogroms of September 6–7, 1955 against the Greek citizens of Turkey. During his speech to Parliament on September 12, 1955, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes openly admitted that the government had lost control:

Had this question of Cyprus not existed, had it not been presented as such a contested issue between the two parties, and had Cyprus not been enshrined as a sacred cause in the minds of the citizens of both countries, then the law enforcement authorities could have prevented this incident from the very start by performing their duties and making use of the powers entrusted to them through their weapons and through the law – by heeding their consciences and using their good judgment. (*Milliyet*, September 13, 1955b)

Following these pogroms, which were directed primarily at Istanbul’s Greek minority, the government shut down the Cyprus is Turkish Association, arrested its

leading members and banned all Cyprus-related demonstrations for more than two years. Such measures demonstrated the extent to which Turkish nationalism – which the government had previously supported – had taken on a life of its own, turning into something far more volatile and unpredictable.

The ruling elites soon realized that a full-scale annexation of Cyprus by Turkey would not be feasible, given that Turkish Cypriots comprised only 20% of the island's total population. On December 18, 1956, Menderes announced a shift in Turkey's attitude towards Cyprus, stating 'We are in favour of the partition of the island' (Armaoğlu 1963, 288). For Menderes, this move was essential for the protection of Turkish Cypriots as well as for strategic reasons: 'Regarding the island's partition, we cannot abandon 120,000 of our population to a foreign country. We consider it essential to maintain an outpost on a piece of land that oversees the security of twenty-five million' (Erdemir and Erdemir 2006, 17). In 1958, in response to the opposition's criticisms of the ruling party, Menderes adopted a more irredentist position, claiming that the government's Cyprus policy would defend Turkey's interests beyond the borders of the National Pact: 'Should we fail to defend our national interests in Cyprus, we would also appear unable to protect our mother-*vatan* when necessary. The Turkish *vatan* and Turkish interests will be defended even outside the borders of the National Pact' (Erdemir and Erdemir 2006, 80).

During the second half of the 1950s, there was a rapid increase in nationalist publications depicting Cyprus as a baby *vatan*. In order to raise awareness about Cyprus, such publications incorporated maps displaying Cyprus as inseparably linked to Anatolia. A significant example is the sketch found on the cover of the 1958 booklet *Kıbrıs Türktür* (Cyprus is Turkish), in which Cyprus is drawn as though it were connected to the Turkish mainland (Figure 1). This sketch was extensively reprinted in brochures and on banners, and copies of it were distributed at demonstrations. Written in question-and-answer format and intended to provide readers with basic information about the island, *Cyprus is Turkish* employed highly provocative language, accusing Greece of acting contrary to geography and history:

By seizing the Aegean islands close to Anatolia, Greece has crossed the natural boundaries drawn between the two countries by historical events and particularly by geography. Indeed, it is as if it has built a fence in the yard of its Turkish neighbor ... However, in recent years the Cyprus case has revealed that the Greek state is now attempting to extend its reach towards the Turkish shores in the eastern Mediterranean. (Koyçıç and Asma 1958, 30)

A snapshot of the anti-communist and nationalist discourse that dominated Turkish politics in the 1950s, *Cyprus is Turkish* regarded the partition of Cyprus at the 35th parallel – from a point south of Famagusta on the eastern coast to a point north of Paphos on the western coast – as the only viable solution to the Cyprus problem.

The Republic of Cyprus was founded in 1960, following the London and Zurich Agreements of the previous year. The political system of the new republic was based on a federation in which power would be shared between Turks and Greeks, with Turkey, Greece and Britain assuming the role of guarantor states. Menderes admitted that recognizing the Republic of Cyprus was a step back from his earlier position; he defended himself by pointing out that 'We were not able to take Cyprus, but we did not cede it either' (Erdemir and Erdemir 2006, 85). During the 1950s, Turkish foreign policy had oscillated between diametrically opposed

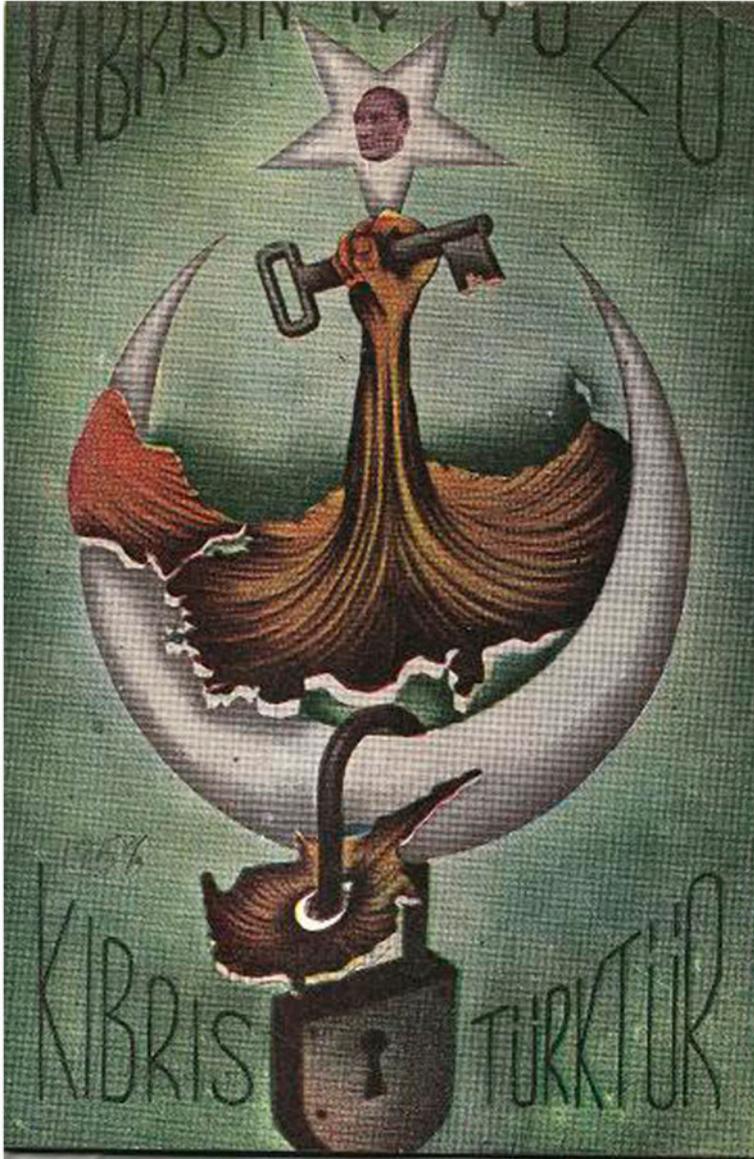


Figure 1. Booklet with the title “Cyprus is Turkish” published in 1958.

positions, ultimately back-peddalling from partition to recognition of an independent Republic of Cyprus. While foreign policy experts argued that these oscillations were tactical manoeuvres, the Turkish government’s concession proved more difficult for the masses to accept. The opposition journal *Akis* criticized the Turkish foreign minister, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, for having forsaken the strategy of partition, which, with its slogan ‘partition or death’, had called on Turkish people to give their lives to seize a portion of the island: ‘As one would expect, this ‘unprecedented’ tactic of the Democrat Party produced a backlash. 100 thousand Cypriot

Turks could not abandon the notion of partition that they had embraced – or had been made to embrace – since they were not tactical masters like Zorlu’ (*Akis* 1959, 12–14).

Indeed, Turkish Cypriot political leaders did not embrace the Republic of Cyprus, nor did they abandon the idea of unifying the northern part of the island with Turkey. Rauf Denktaş, a leading Turkish Cypriot politician of the era, had reservations about the viability of the new country, for which he was censured by Emin Dirvana, Turkey’s first ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus. Dirvana blamed Denktaş for not showing interest in ‘the economic, social, and cultural development of the Turkish community’: ‘But he was not interested in such things, preferring to constantly and needlessly quarrel with the Greeks ... I soon realized that ensuring the development of the Turkish community would be very difficult with Denktaş’s mindset’ (*Milliyet*, May 15, 1964). In 1964, following clashes between the Turks and Greeks of Cyprus, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü – who himself favoured partition – explained to the Turkish public that he had no choice but to propose the less attractive option of federation as a compromise: ‘In order to remain within the terms of the agreement, we have begun to engage in talks and discussions proposing federation, not partition, at an official level’ (*Dışişleri Bülteni* 1964, 63). Journalist Toker (1964, 5), İnönü’s son-in-law, went even further, demanding the partition of the island as the only viable solution: ‘The security of the Turkish Republic and the survival of the Turkish community in Cyprus admit of but one option: partition!’ Turkey’s objective of partitioning the island was finally realized through two military operations in July and August 1974 which aimed at thwarting the ultranationalist military coup backed by the Greek military junta, a coup whose goal was to unify Cyprus with Greece.

### **Cyprus as Turkey’s ‘geographical rights and geopolitical reasons’**

First printed as far back as 1948, the Turkish monthly journal *Yeşilada* (‘The Green Island’) is the earliest publication of any significance to employ naturalized and ideological geopolitics. From the start, *Yeşilada* was intended to be a nationalist journal; its authors mainly consisted of Turkish Cypriots and Turkish nationalists. The views expressed in *Yeşilada* were of seminal importance in the creation of a Turkish foreign policy discourse concerning Cyprus. The intellectuals who wrote for the journal – who would later become key players in the Cyprus question in Turkey – sought to create the political, historical and geographical ‘realities’ to support Turkey’s claims over the island. *Yeşilada* constantly reiterated that Cyprus was geographically part of Anatolia, and that it therefore properly belonged to Turkey. In *Yeşilada*’s second issue, published in 1948, Karagil (1948, 2, 12), the journal’s founder, declared that the National Pact no longer had any validity with respect to Cyprus, explaining that ‘at the time the National Pact was ratified, the scourge of communism with imperialistic ambitions did not exist’. According to Karagil, Cyprus’s strategic geopolitical location meant that Britain should return it to Turkey: ‘If the regions serving as outposts against the perils that threaten the mother-*vatan* must change owners, then these regions should be ceded to Turkey’. A prominent Turkish foreign policy expert, Ahmet Emin Yalman, had recently echoed his colleagues’ opinion (as well as Turkey’s official pro-British stance on Cyprus) in declaring that the goal of annexation was too adventurous and ambitious. Karagil’s response to Yalman – one of the earliest instances in print of

naturalized geopolitics concerning Cyprus – cited the island’s geographical proximity to Turkey as an argument for annexation: ‘Why would the acquisition of this island extending right into the Gulf of İskenderun, and only seventy kilometres to Anamur [a city on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey], be considered as a step towards imperial ambition?’

By this logic, as Cyprus was a ‘geographical extension’ of Anatolia, its annexation by Turkey – rather than its union with Greece, nearly 600 miles away – was a scientific inevitability. Long before, the ‘argument from geographical proximity’ had insinuated itself into Turkish nationalist discourse, which dubbed Cyprus the ‘baby *vatan*’ of Turkey.<sup>2</sup> In the June 1949 issue of *Yeşilada*, Manizade (1949, 3) described Cyprus as ‘an adorable baby in the arms of Anatolia’.<sup>3</sup> The greatest obstacle to Turkey’s annexation of the island lay in the island’s Greek population, which was four times as large as its Turkish community. The solution, in the eyes of Turkish nationalists, was simply to expel the Greeks from Cyprus: ‘According to the laws of nature, it is impossible to lift up the island of Cyprus and carry it to Greece. Therefore, the only solution is to transfer the Greek majority – an artificial and, for the most part, dubious creation of the last century – and exchange them with, say, the Turks of Western Thrace’ (Manizade 1951, 13).

During the debate over Cyprus at the United Nations General Assembly on September 24, 1954, Ambassador Selim Sarper spoke in detail about Ankara’s opposition to the independence of the island. Sarper (1958, 30–45) emphasized that Turkey would prefer Cyprus to remain a British colony. According to Sarper, Cyprus ‘is a part of Turkish territory in terms of physical geography’. Hence, in the event of any change in the island’s status, Sarper called for ceding Cyprus to Turkey, citing the case of the Åland Islands, which were located in the Baltic Sea and had a monolingual Swedish-speaking population but had been surrendered to Finland on the grounds of geographical proximity. With his assertion that ‘this Greek-speaking population in Cyprus has no ethnic ties whatsoever with the Greeks’, Sarper attempted to deny the ethnic bonds between the Greeks of Greece and Greek Cypriots. Seeking to alter their fellow citizens’ perceptions of the Greeks of Cyprus, Turkish annexationists made frequent reference during the 1950s to the ‘fez-wearing, Turkish-speaking Christian Greek Cypriot community, which has nothing to do with Greece’ (Manizade 1965b, 13).<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Sarper (1958) equated the Greek doctrine of *Enosis* with the German *Anschluss*, accusing Greece of pursuing the same irredentist policy as Nazi Germany. Somewhat ironically, in arguing for annexation on the grounds of geographical proximity, Sarper thought nothing of using the German term ‘hinterland’, a favourite catchword of Nazi leaders championing German expansionism: ‘The island of Cyprus is not economically self-sufficient; in the past, when it was part of the Turkish mother-*vatan*, it was able to sustain its population by becoming the hinterland of Anatolia and engaging in economic cooperation with it’.

In the compilation entitled *Kıbrıs ve Türkler* (Cyprus and the Turks), published in 1964, geography professor Cevat Gürsoy (1964, 7–19) attempted to add empirical heft to the geographical proximity thesis. Asserting that ‘Cyprus is geographically akin to the Anatolian peninsula, and could even be said to constitute a smaller version of Anatolia’, Gürsoy’s article concluded that ‘due to its historical rights and security considerations, it is completely impossible to imagine Turkey relinquishing Cyprus’. Similarly, the well-known nationalist poet Behçet Kemal

Çağlar (1964, 24) was among those who defended the cause of Cyprus on the basis of geography:

Geographical rights or geopolitical reasons? We, and only we, are justified on both counts. Once upon a time, our Taurus Mountains dived into the depths of sea, rising back up to the surface there to form Cyprus and its mountains. Turkey is the only piece of land visible from Cyprus, which extends all the way to Turkey like a baby *vatan* cuddling up to be suckled by its mother-*vatan*.

The weakest link in Turkey's claims over Cyprus was the fact that Turkish Cypriots made up only one-fifth of the island's population. In order to gloss over this inconvenient fact, Turkish nationalists asserted that the British colonial regime had pressured Turkish Cypriots to emigrate from Cyprus to Anatolia after the end of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, in addition to the '125,000 Turks' already living in Cyprus, '300,000 Turkish Cypriot exiles' also had a say in the island's future (Manizade, 1964a). Advocates of the Cyprus cause tried to overcome the problem of the island's minority Turkish population by imagining Cyprus as a geographical extension of Anatolia:

The island of Cyprus should not be considered solely on its own. Let's draw a circle with its centre in the middle of Cyprus, a circle that would also include the shores of Southern Anatolia and Hatay. If we calculate the total population within this circle, the Cypriot Greek community will definitely be a minority. From a geopolitical standpoint, the issue of Cyprus is a national cause that must be considered and addressed together with that of the region of Southeastern Turkey. (Manizade 1965b, 18)

At the official level, the argument from geographical proximity was also adopted by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (*Ayın Tarihi* 1955): 'Cyprus is merely an extension of Anatolia and is one of the main pillars of its security'. The annexation of the entire island by Turkey was justified by Menderes on the principle of 'the indivisibility of the *vatan*': 'The *vatan* is not a commodity that a tailor may cut on any side like a piece of fabric. In addition to being the embodiment of certain truths, it is by its very nature a geographical unit demarcated by historical events under the influence of various factors; it constitutes a political, geographical, economic, and military whole'. In a similar vein, the parliamentary group of the ruling Democrat Party made the following statement in July 1956: 'As a part of the mother-*vatan*, Cyprus has geographically belonged to Anatolia throughout its history. And it bears vital importance for the security of Turkey' (*Ayın Tarihi* 1956).

### Cyprus: 'The Cuba of the Mediterranean'

As late as 1954, when asked about the Turkish government's attitude towards Cyprus, Foreign Minister Fuat Köprülü categorically dismissed the importance of the island: 'Turkey is of the opinion that no Cyprus question exists, and it would not be appropriate to conduct bilateral talks with Greece about the island, since Cyprus still belongs to Britain' (*Hürriyet*, April 2, 1954). However, such official statements did not meet the demands of Turkey's nationalists, who felt they had a direct stake in the Cyprus question. In June 1953, Turkish National Student Union described the Cyprus question as 'a national cause for Turkish youth'. The following year, only three weeks after Foreign Minister Köprülü's comment, the Union

declared that ‘Cyprus is an inseparable part of the mother-*vatan*’ (Armaoğlu 1963, 41, 57).

Turkey’s support for British colonial rule was fully in line with its pro-Western foreign policy. Along with Britain and the US, Turkish ruling elites officially condemned the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser (Smith 2008, 124). Unlike Greece, which supported independence movements in Asia and Africa together with the Afro-Asian bloc in the UN, Turkey sided with France in votes on the independence of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco (Aral 2004, 138–9). When, by the mid-1950s, it was understood that the British presence in Cyprus would eventually come to an end, it also became clear that Turkey’s policy of supporting British colonialism could not be sustained indefinitely. Nonetheless, the government made an effort to adapt its pro-Western foreign policy to the changing circumstances, proposing that Britain abandon the island to Turkey, which would then safeguard Western interests in the Middle East and the Mediterranean as a defense contractor, so to speak.

Turkey’s Cyprus policy was heavily influenced by the prevailing anti-communist ideological discourse of the Cold War period. For Ankara, Greek Cypriots’ struggle for independence was nothing other than the encroachment of communism into the Mediterranean. Therefore, the West had to support Turkey against this allegedly Soviet-backed communist expansionism:

To allow the rampant communists in Cyprus to act at will would be to abandon this crucial base to Russia ... Turkey is the only fortress against communism in the Near East and the Middle East. Turkey is surrounded by a formidable communist threat on all sides. It is important to recognize this sensitive situation, and to eliminate the threat to the south. This will only be possible *through a Turkish annexation of the island of Cyprus* [the emphasis is in the original]. (*Yeşilada* 1949, 2, 4)

In short, Turkish foreign policy experts claimed that Greek separatists would turn the island into a hotbed of communism. Cyprus thus became yet another target for Ankara’s anti-leftist rhetoric during the Cold War. Following the Democrat Party’s landslide victory in the 1950 elections, Menderes pronounced leftism more dangerous than fascism: ‘Unlike leftism, we do not regard fascism as an issue, a movement that needs to be struggled against and eradicated ... We understand leftism as the agent of forces working to the detriment of our country today. We categorically reject such ideas, such sentiments’ (Demokratlar Kulübü Yayınları 1991, 8). In a parallel vein, Yalman (1950) declared that ‘we have been facing Moscow’s efforts at sabotage in Cyprus’. According to Fenik (1954), the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Zafer* (the official media organ of the Democrat Party), Ankara was certain that Cyprus would eventually fall to the communists if it gained its independence. In a column entitled *Kıbrıs’ta Kızıklar* (The Reds in Cyprus), Fenik maintained that the way to prevent the spread of communism on the island would be to support the status quo:

Nearly 65 per cent of Greek Cypriots are communists ... The communist AKEL party in Cyprus seeks to convert the entire island to communism. Given this fact, those who have proposed a Greek annexation of Cyprus have done so not out of nationalist considerations, but because they are looking for an opportunity to foment chaos.

The myth that Cyprus was on the verge of a communist takeover bears many parallels to the Democrat Party's claim that secret communist organizations were responsible for the Istanbul pogrom of September 6–7, 1955. The official statement published by the government on September 7, 1955 placed the blame on the communists without presenting any evidence: 'Istanbul and Turkey as whole have been the victim of a communist plot and provocation, and suffered a serious blow last night' (*Milliyet*, September 7, 1955a). Likewise, in a parliament meeting held on September 12, 1955, Deputy Prime Minister Fuat Köprülü held the communists responsible for the incidents, while attempting to exculpate the government, along with the Turkish nationalist groups it had sponsored. The identities of the 'communists' in question, as well as their organizational and party affiliations, were never elucidated (*TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 23, 1950, 684–5).

In fact, there is a striking inconsistency evident in such attempts to make a scapegoat of communism in Turkey. During the first half of the 1950s, Democrat Party leaders claimed that Greece – with its strong leftist movement – would be unable to control Cyprus, where the communists held the upper hand. By this reasoning, Cyprus had to be awarded to Turkey, a nation 'cleansed' of communism. However, these same Democrat Party leaders then tried to put the blame for the September 6–7 attacks on the Turkish communists they had 'cleansed'. Not every member of the Turkish government was enthusiastic about the tactic of blaming the communists. When Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu was told that 'red and dark forces' would be held responsible for the events of September 6–7, 1955, he warned that Turkey's practice of scapegoating its communists while simultaneously claiming to be able to keep them in check would eventually backfire. Zorlu's objections, however, proved futile (Dikerdem 1977, 134–6).

During the late 1950s, articles in newspapers and journals began drawing attention to the 'ideological threat' in Cyprus. The article *Jeolojinin ve Tarihin Işığında Kıbrıs* (Cyprus in the Light of Geology and History), published by the journal *Türk Düşüncesi* in 1958, asserted that because Turkish ports on the Black Sea, Marmara Sea and Aegean Sea were under a 'Russian threat', Western support would have to arrive through the port cities of Mersin and İskenderun in the event of a war. Tökin (1958, 72–81), the writer of the above-mentioned article, criticized Britain and the West for not supporting Turkey's claims against Greece in the face of this communist menace:

Given Turkey's presence in a key location in the Middle East and its status as a country which can put up a strong resistance to the communist world, it is beyond comprehension that Great Britain should be unable and unwilling to grasp the geopolitical and strategic sensitivity Cyprus holds for us. Moreover, the island of Cyprus is a vital base – not only for Turkey and Britain, but also for the entire Western world – against the communist realm.

For Tökin, the Soviet Union favoured Cyprus's independence in order to be able to station its own forces on the island: 'The Cypriot Communist Party supports *Enosis* on the orders of Moscow. The communists' main tactics are disrupting national unity, creating unrest, and introducing discord among the people'. Similarly, underscoring Turkey's significance for the West in the event of a third world war, publisher and nationalist politician Demiray (1958, 31, 38) described the Cyprus question as 'a strategic issue rather than a question of self-determination'. For Demiray, the West had to transform Turkey into 'a veritable fortress' against

communism and ‘take all the necessary measures to this end’. Accordingly, it behoved the West to give Turkey not only Cyprus but also all the other Aegean islands close to the Turkish mainland.

The most severe criticism of Turkey’s Cyprus policy came from the Turkish Labor Party in the 1960s. At the time, Mehmet Ali Aybar, the party’s leader, stated that ‘It is untrue that Turkish Cypriots cherish an ideal passed down from generation to generation of becoming ‘part of the mother-*vatan*’; they are not born for such an ideal, nor are they willing to die for it’ – a view in stark contrast to the general tenor of Turkish politics during that period. Aybar also pointed out that when Greek Cypriots had resisted British rule, ‘the leaders of the Turkish community had expressed loyalty to Great Britain, not wanting to be classed with the rebellious Greeks’. According to Aybar, Britain, which had had no intention of granting Cyprus its independence, was merely manipulating Ankara to serve its own ends: ‘The emergence of Turkey as a claimant to Cyprus would save Britain from isolation in world opinion vis-à-vis Greece. Turkey was invited to the London Conference of 1955 on such a calculation. Its adventurous government, in pursuit of easy victories, eagerly jumped at this invitation’. Aybar also explicitly objected to the notion of partitioning Cyprus and annexing the Turkish section to Turkey: ‘We have drawn the ultimate borders of the mother-*vatan* around an existing, homogenous nation. We do not, and should not, have any claim on a territory outside our current borders’ (*İftiralara cevap veriyoruz: Türkiye İşçi Partisi gözü ile Kıbrıs* 1964, 5–11). The newspaper *Zafer* interpreted these remarks as ‘The chairman of the Turkish Labor Party calling for *Enosis* in Cyprus’; Hilmi Aydınçer, deputy of the centre-right Adalet Partisi (Justice Party), accused Aybar of ‘being a communist mouthpiece’ (*TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 30, 1964, 366–7).

From the 1960s onwards, anti-communist politicians in Turkey vehemently criticized the different perspectives on Cyprus voiced by leftist groups, accusing them of acting against the national interest. Alarmism about an imminent communist takeover of Cyprus intensified in Turkey, with the island earning the sobriquet of the ‘Cuba of the Mediterranean’. Leading Turkish politicians, academics and journalists exploited US opposition to the socialist regime in Cuba by hinting at the possibility of a similar regime change in Cyprus. They expressed hopes that the West would support Turkey against Greece in order to prevent such a ‘communist takeover’. Inveighing against the prospect of a ‘communist Greek republic’ in Cyprus, Manizade (1964b) declared ‘There should be no doubt that Moscow will immediately recognize this government and Cyprus will end up as the Cuba of the Mediterranean’.

The same year, Rauf Denктаş, leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, warned the US during a visit to Washington that ‘One day, when we wake up, we might see that Cyprus has become the new Cuba’ (*Hudut Postası*, March 12, 1964). Tarık Zafer Tunaya (1964, 16–7), a well-known Turkish professor of constitutional law, memorably pointed out that ‘For centuries, Cyprus has been the world’s greatest aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean region, anchored at the crossroads between the Asia and Africa’. However, Tunaya continued, the ideological ties between the Communist Party of Cyprus and Soviet Russia could be regarded as ‘an indication that the Green Island might become the Cuba of the Mediterranean’. In a similar vein, Tevetoğlu (1966, 39), one of the leading anti-communist politicians of the era, put forth that the West had to support the partition of the island in order to counter the ‘communist threat’: ‘Critical British bases and American military

facilities are located in Cyprus. In the event that the communists come to power there, either through a revolution or through democratic means, partition would guarantee that at least part of the island would side with the Free World'. Likewise, *Durum*, a journal sponsored by Turkish industrialists and business leaders, featured on the cover of its first issue a caricature depicting Cypriot President Makarios and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev embracing each other, with the title, 'Is There a Communist Threat in Turkey? The Cypriot Game' (*Durum* 1964, 18). According to the journal, 'When the Cypriot Greeks, with their left-leaning majority, break all their agreements and form an independent state, the threat to the entire Western World will be greater indeed' (Figure 2).

### Cyprus as part of a civilizational struggle

According to the civilizational geopolitics formulated during the late 1950s, the contemporary struggle over Cyprus represented the climax of the 150-year-old historical rivalry between Hellenism and Turkishness. By this logic, if 'Greek expansionism' was not halted in Cyprus – the front line of the conflict, so to speak – the next target would be the Anatolian mother-*vatan* itself. Greece's historical struggles for independence, and the means by which it extended its territories, were described in detail in order to mobilize Turkish society against a similar 'Greek



Figure 2. The Cover of the *Durum* Journal in 1964.

expansionism' in Cyprus. The standard line was that Cyprus must not become a second Crete (which had become part of Greece in 1913 following a long struggle against the Ottoman Empire and the expulsion of its entire Muslim population). Similarly, those who supported a Turkish annexation of Cyprus cited the precedent of Hatay (which had belonged to the French Mandate for Syria for nearly two decades before becoming part of Turkey in 1939). In a meeting of the Milliyetçiler Derneği (Nationalists' Association) in Istanbul, Peyami Safa, a conservative columnist at the daily *Milliyet*, spoke before a crowd cheering 'Cyprus or Death', stressing 'the historical antagonism' between Turks and Greeks:

For 130 years, Greek dreams and Turkish realities have been confronting each other ... Yet, although we have emerged victorious in all the wars between these Greek dreams and Turkish realities for 130 years, the Greeks still managed to seize Turkish lands up to Western Thrace, turning their military defeats into political victories thanks to their British, French, and Russian big brothers. (*Milliyet* June 28, 1958)

Similarly, Manizade (1965a) stated that 'Cyprus is not about land, or about the lives of 120,000 Turks; it is about stemming the flood of Hellenic ambitions'.

Believing Western support to be essential against Greece, Turkish political elites carefully avoided defining the struggle for control over Cyprus as a clash between Christianity and Islam. On the other hand, from the 1950s onwards, Islamist periodicals such as *Sebilürreşad* and *Büyük Doğu* began describing Cyprus as part of a greater conflict between the two rival faiths. As early as December 1949, the prominent Islamist Kısakürek (2010, 37), writing in the journal *Büyük Doğu*, was accusing the CHP of passivity with regard to its Cyprus policy. In a piece in *Büyük Doğu* published in 1956, Kısakürek (2008, 67–8) described Cyprus as 'the prayer mat tossed into the Mediterranean' by the 'Turkish Empire', which had historically held sway over the region. Claiming that Greece was 'leaning towards Soviet Russia' and was attempting to seize Cyprus, Kısakürek openly warned that this policy – which was 'playing into the hands of the communists' – was endangering all of Greece's territory 'from Thessaloniki to Athens'. In an article in *Sebilürreşad* (1957, 299) entitled 'The Cyprus Crisis after Palestine', Cevat Rıfat Atilhan, a notoriously anti-Semitic Islamist author, complained that 'while the Christian cleric Makarios has provoked the sons of Jesus with his cross scepter, our religious figures have taken no action whatsoever in this matter'. During this period, Archbishop Makarios, the leader of Greek Cypriots, was commonly referred to as 'the black priest', not only in Islamist publications but also, on occasion, in secular newspapers. The March 17, 1956 issue of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, for example, featured a caricature showing a hand (belonging to Britain) lifting up the cassocks of several Orthodox priests to reveal piles of bombs hidden underneath, with the caption, 'A Confession in Cyprus' (Figure 3). Prominent Islamist lawyer Bekir Berk, writing in *Sebilürreşad* (1958, 363), described the Crusader mentality as the root cause of the Cyprus conflict:

Why do the Western powers support Greece in the matter of Cyprus? The main reason is that Greece is a Christian state, while Turkey is a Muslim nation. But it is not just that: their mission is to smash the Crescent with the Cross. Christianity seeks to strangle Islam. The Crusaders still seek vengeance.

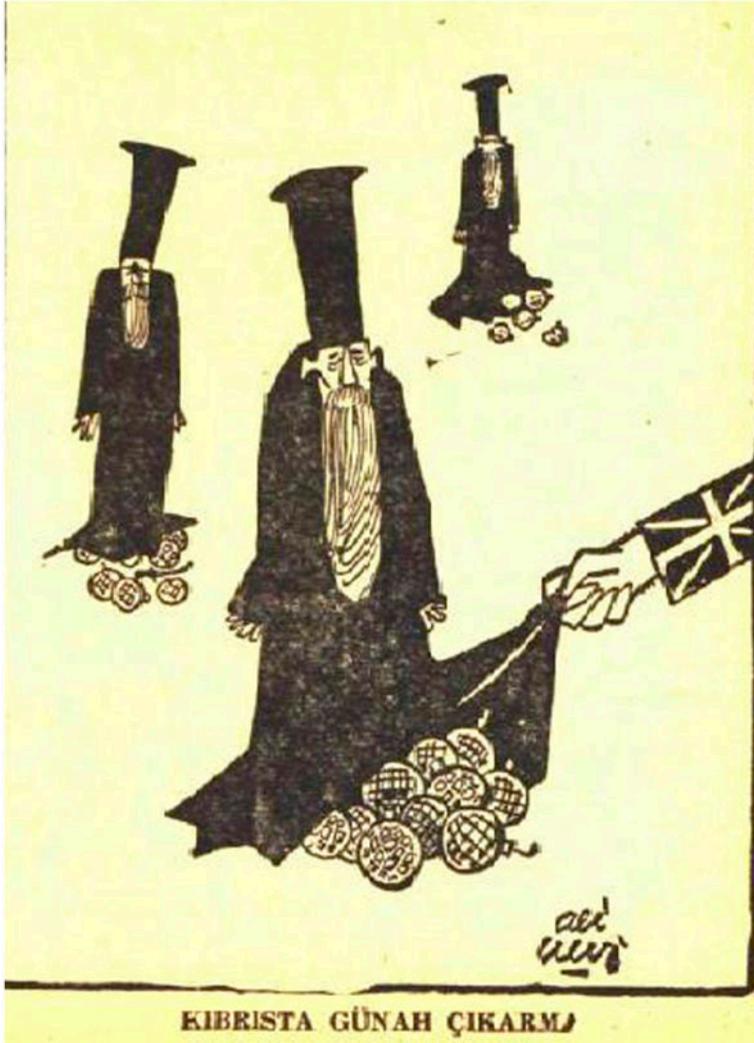


Figure 3. Caricature published by daily newspaper Cumhuriyet in 1956. It says ‘A Confession in Cyprus.’

In his newspaper articles in 1963 and 1964, another well-known Islamist, Karakoç (1986, 30–46), described Cyprus as ‘the final link in the chain of our conquests, the land of which the Prophet dreamed’. Declaring that Cyprus was ‘haunted by the Crusader Spirit’, which had ‘spilled Muslim blood with the aid of the entire Christian world’, Karakoç wished for Islamic countries to act as ‘a bloc, a coalition’ against the West. From the 1950s onward, Turkish Islamists perceived the Cyprus issue as Islamist cause – a *jihad* – as can be seen from their use of the term *mujahid* for Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party) and deputy prime minister in the coalition government during Turkey’s 1974 military intervention in Cyprus.

## Conclusion

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Turkish governments continually redefined their positions on the Cyprus issue; with each policy shift there was a corresponding modification to official nationalist discourse. As explained more broadly by Cynthia Weber (2001, 7), through the myths they construct, those in power represent their own ideological stances and demands as natural and inevitable. From the 1950s onward, Turkish society came to view the myths forged around Cyprus as reality, falling in step with each new political iteration. Geography was an essential factor in all three of Turkey's geopolitical imaginations regarding Cyprus: naturalized (which represented Cyprus as a baby *vatan* to be united with Anatolia), ideological (which advocated turning Cyprus into 'a Turkish stronghold against communism in the Mediterranean') and civilizational (which depicted Cyprus as part of the 'struggle between Turkishness and Hellenism'). To lend credibility to Turkey's claims, Greek Cypriots were sometimes depicted as 'the warriors of Hellenism seeking to invade Anatolia' and sometimes as pawns of Soviet expansionism under the leadership of the 'Red Bishop' Makarios. In short, the prevailing political discourse in this period validates the assessment that 'the issue of Cyprus is not a problem stemming from the island itself, but rather a set of problems constructed externally around the island' (Hasgüler 2006, 13).

Canonized as a national cause in Turkey from the 1950s onward, Cyprus soon ceased to be a legitimate topic of public debate. Instead, it came under the purview of 'expert' politicians, journalists, diplomats and academics acting in the interests of *raison d'état*. In this sense, the Cyprus question both reflected and strengthened the authoritarian political climate of the day, with an unenviable fate awaiting those who were deemed disloyal in the face of the 'Greek threat'. Ironically, the group that suffered the most on account of Cyprus was Turkey's own Greek population, which was forced to emigrate en masse between 1955 and 1965. In the end, the issue of Cyprus was instrumental in defining the Turkish state as 'one and the same as the Turkish nation'.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes

1. The slogan 'Cyprus is Turkish' is not encountered until Örneç's 1949 article in the journal *Yeşilada* criticizing the 'Greek Cyprus' slogan. Starting in 1951, the slogan 'Cyprus is Turkish' began to be frequently used in *Yeşilada* as well as in political rallies in Turkey.
2. The term *yavru vatan* or 'baby homeland' was first used by Gökhan Evliyaoğlu, who published a poem entitled 'Anavatan'dan Yavruvatan'a' (From the Motherland to a Baby Homeland) in the October 1949 issue of *Yeşilada*.
3. Derviş Manizade was one of those chiefly responsible for turning Cyprus into a 'national cause' for Turkey. In an interview conducted many years later, Manizade was described as *Kıbrıs'ı Türkiye'ye tanıtan adam*, 'the man who introduced/advertised Cyprus to Turkey' (Kalyoncu 2001).
4. Derviş Manizade's speech entitled *The Cyprus Question* was delivered on April 21, 1954, and published in 1965.

### Notes on contributor

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