Ελληνική Σχολή
ΠΑΣΚΑΛ
ΛΕΜΕΣΟΣ

PASCAL
English School
LEMESOS

20th century - The century of conflicts in Cyprus

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Historical Background

- Cyprus has always been conquered by the super powers of each era.

- The Ottoman rule and control of Cyprus ended in 1878 when the Ottomans and the Sultan transferred the administration of the island to Britain.

- The island was used as a navy base for British power in the Middle East.

- Since the ancient times, Cyprus has been Greek in terms of population and culture with a Turkish Minority introduced after the Ottoman conquest in the 16th century.

- After World War I, Treaty of Lausanne was signed and Britain annexed our island. Turkey and Greece recognized British sovereignty over Cyprus.

- After the Treaty of Lausanne, Cyprus became a British colony and Turkey relinquished all its rights on Cyprus.

- After the end of World War II, the Greek Cypriots began to demand self determination, which would lead to the union with Greece.

- Many issues rose between England, Turkey and Greece regarding the solution of the Cyprus problem (how Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can co-exist).

- Cyprus gained its **independence in 1960**, with the Liberating Fight of EOKA and the Zurich – London agreements of 1959.

- Being an independent island, Cyprus had three countries to guarantee its status quo (Greece, Turkey and England).

The Cold War and Cyprus

- The USA was looking into solutions for the Cyprus problem. Plans were introduced by the British government in favour mostly of the Turkish part, so they were rejected.

- Moreover, based on the agreements of Zurich – London, the British Bases have permanently been in Cyprus.

- On the other hand, after the independence of Cyprus, the Soviets were also very interested in Cyprus for a variety of reasons.

Reasons for the Soviet interest in Cyprus:

- They wanted to increase their territory in the eastern Mediterranean; an area connecting their territories between the Black Sea and their vital interests in Middle East.

- They were two important British bases, which were of strategic value to Nato.

- The Cyprus problem provided the opportunity to encourage disruption of the south-eastern flank of Nato. The prospect of detaching Turkey slightly from Nato was very important for them.

As in all countries, Communism influenced Cyprus, too!

- A dynamic political party made its appearance – AKEL.

- AKEL stands for The progressive Part of the working people.

- Soviet Union influenced and interfered in the discussion and the crises that took place especially between 1964 – 1974.

Policy of Soviet Union in Cyprus

- Supported the constant existence of a unified and demilitarized Cyprus and consistently opposed the partition of Cyprus – in fulfilment of unification with Greece or double unification.

- Had established close diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with Cyprus.

- Interfered in each bi-communal crisis between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots from 1964 to 1974.

- More specifically, after the establishment of the military regime in Athens, Soviets felt that their threat of interest in Cyprus came more from Greece than from Turkey, so they supporter Makarios who was the legitimate president of Cyprus, against his opponents.

- EOKA II made its appearance and threatened with a coup d'état, supporting the Unification that Makarios did not continue to support based on the diplomatic environment.

- AKEL influenced and supported the aforementioned.

- The Greek Cypriots were in a civil war in 1974.

- On the one hand, there were those that supported Makarios and on the other hand the supporters of EOKA II and its illegal actions against Makarios.

- All these led to a coup d'état, which gave Turkey the right, based on the Zurich – London Treaties to interfere.

- As a result, Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied 37% of the island, which is still currently illegally occupied.

Thank you for your attention!