

the Middle East. Therefore, the title of the book, "European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II," does not correspond to its content; rather, the content is a very valuable historical narrative of the events in the *sancak* of Alexandretta between 1936 and 1939, but no more than that. Although the title of the book is somewhat ambitious for the content, the author succeeds in illuminating this specific issue by carrying the affair beyond inter-state relations.

### Hazal Papuççular

Boğaziçi University

**Ayhan Aktar, Niyazi Kızılyürek, and Umut Özkırımlı eds. *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, xxiii + 276 pages.**

*Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle* presents the reader with a series of articles in which the construction of Turkish and Greek nationalisms is explained through their interaction with the history of Cyprus. The book is edited by Ayhan Aktar, Niyazi Kızılyürek, and Umut Özkırımlı, all prominent scholars on nationalism and the Cyprus question. The articles are written by Turkish, Greek and Cypriot academics who are all critical towards their own national histories and co-nationals' attitudes towards this troubled region. As the construction of Turkish and Greek nationalisms unravels in the first part of the book, the reader finds opportunity to develop a comprehensive understanding of the conflict around the island.

After an introductory part by Umut Özkırımlı, the book begins with a chapter by John Breuilly, which aims to illuminate the relationship between nation-building and the process of history-writing. Breuilly underlines the necessity to understand the "national frame" in the histories of nations, and the modernist view of nationalism is a good starting point to fulfill this requirement. Breuilly states, first, (with reference to Kedourie) that the idea of nationalism, which is a very new phenomenon, should be removed from the histories of earlier periods and, second, that later developments should not be linked with nationalism without a critical analysis.

Breuilly's chapter introduces the themes discussed throughout the book with reference to the two competing nationalisms on the island. His framework establishes a dialogue between the following articles,

forming the link for their arguments, since most of them try to demonstrate the constructed nature of nationalisms on each side. Throughout the book the reader is exposed to the different ways in which nationalist sentiments transform the meanings of current events and how nationalist narratives manipulate the historiography of periods when the idea of a nation did not even exist.

In line with Breuille's chapter, in Chapter 3, Suavi Aydın examines the development of archeology in the first decades of the Turkish Republic and the motives behind this development. Aydın states that in this period archeology had two significant goals: First, to prove the historical presence of Turks on Anatolian territory and, second, to establish the membership of Turks among contemporary civilizations. Aydın underlines the fact that, through archeology, history before the birth of "nationalism" was distorted in order to prove the primordality and uniqueness of the nation *per se*.

Responding in a way to Breuille's chapter, Renee Hirschon in Chapter 5 explains the construction of the Greek nation with reference to the *millet* system in the Ottoman Empire. According to Hirschon, as in the case of the *millet* system, religion constitutes a major role in Greek nationalism as well, and, contrary to the attempted secular division of the private and public spheres in Turkey, Greece is very weak in this respect. Moreover, being orthodox is a major pillar of identity formation among Greeks, even for non-believers. Although there have been recent efforts to secularize the state, Greece's situation reflects the impact of the Ottoman legacy on Greek nationalism. Thus, the Greek nation still cannot realize itself outside the religious identification which predates the birth of nationalism.

Similar to the place of religion in the construction of the national history of Greece, religion and religious institutions have acquired a special role among Greek Cypriot nationalists. In Chapter 10, Michalis N. Michael analyzes how the Church of Cyprus and the archbishops became national myths in order to strengthen the commitment to both nationalism and religion. Michael emphasizes the fact that most of the myths created by national historiography actually do not bear any relation to national sentiments as they have been experienced. Yet, they are reflected through the lenses of the nationalism in order to transform people's current feelings into love for their nation and hostility towards the enemy.

In contrast to the Greek Cypriot side, on the Turkish Cypriot side, the religious leaders have no political power, since Muslim subjects were directly ruled by the Ottoman center. Yet, when British colonial rule

came to the island, the Turkish Cypriots needed the office of the *müftü*, as their linkage with the Ottoman center was cut. In Chapter 11, Altay Nevzat summarizes the conflictual and ambivalent relationship between the Turkish Cypriots and the office of the *müftü*. The need of Turkish Cypriots for an authority to represent their loyalties, in opposition to the Archbishop of Cyprus for the Greek Cypriots, was met by this office. However, since Kemalist nationalism requires that the *müftü* carry no political power, this office became a source of ambivalence, due to the fact that, on the one hand, Turkish Cypriots did not want the *müftü* to stand against the secular premises of the motherland's Kemalist regime, while, on the other hand, the office was needed to represent the Muslims on the island.

Chapter 6 is an essential chapter, aiming to analyze the Cypriot, Greek, and Turkish nationalisms comparatively. In this chapter, Spyros A. Sofos and Umut Özkırımlı explain the similarities and differences between Greek and Turkish national movements, explaining how the histories of Greece and Turkey were shaped by the Ottoman past. Sofos and Özkırımlı specifically advance the claim that opting for Neohellenic Enlightenment among Greeks and Turkism among Turks was not necessarily a choice. Rather, they were brought about by the practical necessities of the time.

The chapters on the use of international law by the Greeks (Chapter 9), on the complex nature of Greek Cypriot nationalism (Chapter 13), and on the referendum of April 24, 2004 (Chapter 14) tell the history from the viewpoint of Greeks and Greek Cypriots, while covering the developments from the Ottoman period to the Annan Plan. In Chapter 9, Harry Tzimitras explains how international law can be used as a means to justify national goals, while supporting its enactment whenever it serves national interest. The cards of a confederative state, *enosis*, or partition were all played by Greek Cypriots in accordance with the international environment. However, Caesar V. Mavratsas in Chapter 14 argues that Greek Cypriots, though officially accepting bi-communal settlement with political equality for the two communities, have always assumed Cyprus to be a Greek Cypriot polity, with Turkish Cypriots deserving only minority rights.

The remaining chapters also make important contributions to our understanding of nationalisms in Greece and Turkey and their relations to Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Yet, Chapters 4 and 8, which are on state patriotism in Turkey and narratives of Turkish diplomats, respectively, could have been in greater dialogue with the rest of the book. Although both of them are well-written pieces, they stand isolated due to

their focus and do not speak directly to the larger themes of the book. Moreover, the invisibility of the September 6-7, 1955 events, which have a direct relationship with the Cyprus issue, and the subsequent London conference is an omission in this book. The events of 1955 are mentioned only once and in passing, without any close scrutiny. The economic and political interest of the then governing *Demokrat Parti* (DP, Democrat Party) behind these events could have been given as an example of the national framework's manipulative power. The DP triggered the nationalist sentiments of Turkish citizens in order to prevent a political or economic crisis, which might have weakened their power, by utilizing Cyprus as the main problematic issue of that period and by devastating the Greek and Armenian bourgeoisie as a way to homogenize the national economy. In my opinion, this case displays how the hostility of the two nations can be intensified by the political parties in power using a nationalist framework.

To conclude, *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle* is a very noteworthy book with a rich variety of viewpoints from Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey, covering the very complicated issue of Cyprus through critical and lucid essays. Compared to its valuable contributions to the topic, the above-mentioned weaknesses are very minor. In my opinion, everyone with an interest in nationalism will benefit from reading this book, regardless of whether they are experts in this region.

**Aslı Orhon**

Boğaziçi University