Abstract

In Cyprus that experienced the British imperial rule from 1878 until 1960, Greek and Turkish nationalism developed at different historical periods and at different paces. Greek Nationalism has been appeared in the island since the beginning of the 19th century while Turkish Nationalism started to develop in the Ottoman Empire at the end of 19th century and was consolidated with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Relations between Turkish Cypriots and the British on the one hand, and Greek Cypriots and the British on the other, were asymmetrical. During the colonial era in Cyprus, the Muslim community had undergone an enormous change in terms of national/ethnic identity and class characteristics. Turkish Cypriot nationalism developed belatedly as a militant nationalist and anti-Enosis movement.

Against this background this paper aims to explore the relationship between the emergence of the Turkish national identity and the British Colonial rule because the latter set out the political, social and ideological context wherein the Turkish national identity was shaped. In particular this paper focuses on the period between the two World Wars (1919-1939) when the transformation of the Muslims of Cyprus into Turkish Cypriots emerged. This paper will discuss educational and administrative policies implemented by the British rule that had an impact on the politics of the Muslim community of Cyprus.

Keywords: Nationalism, Imperialism, Cyprus

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