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PARTITION FOR CYPRUS ?

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Although overshadowed by the larger crises of the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the Cyprus question has persisted in troubling the international scene during recent years, affording one more instance of the declining influence of Western Europe and causing one more strain on relations within the NATO alliance. With a population of 531,000 that is 80 percent Greek and 18 percent Turkish, the island is an object of interest to both Greece and Turkey, as well as to Great Britain, the present possessor.

The desire of Greeks and Greek Cypriots for ultimate enosis (union of Cyprus with Greece) has long challenged Britain's position. Turkish interest in Cyprus is due not only to the desire to protect the rights of the Turkish minority but also to the proximity of the island to the southern coast of Asia Minor. Cyprus lies only 44 miles from the Turkish coast, whereas it is some 250 miles from Rhodes, the nearest large island of Greece. For a long period, Turkey seemed satisfied with continued British sovereignty over Cyprus; more recently, Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish Government have pressed increasingly for partition of the island between Greece and Turkey. The Greek Government is adamantly opposed to partition. Great Britain regards its military and air bases on Cyprus as necessary in carrying out its international treaty obligations in this part of the world. The strategic importance of these bases was illustrated during the Suez invasion of 1956 and might again emerge should the Lebanon crisis continue to deepen. The island lies about 240 miles from the northern entrance of the Suez Canal and about 100 miles from the coast of Lebanon.

On 20 June 1958 the British Government proposed a plan for governing the island that would involve a "partnership" among the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus and the governments of the United Kingdom, Greece, and Turkey. Although the plan was immediately rejected by both Greece and Turkey, further negotiations are not precluded. Since partition, strongly backed by Turkey, is proposed as a possible solution, the question arises as to the practicability of such a measure in terms of the distribution of the Greek and Turkish communities, and the location of valuable resources and military bases.

According to the 1946 census -- the most recent source for the details of community distribution -- the proportion of Moslems (Turks) to the total population is highest in the two southern districts of Paphos and Larnaca, where they comprise respectively 24 and 21 percent of the total. The proportion of Turks is lowest in Limassol District in the south, with 12 percent, and in Kyrenia District on the north coast, with 13 percent (see table). Throughout all six districts of the island, however, Greeks and Turks are intermixed, and no large area can be described as purely Greek or purely Turkish.

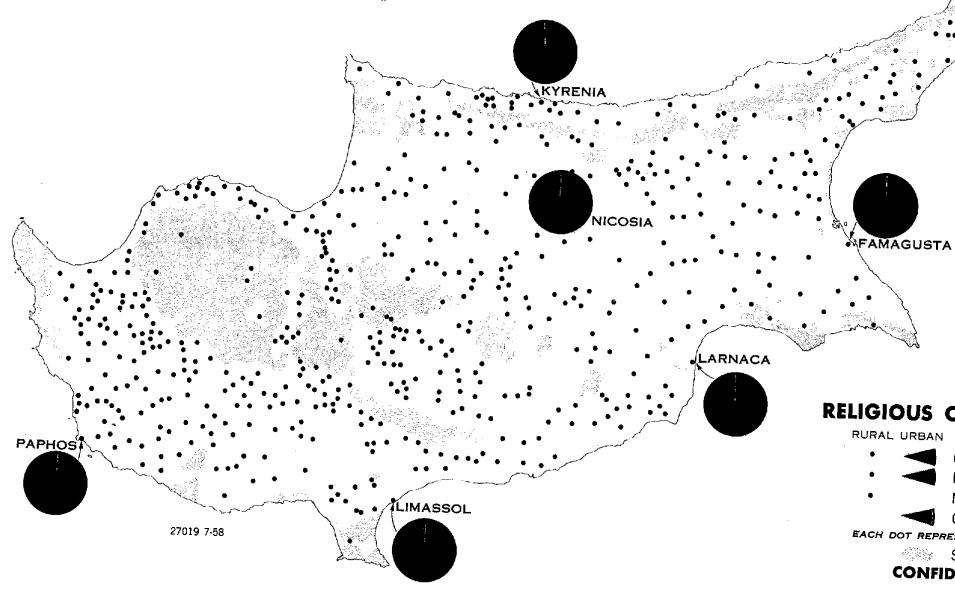
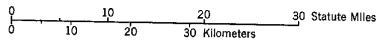
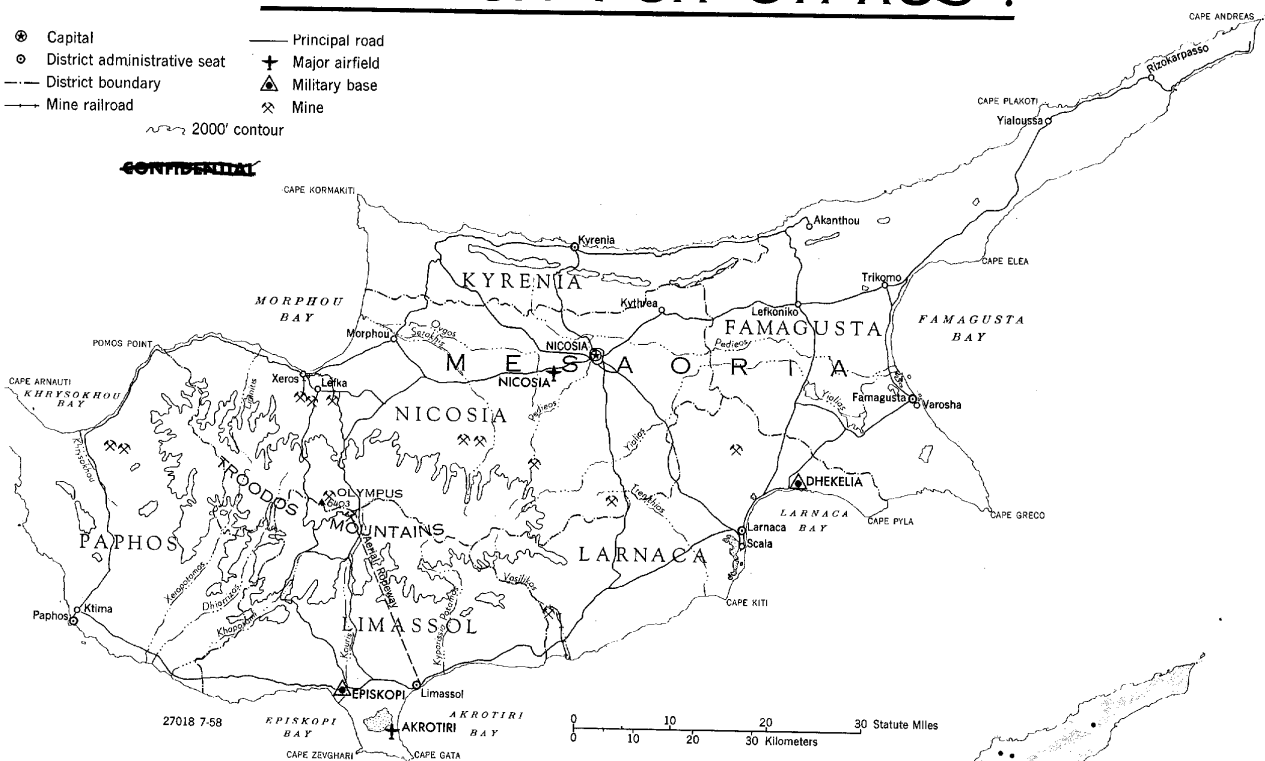
There are six towns on Cyprus, each functioning as the administrative and commercial center of its respective district. The Turkish community comprises a somewhat higher percentage of the total population in these six towns than in rural Cyprus, a hangover from the period of Ottoman sovereignty, when the Turkish ruling class lived mostly in the towns. Since the beginning of British administration, however, the Greek element in the urban population has increased at a more rapid rate than the Turkish, owing to townward migration from the predominantly Greek countryside. The rapid urban growth in recent years -- amounting to about 50 percent in the decade 1946-56 -- has probably still further increased the "Greekness" of the towns. In 1946 the six towns had Turkish populations ranging from 15 percent of the total in Limassol to 37 in Paphos. In general the proportion of Turks in a town reflects that of its surrounding countryside (see table). Thus, Paphos, the town with the largest percentage of Turkish population, is the center for the district that has the highest percentage of Turks in its rural population. Nicosia, the capital and largest town, with a 1956 population of 81,700, is more cosmopolitan than the other centers and includes Armenians, British, and others as well as Greeks and Turks.

The rural population of the island is distributed among numerous villages, many composed of a single ethnic group. There are, nevertheless, a considerable number of mixed Greek-Turkish villages throughout Cyprus. Maronite Christians, who live in several villages in the northwest, constitute the only other group of any importance in rural areas. The typical rural Cypriot is a small farmer owning his own farm, which consists of several scattered plots. The large estates of medieval and Turkish times have disappeared, except for holdings of the Orthodox church, the Moslem communal properties, a few remaining Turkish estates in the south, and an Israeli-owned commercial plantation on the east coast. According to one estimate, the Greek community owns about 59 percent of the land, the Turkish community about 12 percent, and the government a substantial portion of the remainder.

PARTITION FOR CYPRUS ?

- ⊗ Capital
- District administrative seat
- District boundary
- Mine railroad
- Principal road
- ✈ Major airfield
- ▲ Military base
- ⌘ Mine
- ~ 2000' contour

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RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

- RURAL URBAN
 - Greek Orthodox
 - Moslem
 - Mixed
 - Other
 - State forest
- EACH DOT REPRESENTS A VILLAGE

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CYPRUS: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, 1946
Percent of Total Population

District ^a	Orthodox	Moslem	Other	District	Orthodox	Moslem	Other
Nicosia	78	19	3	Larnaca	77	21	2
Urban	60	30	10	Urban	72	20	8
Rural	84	15	1	Rural	79	21	-
Kyrenia	81	13	6	Limassol	87	12	1
Urban	75	20	5	Urban	83	15	2
Rural	81	13	6	Rural	89	11	-
Famagusta	83	17	-	Paphos	76	24	-
Urban	81	17	2	Urban	62	37	1
Rural	83	17	-	Rural	77	23	-
Total Cyprus	80	18	2				
Urban	71	23	6				
Rural	83	16	1				

a. The urban population given for each district is that of the district administrative center.

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In economic functions and occupations the Greek and Turkish communities duplicate each other, with few occupations being specifically Greek or Turkish. The two communities are similar in standards of living, family structure, education, and agricultural practices. The casual observer cannot readily distinguish between their houses, stores, and farms. The Moslem Turks, like their Christian neighbors, practice monogamy. The two communities, however, do not mix socially or intermarry.

As the Greeks and Turks are now distributed, it would be impossible to draw a partition line that would set apart any area of substantial size within which Turks are in the majority. Partition would doubtless be accompanied by exchanges of population, which would probably involve transfers of real estate also. From the standpoint of economic functions, an exchange of populations should not present insuperable difficulties, since the two communities are functionally similar rather than complementary.

Over half the labor force of Cyprus is agricultural, and any partition would have to take into account the equitable division of the principal agricultural regions. Most of the crops are raised for local consumption, but a significant proportion is sent abroad. The principal agricultural exports are carobs, potatoes, oranges, grapefruit, wine, and, in some years, wheat. Sheep and goats are the principal classes of livestock. The Mesaoria or central plain is the outstanding agricultural region, producing almost half of the total output by value. Although field crops are of major importance here, citrus fruits, olives, and almonds are also raised. Much of the land is irrigated, and the area of irrigation is being increased annually. In the hill lands bordering the Troodos Mountains and along the southern coast, vines, olives, and fruits are grown. Carobs or locust beans are raised extensively for stock feed and gum, mainly on the seaward slopes facing the north and south coasts.

One of the principal problems that would arise in connection with partition would be the equitable division of mineral areas. Mineral products constituted 66 percent of the value of all exports in 1956, and mining employs a larger amount of foreign capital than any other industry. The mines are located along the periphery of the southwestern mountain region and in the Troodos Mountains in the center of this region. Copper and iron pyrites are the principal minerals. An American company, the Cyprus Mines Corporation, is the largest producer. Its principal mine, south of Morphou Bay, yields some 700,000 tons of copper-bearing ore per year and has an estimated reserve of 15 million tons. The Hellenic Mining Company, Ltd., a Greek concern, ranks second, operating on the south coast and the north flank of the mountains. Near the coast beyond the western edge of the mountains are the properties of the Cyprus Sulphur and Copper Company, Ltd., a British company. Asbestos quarries belonging to a British company and a chrome deposit worked by a Swedish firm are located in the heart of the Troodos range. Among the minerals of lesser importance are gypsum and terra umbra.

The southwestern mountain region also contains the principal timberlands of Cyprus; and, before the region became a hideout for EOKA, it was beginning to build up a thriving tourist business -- attracting summer visitors from Nicosia and other parts of the lowlands and even from the Arab countries. Thus, although the southwestern mountain region is sparsely populated, its mineral and timber resources and its resort attractions would doubtless make it a prize to be sought by both Greek and Turkish communities in case of partition.

The disposition of three British military bases would have to be provided for in case of partition -- the Episkopi base, which was planned as the headquarters for both the Middle East Land Forces and the Middle East Air Force; an army cantonment located at Dhekelia; and an airfield at Akrotiri. The principal commercial airport of Cyprus is at Nicosia.

Any form of partition for Cyprus would result in considerable economic derangement, since it would mean the splitting of areas that are now integrated units. In addition, population transfers under even the most peaceful conditions would cause much suffering and inconvenience. On the other hand, should there be continued stalemate in the dispute and should relations between Greeks and Turks on the island continue to deteriorate, disorders might result in enforced migration, and partition might become the only solution possible.

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