

CYPRUS

Turkish Colonisation of a European Country

Since its 1974 military invasion and subsequent occupation of 36,2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey has maintained a policy of bringing in thousands of Anatolian colonists to settle in the occupied area, thus changing the demographic character of the island. Occupation, colonisation and expulsion of the local Greek Cypriot population are all part of Turkey's long-standing expansionist policy. Turkey's aim is to cede and assimilate the part of Cyprus it occupies and ultimately to annex it.

Turkish Cypriots a Minority in Occupied Cyprus

Demographic analysis and examination of statistical data on arrivals and departures of Turkish Cypriots as well as Turks from Turkey clearly show widespread emigration of the indigenous Turkish Cypriots, who are systematically replaced by an even greater number of illegal colonists from Turkey. According to statistical evidence, press reports and statements by Turkish Cypriot politicians, Turkish Cypriots are forced to emigrate, as a result of unemployment, economic, social and moral degradation and pressure from Turkish colonists who are given undue privileges. It is estimated that 57.000 Turkish Cypriots out of a population of 116.000 in 1974 have emigrated since the invasion. The Turkish Cypriots themselves have become a minority in the occupied area, victims of the colonisation policy of Turkey and their leadership. Given the continuing emigration of Turkish Cypriots and the fact that the population in the occupied areas increases every year by more than the birth rate justifies, it is obvious that a large number of Anatolians are brought to and illegally settled in Cyprus, part of a well-planned scheme, the aim of which is to change the population ratio in the occupied area and the demographics of Cyprus.

Alarming Number of Turkish Colonists

The policy of bringing settlers from Turkey to the occupied areas has changed demographics to such an extent that illegal settlers now outnumber the Turkish Cypriots by almost two to one. Turkish settlers are estimated at around 160.000 compared to the 87.900 Turkish Cypriots. During 2004-2005 alone it is estimated that more than 40.000 new settlers came to the island.

Turkey's colonisation policy aims at:

- Altering the demographic structure of Cyprus so that the Turkish-speaking population outnumbers the Greek Cypriots (Turkish Cypriots constituted 18% of the population before the Turkish invasion): In the long – term this could be used to "justify" inordinate claims of the Turkish side at the negotiating table regarding territorial arrangements and political power in a final settlement of the Cyprus problem.
- Exercising control over political life in the occupied area:
To this effect the colonists are given "citizenship", Greek Cypriot properties, "voting rights", work permits and lower wages, thereby giving rise to unemployment among Turkish Cypriots and forcing them to emigrate.
- Importing cheap labour to be used especially in the construction industry: Since the submission of the Annan Plan for the solution of the Cyprus problem (which was rejected by the Greek Cypriot community in the 2004 referendum) that includes an unacceptable restriction of the right to restitution of property, the illegal regime in occupied Cyprus [the so-called "TRNC"] has engaged in unprecedented construction frenzy in the occupied part of Cyprus. Low wage settlers from Turkey are brought to the occupied area and employed in the illegal building business.