

## **Biggest Supporters of Chauvinism: Education and Media (Cyprus Experiment)**

Ethnic nationalism is usually strong in most of conflict areas in the world. The easiest way of passing ideas to the new generations is using education and media. The role of mass media and educational institutions is very important in such conflict areas. Especially the terminology used in media and education system affects understanding, manner and tendency of the people.

Cyprus problem has been going on for about 60 years. Chauvinist attempts in both communities in Cyprus have caused several conflicts and fights on the island for a long time. In the meantime educational institutions and mass media are being used for achieving goals by both leaderships of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

Focusing on education and mass media is very important as the first decade of 2000's is about to come to the end and the conflict is still going on in Cyprus.

Reflexes which have been administered by the social sensitivity and misinformation are the biggest obstacles on the way to get rid of the chauvinist approaches and the discourse in the historical books.

Cyprus is a very good example to be shown in this respect.

The historical books were written with "we" and "others" terminology and also with the logic of "our side is ever right", but also "they are ever wrong and guilty." This is one of the results of this chauvinist education again.

Some children got really surprised to see the citizens of "the other community" are also as normal as the other human beings, when the crossing points were opened in April 2003 for the first time after years and years.

It is so clear that some important steps had been taken and chauvinist approaches had been removed from Turkish Cypriot historical books used in Turkish schools during until last year. Although, the new government tries to bring the old vision again, there is a very strong public and NGO support which makes this difficult.

On the other hand even a little bit late, a similar study has been started by Greek Cypriot leadership, but unfortunately still there is no any result and step on that.

Greek Cypriot leaderships' unwilling attitude towards the historical books must be questioned with all these facts such as: its being internationally recognised, being the member of the UN, the EU, the OSCE and other international institutions, whereas the Turkish Cypriot leaderships have taken steps ahead even under the conditions of being unrecognised and isolated by the international community.

On the other hand it is clear that some media institutions really have a very big importance in terms of encouraging chauvinism or even racist approaches in both communities which is a very dangerous thing for the future of the island.

A very good example to be given for this point is that it's impossible to publish any Turkish Cypriot companies' advertisements in Greek Cypriot media.

It's also clear that the Greek Cypriot media makes discrimination against Turkish Cypriot Community. This manner is against the basic human rights and also the principal of equality of human being.

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