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Let's End Nationalism (Leaflet)

Historical Note

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Content

LET'S END NATIONALISM

Every year at the anti-occupational marches, the assemblies of Cypriot university students, at school and national holidays, at conferences of political parties, and on television and radio shows, we experience a peak of national absurdness: nationalist slogans, countless flags, a sudden wake-up of patriotism and religious pride, with the high point of all this national madness – the grand finale – the Greek national anthem! Of course, these events reflect the dominant concept cultivated systematically and which has existed for many years on the island, that of complete nationalism.

The terms nationalism – patriotism can easily be misunderstood. What are these ideas of nations, nationalism and patriotism? Is patriotism just a well-covered-up nationalism? Sometimes even the most democratic of spirits stoop to defending national identity. Schools, media, bodies of the state and political parties constantly propagandize national consciousness. As a nation we can consider a group of the population which has common representations in a certain historical framework. The social processes which create them are not static, but exist amongst a grid of conflicts and variations, where the common references are constantly changing, creating new data and conditions. During feudalism, as in older social forms of organization, even though ethnological views existed, they were basically made a part of the system via the dominance of the capitalist way of production, and they were then spilled out as a dominant ideology. Thus, national consciousness is created, quite recently in history: in Europe during the 18th century, along with the development of capitalism.

In the beginning of capitalism's existence, it required as strong, large and concentrative states as possible, and nationalism was the secret ingredient to fulfill this requirement: thus nation-states were created, as a result of large conflicts between the upcoming bourgeoisie and feudalists, the then-dominant class. It is a fact that before the Greek uprising (1821) in the Balkans there were various nationalities spread around (Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Slavish), however the needs of the dominant bourgeoisie caused the creation of 'pure' nation-states. The national delirium of today is a descendant of the imposition of the so-called 'Greek - Christian ideal.' Let's clarify a few things: this term (Greek - Christian ideal) was invented with the founding of the Greek state, and does not correspond to historical reality. There was no smooth continuity of ancient Greece into byzantine orthodoxy, but a full-on clash of the two different cultures, leading to the prevalence of one. So Greek flags depicting

Cyprus and the Parthenon, alongside flags of Byzantium can only be described as an awful collage of nationalist propaganda. The invention of the 'Great Idea,' - result of the last process - served the local bourgeoisie in the extension of its political dominance to the total of lands where Greek-speaking cultures lived (1912-1922). All of this proves that nationalism, as an ideology, exists to serve certain interests of the ruling class, in subjugating those under them.

The nation is the coherent bond between higher and lower social classes, oppressors and oppressed. It serves and elongates this distinction since it depicts the enemy as being a different nation - which, coincidentally experiences the same contradiction. One of the main causes of the lower social classes being continually subjugated, is the acceptance of national consensus and the common national interests, which do not exist, they are simply a fraud. Using this, governments justify their authoritarian politics. Cyprus' history in particular cannot leave us with any illusions. Nationalism among locals was used by colonialists which locals were fighting against for freedom, as a weapon against the people so that the people would continue serving the colonialists' interests.

The separation of the people into Greeks and Turks, the overlooking of our common cultural roots caused devastating damage to the relationships between us. The entrenching behind national interests basically hides the problem and refuses to see reality. It follows the paths of the past like a faithful dog, and leads to the same deadlocks and the same destructive historical reality. The recognition of Greece as "the motherland," as the country, to which we must without a doubt be attached to, cannot understand that Greece is not an idea, an imaginary meaning which exists somewhere far, far away. The Greek social formation exists in its historical development, dependant and shaped by its social and class conflicts.

We recognize, honor and learn from the great moments of the Greek worker's movement, not because it is Greek, but because it is historically one of the most important class movements in Europe. The 'greek-worshipping' nationalists, fans of the Junta regime have been on the opposite side, alongside the enemies that the people fought. In the best case, nationalism (fascism in disguise) will simply destroy social and class resistance potential. However, in reality, this kind of ideas and actions lead gang-like hits, 'cryers' in Ledras regarding the fall of the wall, and dark memories of Grivas, whose resurrection will soon have to be answered.

NATIONAL CONSENSUS IS A TRAP - THE OPPRESSED HAVE NO HOMELAND

<http://enosianarxikon.blogspot.com/> - <http://www.anarchistunion-cyprus.blogspot.com/>

enos_i_anarxikon@riseup.net

Anarchist Union

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