

Introduction

Nationalism remains indisputably linked to the political and social reality of Cyprus. If the phenomenon is characterised by any uniqueness within the Cypriot context, this is found in the preservation and reproduction of the Cyprus Problem as the dominant civil and political issue on the island at least since the 1950s, rather than in the dominance of national identities, the preservation of national political discourse or the reproduction of national myths, as these manifestations of nationalism are reproduced through the structures of every modern nation-state and the everyday life that surrounds them. The process of consolidating the Cyprus Problem as an integral part of Cypriot everyday life remains intertwined with the downgrading of social demands on the island, mediating political, social and economic contradictions through an endless appeal to national unity in the face of the unbridgeable “national problem”. In these circumstances, the luxury of political action independent of the Cyprus Problem repeatedly proves to be an extremely difficult, if not impossible undertaking, with the need for some kind of positioning vis-à-vis the Cyprus Problem taking the form of an imposed necessity rather than a personal or collective choice.

For the small (Greek) Cypriot anti-nationalist radical milieu, the deconstruction of the modern Cypriot experience presupposed the critical analysis of nationalism both on a theoretical and on a historical level, forming in parallel new readings of the Cyprus Problem. A significant part of the theoretical texts of the (Greek) Cypriot extra-parliamentary left and the anti-authoritarian milieu historically engaged with the theoretical analysis, documentation and promotion of Cypriot identity, using various terms of reference, often taken from the academic research and political rhetoric of the period, such as the terms ‘Cypriot consciousness’, ‘Cypriotism’, ‘Cypriotness’ and ‘Cyprocentrism’. These terms have been used both as references to theoretical schemas that attempt to develop political, sociological and historical analyses independent of the dominant Greek Cypriot nationalist narrative, and as ideological terms of self-reference, usually signalling opposition to Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism, support for the reunification of the island on the basis of a bizonal bicomunal federation and; more generally, identification with the geographical space and cultural sphere of Cyprus as a whole.

We can mention here, among others, the various texts published in the leftist magazine “Entos ton Teihon” (Within the Walls) (1985-90) and the anarchist magazine “Traino stin Poli” (Train in the City) (1987-94), the magazine “Eks Iparhis” (From the Beginning) (1999-04), which offered an important space for the discussion of Cyprocentric ideas at the beginning of the 21st century, as well as the pamphlet “Cypriot Consciousness: Dialogue for an Experience Without a Name” by Andreas Panayiotou, published in 1992. Cyprocentric approaches are often (though not entirely) characterised by a critical approach to the role of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism in shaping historical events on the island, by the theorisation of a Cyprocentric historical subject which is dialectically placed in a position of resistance in relation to Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism, and by the production of a new genealogy based on this dialectic, where historical figures and events acquire new meaning through new readings of modern Cypriot history.

These ideological currents were initially formed in the aftermath of 1974 and specifically in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, a period during which new political ideas emerged in the Republic of Cyprus, influenced by the different currents of the New Left that were developing in Western countries in the 1960s and 1970s. It was within this post-war current of politicisation that anarchism first appeared on the island, while feminist, Trotskyist and Maoist organisations and groups emerged, which were mainly active outside the political processes of the state. After multiple ideological conflicts and

theoretical confrontations with the various tendencies of left-wing Greek Cypriot nationalism, Cyprocentric positions managed, if not to dominate, at least to become identified with the radical (Greek) Cypriot milieu and to remain an integral part of it.

Radical anti-nationalist approaches were not, however, historically limited to Cyprocentric political and theoretical analyses developed around Cypriot identity. A more comprehensive reading of the theoretical and political material of the Cypriot radical milieu reveals a number of texts that deviate from dominant Cyprocentric approaches, both in their emphasis of critique and in their theoretical orientations. This collection aims to make the content of these texts accessible to a new audience, bringing to the surface the alternative radical approaches through which the (Greek) Cypriot radical milieu has analysed and deconstructed the Cyprus Problem, as well as the Cypriot experience in general.

Selection Process

The selection of texts depended on a number of key criteria. Firstly, the texts had to focus on the Cyprus Problem and express a critical perspective stemming from the political traditions of the Cypriot extra-parliamentary radical milieu, such as Marxism, anarchism or anti-authoritarianism. Second, the texts had to avoid placing the notion of the 'nation' (or of the 'people') at the centre of their analysis, situating them outside a national reading of the Cyprus Problem. Thirdly, the texts had to contain analysis and not just political rhetoric. Fourth, texts that focused on notions of Cypriot identity were excluded, as they were based on the notion of a Cypriot people linked to an alternative imagined community. For this reason, their inclusion would contradict the second main selection criterion. It is worth mentioning here that the publication of an anthology of Cyprocentric texts in 2022¹⁾ (sadly, only in Greek) has made some of the most important Cyprocentric texts available to a wider audience, filling the gap that existed in the literature.

Apart from meeting the basic selection criteria, no attempt was made to achieve ideological coherence. Instead, the collection presents texts with different perspectives, ideological backgrounds and theoretical starting points. This heterogeneity reflects the general spirit of this publication, which aims to broaden the debate on the Cyprus Problem through the inclusion of radical analyses, rather than by promoting a specific interpretation. In its original conception, the collection was intended to present radical texts originating throughout contemporary Cypriot history, including texts published by the "Communist Party of Cyprus" (1926-44) and the "Trotskyist Party of Cyprus" (1947-49).²⁾ However, this proved difficult due to the absence of texts from the 1950s and 1960s meeting the selection criteria. The decision to focus on the post-1974 period allowed for a more focused publication that is more directly linked to the current political reality in Cyprus. As the texts presented here were written after the de facto partition of the island, they focus on issues and concerns that remain relevant today, making the texts more accessible. Another point to note is the absence of Turkish Cypriot texts from this collection, as well as texts published by Cypriot immigrants.³⁾ Therefore, we should note that this collection primarily reflects extra-parliamentary radical ideas within the Greek Cypriot community of the island, which developed mainly within the Republic of Cyprus after 1974.

The locating of the texts was based on long-term archival research based on the archive that was maintained by the group "Syspirosi Atakton" in social space "Kaymakkin" in Nicosia, private archives of individuals who are politically active in the extra-parliamentary milieu, as well as on material archived by the Cyprus Movements Archive (movementsarchive.org). The main political magazines examined were "Mavres Pinelies" (Black Brushstrokes), "Entos ton Teihon" (Within the Walls), "Traino stin Poli" (Train in the City), "Thkianema", "Hade", "Eks Iparhis" (From the Beginning), "Kalemi" (Kalem), "Falies Online Magazine", "Voukolos" (Bucolic), "Falies OFFLINE", "Anatropi" (Overturn), the

student magazine “Skapoula”, “Entropia” (Entropy) and “Antifa Tropikal”, as well as the newspapers “Sosialistiki Ekfrasi” (Socialist Expression), “Ergatiki Dimokratia” (Workers’ Democracy) and “Anafentos” (Without a Master),⁴⁾ while a significant number of political pamphlets, brochures and online articles were also examined. The texts presented were digitized based on the original material, with the exception of those published after 2009, which had already been released digitally. With the exception of the texts by “Syspirosi Atakton” and “Falies”, which constitute official translations by the groups themselves, all other translations presented in this collection originate from contributions located in the Cyprus Movements Archive.

The spelling and grammar of the collected texts was attempted to be preserved in their original version, with the exception of some minor corrections. Footnotes have been added at various points, providing additional information. These footnotes are accompanied by a comment explaining that the footnotes originate from the editor. The remaining footnotes are part of the original texts. Rather than presenting each text in the introduction, additional introductory notes have been added at the beginning of each text.

Brief Account of the Greek Cypriot Radical Milieu⁵⁾

The history of the extra-parliamentary milieu in Cyprus has not yet been written. What we have at our disposal is a collection of fragmentary academic contributions, primary sources and occasional media coverage, which cannot, however, simply be transformed into a comprehensive historical narrative. Understanding and analysing the development of the Cypriot extra-parliamentary radical milieu requires both a detailed awareness of the political, economic and social history of Cyprus and a comprehensive access to the ‘insider’ knowledge of the milieu itself. Such an analysis, in turn, presupposes systematic historical research that extends beyond the boundaries of the Cypriot radical milieu as such. What is attempted below is not a historical analysis, but a first brief account of the political groups and events that unfolded within this milieu after 1974. This presentation is organized in periods, based on the available archival material and my personal knowledge. I hope that the presentation below can be replaced in the future with an analysis capable not only of documenting, but also of explaining the historical development of this political milieu.

First Period (1974-1994)

The events of 1974 created an unprecedented crisis in the Republic of Cyprus on multiple levels. The integrity of the state was directly challenged by the Turkish invasion and the coup of the Greek junta. The occupation of a third of the island’s territory and the forced displacement of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots simultaneously created a huge humanitarian crisis, with one in three Cypriots being displaced from their homes, leading to the creation of two ethnically homogenised areas, which separated the two communities completely until the opening of the checkpoints in 2003. The loss of land and infrastructure created an unprecedented economic crisis in the Republic of Cyprus, reducing the country’s productive capacity in agricultural and industrial production, laying the foundations for its subsequent shift to a service economy. As a result of the war, a large part of the population was proletarianized, a process that seems to have triggered the mass entry of women into the labour market, altering in a short period of time the dominant gender relations, in parallel eroding traditional values.

In relation to the Cyprus Problem, the balance of power shifted in favour of the Republic of Turkey, with the Greek Cypriot community losing the military advantage it enjoyed over the Turkish Cypriot community after the intercommunal violence of the 1960s. However, diplomacy replaced military engagement, with the Republic of Cyprus using its influence as a recognized state to prevent the recognition of a Turkish Cypriot state, successfully continuing the political and economic embargo it

imposed on the Turkish Cypriot community over the previous decade. In parallel, the Turkish Cypriot leadership aimed to establish its own recognised state on the island by forming its own administrative structures, continuing its policy of *taksim* (partition), built on the spoils of war and the *de facto* control of the northern part of the island. The new political reality changed fundamentally the institutional framework for the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. The 1977 High-Level Agreements established bizonal bicommunal federation as the agreed model for the future reunification of the island, replacing the bicommunal unitary state of 1960. Despite the establishment of the federal model as the agreed framework for resolving the conflict, the political leaders of the two communities proposed different, even contradictory visions of the structures that would accompany such a federation. Different approaches around federalism emerged in both communities, ranging from its acceptance as a necessity to its outright condemnation as a prospect.

This changing context was accompanied by a parallel ideological crisis. With the achievement of the Turkish Cypriot nationalist aim of *taksim*, the Greek Cypriot nationalist aim of union with Greece (*enosis*) was simultaneously laid to rest. In the public discourse, *enosis* had been maintained in both variants of Greek Cypriot nationalism, continuing to define the community's vision in Greek Cypriot political life until 1974. For the pro-Grivas faction, which represented the most extreme nationalist tendency, *enosis* remained an immediate political goal, while for the dominant pro-Makarios faction, which publicly supported the maintenance of an independent Cypriot state, *enosis* remained an abstract, long-term aim in its ideological formulations. The participation of the Grivas faction in the coup, which triggered the Turkish invasion, led to the equation of *enosis* with fanaticism, extremism, and treason, leading to its abandonment from public political discourse. This abandonment, however, also displaced the dominant ideological vision of Greek Cypriot society from the public sphere, a vision that presented the historical course of the island as evolutionary, with the final stage being the ultimate national "realization" of the Greek Cypriot community.

A similar ideological crisis was developing within the Greek Cypriot left. For AKEL, which had remained dominant within the Cypriot left since the late 1940s, Cyprus was in a struggle for national self-determination after independence, fighting against the forces of imperialism. From the perspective of the party leadership, this condition presupposed the maintenance of national unity against imperialist interventions, while the achievement of self-determination was presented as a basic precondition for the socialist transformation of society. Through this logic, AKEL supported the state in all the violent developments of the 1960s, promoting the efforts of the Greek Cypriot government to resolve the conflict on terms favourable to the Greek Cypriot side. While Greece's role in the *de facto* partition of the island evaporated any expectations or support for *enosis*, a parallel disillusionment, albeit on a smaller scale, seems to have unfolded within the left as well, with AKEL proclaiming the resolution of the Cyprus problem as a necessary precondition for the socialist transformation of Cypriot society, shifting the possibility of a post-capitalist society into an unknown, unpredictable and undefined future.

The ideological vacuum created by the decline of Greek Cypriot nationalism was filled by Cypriotism in the 1970s and 1980s, an ideology that openly supported the independence of Cyprus and was primarily associated with the political centre and the left. Broadly speaking, Cypriotism based its positions on the principle "that Cyprus has its own *sui generis* character and, thus, must be viewed as an entity which is independent from both the motherlands of the two main communities of the island, that is, Greece and Turkey".⁶⁾ At the level of political discourse and public symbolism, these ideological changes had their significance, as the flag and symbols of the Cypriot state were integrated within a broader patriotic symbolism, while Cyprus' independence began to be publicly celebrated as a monumental historical event. This ideological shift reflected the general shift towards support for an independent Cypriot state and the identification of the Greek Cypriot community with it. That a new political consensus was emerging was evident from the fact that (right-wing) Greek

Cypriot nationalism took when it re-emerged as a major political force in the 1990s. While the national, cultural and social character of the state remained a field of fierce dispute between Cypriotists and nationalists, the acceptance of the existence of an independent (Greek) Cypriot state was no longer contested by the political forces within the community.

The ideological crisis that accompanied the events of 1974 allowed for the reinterpretation of the past and the formation of alternative visions for the future. The post-1974 period was characterized by a gradual erosion of ideological orthodoxy, expressed through the emergence of radical extra-parliamentary groups, marking a clear shift from the extra-parliamentary stagnation of the 1960s. These groups presented a new wave of political ideas, ranging from feminism, ecology and Trotskyism to anarchism and social liberalism. In the first decade after 1974 we can also note the existence of small groups and publications that maintained a strong pro-enosis Greek Cypriot nationalist tendency. This current was initially associated with the "Reconstitution of the Communist Party of Cyprus" (1975-77),⁷⁾ a small Maoist political party that focused on the nationalist elements of Maoist ideology; rather than on the concept of cultural revolution. After failing to gain mass support, the party dissolved itself in 1977, with its ideas continuing in part through the magazines "Orimagdos" (Uproar), "Aftodiathesi" (Self-Determination) and "Enosis" (Union), which were associated with the "Aigaion" (Aegean) tavern in the old town of Nicosia. Although in the first years after 1974 this ideological tendency was considered part of the extra-parliamentary milieu, the positions it expressed, which were in line with those of the Greek Cypriot far right, led to an intense confrontation in the 1980s, resulting in the exclusion of this ideological current from the wider extra-parliamentary radical milieu.

In contrast to these marginal Greek Cypriot nationalist groups, new leftist tendencies began to emerge through the formation of political organizations and publications, influenced by radical ideas developing in France, Greece and the United Kingdom. These new ideas were often associated with the New Left and Trotskyism, ideological currents that offered an alternative to the monolithic ideological orthodoxy of the European Stalinist communist parties. Offering an alternative socialist vision to that expressed by the Soviet Union, these new ideological currents allowed for the opening of theoretical and ideological debates within the wider Greek Cypriot left. The emergence of Trotskyist political currents in the early years after 1974 seems to be linked to left-wing Greek Cypriot students studying abroad, who brought with them alternative political ideas upon their return to the island. Indicative of the emergence of new ideas was the publication in the late 1970s of the magazine "Deltio Sizitisis" (Discussion Bulletin), a Marxist political magazine that aimed to provide a space for discussion of political, theoretical and ideological issues.

The first organized alternative political group can be considered the leftist tendency that developed within the socialist party EDEK in the 1970s. After the coup and the invasion, a new generation of young leftists gathered in the party, forming a radical tendency with mainly Trotskyist origins, which came to be known as "Aristeri Pteriga" (Left Wing), as well as "Sosialistiki Ekfrasi" (Socialist Expression), from the newspaper it published bearing that name. This particular tendency maintained a line of rapprochement with the Turkish Cypriot community, while promoting cooperation between EDEK and AKEL, for the election of a left-wing government in the Republic of Cyprus. Left Wing functioned as the most coherent alternative left-wing political organization in the 1980s, while remaining firm in its support for the rapprochement of the two communities. In 1981 its members were expelled from EDEK, leading it into the sphere of the extra-parliamentary left, in which it has remained ever since. In 1979 the organization "Ergatiki Dimokratia" (Workers' Democracy), a Marxist-Leninist organization of a Trotskyist orientation linked to the British "Socialist Workers Party" (SWP) and the Greek "Sosialistiko Ergatiko Komma" (S.E.K.), also appeared. Workers' Democracy circulated its own newspaper, maintained a strong class analysis of the Cyprus Problem, tried to influence leftist

trade unions, was involved in the 1987 garment strike, and was also active in the anti-militarist movement of the 1980s.

In the early 1980s, the Trotskyist group “Kommounistikos Kiklos” (Communist Circle) appeared for a few years. It ran “Prolatis”, a hangout space in Nicosia in 1981-82. The short period of life of the project is perhaps typical of the Cypriot extra-parliamentary milieu, where groups and initiatives often emerge and come to a close at short intervals. The publication of the magazine “Entos ton Teihon” (Within the Walls) (1985-1990) in Nicosia in the mid-1980s can be considered a pivotal moment in the production of an alternative left-wing political discourse. The magazine engaged systematically with cultural, political and theoretical issues of the period, accommodating alternative readings of Cypriot history, academic articles, critical texts on the Cyprus Problem and ecological analyses, while also hosting translated texts by Turkish Cypriot leftists and intellectuals. Indicative of the importance of the magazine during this period is the presence of its members at the first official meeting of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot citizens since 1974; in West Berlin in May 1989.⁸⁾

Alongside the development of an alternative left milieu, anarchist and anti-authoritarian ideological currents appeared for the first time in Cyprus. In the summer of 1981, a group of young individuals rented two rooms in Limassol to hold meetings, in which anarchist political ideas were discussed. This meeting place, which came to be known as “Kilimi” (Kilim),⁹⁾ seems to have been frequented by an increasing number of friends and acquaintances, forming the first circle of what came to be known as the anarchist/anti-authoritarian scene. With the end of the summer, the majority of the Kilimi circle went abroad for university studies, leading a section of them to the city of Lyon, France. Little is known about this Lyon circle beyond the fact that it produced, printed and distributed the first Cypriot anarchist publication in 1982, called “Mavres Pinelies” (Black Brushstrokes), a magazine that ran for a mere single issue. While there were no publications in the years that followed, the group continued to engage with radical ideas, trying to critically analyze Cypriot society from an anti-authoritarian perspective. This is at least the conclusion one could come to by reading the 1984 pamphlet, “Cyprus, the National Issue and Nationalism: A Libertarian Analysis”, published anonymously in Athens, which informs us that the author’s arguments were developed in connection with discussions held with the Lyon circle on how to approach the Cyprus Problem from an anti-authoritarian perspective.

A year later, “Chrysallida” (Chrysalis) (1985-1990), the first Cypriot self-managed alternative social space, opened its doors in Limassol. Its presence, which was to last for five years, allowed youth subcultures, alternative lifestyles, political initiatives and informal anarchist groups to coexist at a common meeting point. At least two political groups of the period seem to have been active in Chrysalis, the anarchist group “Anafentos” (Without a Master), which seems to have been the first anarchist group on the island, and the “Initiative Against Social Racism”, which was involved in anti-militarist political initiatives, particularly in relation to the recognition of the right to conscientious objection. In 1987 the magazine “Traino stin Poli” (Train in the City) (1987-1994) appeared in Limassol, the first Cypriot anarchist magazine. Train in the City was primarily an underground magazine, probably distributed through photocopying, with the exception of the last three issues, which were published officially. In its pages appeared texts dealing with sexual liberation, musical subcultures, anti-capitalism, postmodernism, Cypriot identity, critical readings of Cypriot history and nationalism, as well as international and local news.

Second Period (2000-2013)

Based on the available data, the 1990s can be seen as a transitional period. Nevertheless, we can mention here the publication of the magazine “Thkianema” (Wandering) (1996-2003), as well as the first appearance of the Cypriot punk scene, and thus the beginning of the formation of a DIY punk subculture which continues to this day. In an interview given by the punk band “Nuclear Mutants” in

1997, there is also a reference to an unofficial political group called “Anarchists of Nicosia”, the first reference to anarchists located in Nicosia instead of Limassol.¹⁰⁾ The end of the decade also saw the appearance of the bilingual magazine “Hade” (1997-2001), probably the first bicomunal magazine in the history of Cyprus, which circulated on both sides of the Green Line, keeping open a channel of communication between the two communities during a period of almost total separation.

In the early 2000s we can identify a new cycle of politicization, which intensified after the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 and the failure to reunify the island on the basis of the Annan plan in 2004.¹¹⁾ A first manifestation of this new cycle can be seen in the publication of the magazine “Eks Iparhis” (From the Beginning) (1999-2004) in Nicosia, which systematically published critical articles on Greek Cypriot nationalism, Cypriot history and the Cyprus Problem, as well as articles by Turkish Cypriot leftists, additionally publishing texts in favor of the Annan plan. The magazine further supported the opening of the checkpoints and generally encouraged theoretical and ideological debate within the Cypriot left. At the same time, “Anarchikos Pirinas Kiprou” (Cypriot Anarchist Kernel) (initially in Limassol and later in Nicosia) appeared in the anti-authoritarian milieu at the beginning of the 2000s. The Kernel maintained for some time a space in Anexartisias Street in Limassol, while its activities and political discourse reflect the appearance of new ideological currents within the anti-authoritarian milieu, influenced by the anarchism of Greece.

With the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, new possibilities for political action emerged. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot organizations, as well as individuals who supported reunification, could coordinate, organize joint events and protests and push more directly for the reunification of the island. Significant activities of the period include the opening of the bicomunal Kardaş Cultural Centre in 2003,¹²⁾ the Demilitarized Nicosia initiative, which organized bicomunal demonstrations in favor of the demilitarization of the island and whose activities continued in the following period, and the activities of the “Occupy Buffer Zone” movement (2011-12), which squatted a building between the checkpoints on Ledra Street to protest the ongoing partition of Cyprus. We can further note that during this period the support for the reunification of the island includes a clear political demand, with most of the extra-parliamentary milieu supporting the bicomunal federal model of reunification. This position was systematically expressed in the public sphere through the magazine “To Kalemi” (Kalem) (2008-11), which was published by the Greek Cypriot section of the bicomunal Teachers’ Platform “United Cyprus”, as well as through the blog “Epanenosi 2011” (Reunification 2011) (2009-13).¹³⁾

While Left Wing and Workers’ Democracy continued their political activity, new left-wing groups emerged. One of them was the “New Internationalist Left”, which was formed in the early 2000s, initially under the name “Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) – Cyprus Section”. The New Internationalist Left is located ideologically within the Trotskyist current. It organized its own annual anti-fascist festival, and for some years had a student organization called “Youth Against Nationalism”, which published its own anti-nationalist publication called “The Wall”.¹⁴⁾ Another small left-wing group that emerged during this period was “Anatropi” (Overturn), which published a political magazine with the same name. Although the group has remained active, its activity is limited to publishing articles on its website. Another political group that emerged in the same period was the “Independent Left Movement – Cypriot Students Initiative” (ANATROPI), a left-wing student group that was active mainly in Athens.

In parallel, an anti-consumerist youth subculture began to develop in the old town of Nicosia, centered around Faneromeni Square.¹⁵⁾ This subculture was strongly influenced by the anti-authoritarian milieu in Greece, maintained an anti-nationalist and anti-fascist character and tended to organize itself through direct democratic processes, usually through open assemblies.¹⁶⁾ Characteristic examples of the expression of this subculture can be considered the organization of street parties in

2009-10 in Faneromeni Square, the subsequent organization of street parades in the old town of Nicosia, the “Critical Mass” cycle rallies, and the organization of alternative festivals in the old town, such as the “Festival of Thiseos” in 2010, organized in coordination with local residents. The prevalence of this subculture in the old town of Nicosia, especially in the period 2008-2012, reinforced anti-authoritarian political activity, as young people came into contact with a number of political groups active both in the old town and in Faneromeni Square specifically.

Within the anarchist, anti-authoritarian milieu, the period is ideologically characterized by an emphasis on self-organization, anti-racism, anti-fascism, anti-capitalism, anti-militarism and the promotion of an anti-consumerist subculture. Some of the groups that were active in the old town were the “Anti-Authoritarian Autonomous Action” (2008-09), the “Anarchist Union” (2010-11),¹⁷⁾ the pressure group “Citizen’s Movement Alert” (2009-10), created to oppose police violence, as well as “Awake Within the Walls” (2007-11), a group of residents opposing the commercialization of the old town and the racist treatment by the state of migrants living in the area. Another notable political group was “Falies”, which was an evolution of “Atypos” (Atypical), a group that was active within the Kardaş circles.¹⁸⁾ Falies were very active between 2008 and 2011, maintaining their own social space/alternative library called “Agrammata” (Illiteracy) (2008-15). Another notable example is the ecological group “Utopia” which also maintained a social space with the same name in the old town of Nicosia.¹⁹⁾

Limassol also experienced a new wave of politicization during this period, as new political initiatives were formed, and a more coherent extra-parliamentary political network began to emerge. Some of the political groups of the period were the “Anti-Racist Initiative of Limassol” (2010-12), “Adespotoi” (Strays) (2011-12), which maintained a clear libertarian ideological approach, and the “Anti-Capitalist Leftist Class Revolutionary Rally – ANTARTES” (Rebels), a left-wing political group active from 2011 to 2013.²⁰⁾ During this period, the “Self-Managed Limassol Hangout Space”, known informally as “Steki” or “Devicta”, was also operating, a social space that seems to have remained open from January until June 2012. Political groups and social spaces in Limassol and Nicosia circulated their own leaflets and pamphlets, had a constant presence on the internet²¹⁾ and systematically organized political protests, presentations, debates, alternative parties and documentary screenings.

Some of the most notable moments of this period were the anti-fascist mobilizations organized against the growing presence and activity of Greek Cypriot far-right groups. In December 2009, an anti-fascist march was organized in Nicosia in response to the first march of the “National Popular Front” (ELAM) in the city, the local branch of Golden Dawn. The march was organized by members and groups of the extra-parliamentary milieu, gathering around 1,000 people, a remarkable number for Cyprus, preventing members of ELAM from marching through Nicosia. A similar initiative was taken in Larnaca in 2010, in response to a march by the “Greek Resistance Movement” (KEA), another far-right political group that was very active at the time. The confrontation escalated violently, resulting in serious injuries to antifascist activists. The last major anti-fascist rally of the period with a significant turnout took place in January 2013 at Faneromeni Square, in response to ELAM, which organized a march to the square.

Finally, we can note that during these years the tendency of the student youth to organize themselves was increasingly prevalent, especially in the circles around Faneromeni Square. This tendency was initially expressed through the formation of a student self-education group in 2009, but also through the creation of the student group “Planadio Steki Dromou” (Wandering Street Hangout) (2010-11). The culmination of this process, however, was the formation of the student group “Skapoula” in 2011, which continued to operate in Nicosia until 2014. Skapoula published its own political magazine, organized its own political festivals, promoted alternative music (especially punk and hip hop), organized anti-fascist marches and systematically distributed political material of an

anti-capitalist, anti-nationalist and anti-authoritarian nature.

Third Period (2013-2021)

We can observe a shift in politicization that coincides with the Cypriot financial crisis of 2012-2013, a crisis which concluded with the imposition of a memorandum on the Cypriot economy and the haircut of deposits in the two largest Cypriot banks. The financial crisis shifted the Cyprus Problem for the first time from the dominance it enjoyed in public political discourse, while it crystallized the end of the so-called economic miracle that was supposedly taking place within Greek Cypriot society since the late 1980s. The economic crisis coincided with the presidency of Demetris Christofias (2008-13), a leading figure of AKEL and the only left-wing politician elected to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus. The failure of the Christofias government to offer an alternative to austerity measures, the implementation of such measures by the government itself, as well as the failure to resolve the Cyprus Problem, led to a widespread disillusionment with AKEL within the leftist extra-parliamentary milieu, which was expressed both through the criticism of the institutional left as well as through the attempt to create an alternative left-wing political organization, which took the form of the “Committee for a Radical Left Rally” (ERAS).

ERAS was created in 2011 with the aim of bringing together the extra-parliamentary left under a single organizational structure. It drew support from members of political groups of the extra-parliamentary left, such as Workers’ Democracy and the Left Wing, from personalities of the extra-parliamentary left, but also from a new generation of leftists interested in forming an alternative leftist initiative independent of AKEL. Although it had established local sub-groups in various cities and drafted a comprehensive manifesto, ERAS was divided after its members decided not to officially support the AKEL candidate in the 2013 presidential elections. Internal tensions continued after the elections, resulting in a split, with the creation of the group “Left Intervention” (2013-14) in Nicosia and “Granazi” (Cogwheel) (2013-19) in Limassol. Left Intervention did not survive politically while Cogwheel remained active, but with limited influence. The minority pro-AKEL tendency retained control of ERAS, which became inactive after the split, finally ceasing its activities in 2014.

Two other leftist initiatives are worth mentioning. The first is the “Bicommunal Radical Left Cooperation – United Cyprus” (Drasy-Eylem), a bicommunal left-wing electoral formation that took part in the 2014 European elections. It was the only bicommunal electoral formation in the history of the Republic of Cyprus up to that point. In addition to members of the Turkish Cypriot left, the formation included members of Workers’ Democracy, of the Left Wing and of the New Internationalist Left, as well as Kostis Achiotis, an important figure of the reunification movement. Drasy-Eylem received 0.86% of the vote (2220 votes). Following the European elections, the formation faced internal conflicts and was effectively inactive, stopping its activity completely in 2016. The second initiative is the “Leftist Movement – We Want Federation” (AKTHO), created in 2016 to support the federal reunification of the island. AKTHO took part in several pro-federation events, promoting its positions and raising awareness about the prospect of reunification.²²⁾

During the period of the economic crisis we can also trace the emergence of Stalinism as a coherent ideological current within the extra-parliamentary milieu, expressed by the group “Agkarra” (Quarrel) (2013), the group “stasis” (2016-17) and the “Nea Skepsi” (New Thought) website (2018). Both Agkarra and stasis seem to have had limited activity, with Agkarra maintaining a strong online presence in 2013-17. The emergence of Stalinist groups did not also mark the convergence of their political positions, with Agkarra expressing a particular skepticism towards a bicommunal bizonal federation, in contrast to the stasis group, which supported the federal model for the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. In the same period, we also observe a rise in the public activity of “KKE Cyprus”, the local branch of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), through the publication of announcements and

the organization of events and demonstrations.

In the anarchist, anti-authoritarian milieu, there was a parallel effort of coalescence, which was expressed with the creation of the group “Syspirosi Atakton” in 2012 in Nicosia. The group aimed at bringing together anarchists and anti-authoritarians under a common political organization. New people joined the milieu, with the group slowly focusing on issues that were either marginalized or completely absent from the anti-authoritarian milieu that had developed after 2000, such as gender relations, sexuality, the Cyprus Problem and feminism. The group started publishing the magazine “Entropia” (Entropy) in 2013 (2013-20), and in 2015 opened social space “Kaymakkin” in Nicosia, which later became autonomous, operating under the control of its own assembly, with Kaymakkin remaining a focal point for the extra-parliamentary milieu to this day.²³⁾ Besides the writing and circulation of political texts, the activities of Syspirosi Atakton have included the organization of the feminist/queer festival “Gender and Power”, its involvement in the bicomunal reunification movement of the city, the organization of speeches and presentations at Kaymakkin, as well as its participation in the pan-European anti-capitalist anti-authoritarian network “Beyond Europe”. The activities of Syspirosi Atakton appear to have been pivotal for the incorporation of sexuality, gender relations, feminism and reunification as central themes within the anti-authoritarian milieu.

In 2014, the political group “antifa lefkosha” (antifa λευκοσα)²⁴⁾ was formed, following the hunger strike of Iranian detainees at the Menogeia immigration detention center. The group has systematically focused on the living conditions of migrants, institutional racism in Cypriot society, the Republic of Cyprus’ immigration policy and the Cyprus Problem, organizing presentations, debates, political interventions, solidarity actions and demonstrations. It has published a significant number of leaflets, announcements and pamphlets, as well as its own political magazine, “Antifa Tropikal” (2019-20). In 2017, the “Ramona” collective was also formed, following a visit by people from the extra-parliamentary milieu to the Zapatista communities of Chiapas, Mexico. Ramona works mainly as a solidarity group for the Zapatistas and played a central role in the initiative of hosting a Zapatista delegation in Cyprus as part of the world tour they started in 2021. The hosting of the delegation was accompanied by a series of closed and open events in various cities, villages and regions of Cyprus, in cooperation with other extra-parliamentary groups.

In Limassol, new political initiatives also emerged, such as the “Limassol Anti-Fascist Network” (2014-16), which appears to have taken part mainly in anti-fascist and anti-racist actions. During the same period, the social space “Zerminal” was also operating in the city, while various self-organized antifascist football matches known as “Antifa League” were organized. In the same period, the organization of an anti-fascist, anti-racist festival started at Molos, Limassol, which continues to take place. In 2017, “Spirithkia” (Spark) was formed, an anti-authoritarian group which has mainly focused on the housing problem in Limassol, but also on the racist treatment of the migrant population by the Cypriot state. In the same year “Bandiera” began its activities, having members both in Nicosia and Limassol. The group aimed to create a common political organization of anarchists and communists. The project does not seem to have been able to overcome its internal contradictions, with the group permanently disbanding in 2020. Characteristic of this period is also the expansion of the extra-parliamentary milieu beyond Nicosia and Limassol, with groups being formed in other cities and regions. We see, for example, the formation of political organizations in the Larnaca district, such as the “Anti-fascist Collective Dromos” (Street) (2019-21) and the group “ASYLA Re Alexis” (2020),²⁵⁾ as well as the creation of the libertarian group “Aeriko in the mountains of Troodos” in 2017, which maintains a social space in Galata.

Alongside the creation of new groups and initiatives, a number of alternative media websites appeared, such as “Defteri Anagnosi” (Second Reading) (2012), the trilingual “3533” (2013-17), “Platforma News” (2014-16) and “Kontrasusta” (2017-18). Despite efforts to establish alternative

media websites, the dominance of social media has been almost universal. Of the alternative media sites, only Second Reading has survived, now almost entirely active on Facebook. In the same period, the “Cyprus Movements Archive” was created (2016), an open access online archive of the Cypriot radical milieu.

It is important to at least record here the establishment of the “People’s Athletic Club Omonia 29 May” in 2018 by organized fans of “Gate 9”, who disagreed with the conversion of their team, “Athletic Club Omonia Nicosia”, into a company. The new club was initially called “Omonia 1948” but was forced to change its name for legal reasons, remaining, nonetheless, also known by this name. Cypriot football has remained a field of political contention since the 1940s, a period in which sports clubs were divided into left-wing and right-wing, with “Athletic Club Omonia Nicosia” later developing as the most important left-wing football club in Cyprus. The establishment and subsequent course of “Omonia 29 May” also marks the autonomy from the institutional left of a significant part of the left-wing political subculture that had been developing in Cypriot stadiums since the 1990s.

The most important political action of the period from the extra-parliamentary sphere can be considered the second “Os Dame” (That’s Enough) march that took place in Nicosia in February 2021 and in which about 10,000 people participated.²⁶⁾ The march was organized in response to the police violence, unprecedented in the context of Cyprus, that protesters were subjected to a week before, in the first march organized by the “Os Dame Coordinating Group”, with the aim of holding a protest against, among other things, state authoritarianism, corruption, institutional racism, lack of social welfare and understaffing of public hospitals. Groups from almost the entire spectrum of the extra-parliamentary sphere took part in the march, while the organization of the mobilization was coordinated by an assembly in which various political groups participated. Following the protests, we seem to be entering a new cycle of politicization, as older groups fall into inactivity and new initiatives slowly begin to emerge, repeating a pattern observed at the end of previous periods. We cannot predict here what form and ideological content a new cycle of politicization will have, but we can note here the creation of two feminist groups in recent years, the “Feminist Collective Kores Xapolytes” (2021), which seems to be active mainly in Nicosia, and the “Feminist Group Eutopia” (2022), which is active in Limassol. A small Marxist group called “1917” also made its appearance in Nicosia in 2022. Another recent development was the strike of migrant workers on the Wolt platform in December 2022, which was widely supported by the extra-parliamentary milieu.²⁷⁾ Whatever form the Cypriot extra-parliamentary radical milieu takes in the coming years, it is undeniable that it will continue to exist, expressing both the rejection and the necessity of overcoming the social, political and economic reality prevailing in Cyprus.

Antonis Pastellopoulos,

Coventry, February 2023.

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[Needs Turkish Translation, Ten Radical Texts on the Cyprus Issue \(Book\), Decade 2020-2029, 2025, Nicosia \(south\), Nicosia, History of the Milieu](#)

1)

The full title of the publication is "Anthology of Historical Texts and Analyses on the evolutionary course of positions on Cyprocentrism, Cypriot Consciousness, Cypriot identity and Cypriotism". It was published in 2022 by the New Cyprus Association. It was edited by Andreas Panayiotou, Nikos Moudouros and Anna Misiadouli. The Anthology includes a large number of texts from the modern history of Cyprus, both by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

2)

I am referring here to the pamphlet "Some Current Political Issues" written by Charalambos Vatiliotis (Vatis) and published in 1931 by the Communist Party of Cyprus, and the article "Which is the Real Path Towards our National Liberation?", which appeared in 1947 in the third issue of the newspaper "Ergatis" (The Worker) of the Trotskyist Party of Cyprus. The texts can be found, in both English and Greek, on the website of the Cyprus Movements Archive (movementsarchive.org). They have also been included in the publication "the remainder of a division", published in 2024 by "Faura Books".

3)

Various left-wing political texts were published in the UK in the 1970s, while other texts occasionally appeared in Greece after 1974. Locating such texts has proved particularly difficult, but their

existence should at least be mentioned. Some of these texts are in the archives of the Marx Memorial Library in London. With regard to Turkish Cypriot texts, the most immediate limitation was the absence of a sufficient number of translations.

4)

The newspaper “Anafentos” was a publication of the “Anarchist Union”, a political group that was active in 2010-11. It is not related to the anarchist group “Anafentos”, which was active in the 1980s.

5)

This account was written in 2023. Because of this, some of the groups mentioned have now either been officially dissolved (antifa lefkosha, Aeriko) or have remained inactive for an extended period of time, to the point that we can consider them to have faded out (AKTHO, Agkarra, Nea Skepsi, Syspirosi Atakton, ASYLA Re Alexis, A.C. Errico Malatesta and Kores Xapolytes).

6)

Caesar Mavratsas (1997) The ideological contest between Greek Cypriot nationalism and Cypriotism 1974-1995: Politics, social memory and identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20 (4), page 721.

7)

I have attempted to offer both the original names, as well as translations of the names of the various groups, initiatives, social spaces etc. presented in this section. At some points I chose to simply present translations, as some original names are merely descriptive (e.g. Anarchist Union), while at other points, I only present the original name, as I could identify no accurate translation (e.g. Syspirosi Atakton).

8)

Although we know very little about its activities, it is worth mentioning here the creation of “Omada Ginaikon Lefkosias” (Women’s Group of Nicosia) (1978-81), a feminist group that published four pamphlets on gender inequality and the woman question. In 1986, the “Friends of Akamas” was also founded, which to this day is a reference point for the local ecological movement, and whose activities played a decisive role in saving the Akamas peninsula from ecological destruction.

9)

The space was also known as “Peftjin” (Pine).

10)

The interview was given in the French zine “Riot & Dance”, probably in 1996. It was republished in 1997 in the British zine “Ripping Thrash”. It can be found at the Cyprus Movements Archive (movementsarchive.org).

11)

In 2004, the “Initiative of Leftists for YES” was also created to support the plan, following AKEL’s decision to reject it.

12)

In 2005 the management team of Kardaş changed, while in 2007-2008 the space changed management again and was renamed to “Steki Arsinois 5” (Arsinois 5 Hangout). In this last phase it was essentially functioning as an anarchist squat.

13)

Originally the blog was called “Epanenosi 2010” (Reunification 2010).

14)

In 2018 the New Internationalist Left also opened the social space “Meltemi” (Etesian) in the old town of Nicosia.

15)

It is worth noting here the opening of two squats in the old town in the same period, “Malakasa”, which was originally established in 2005 by “Cyclown Circus”, a small Spanish travelling circus group, and the “Lantern of Diogenes” squat (2008-09). Cyclown Circus also introduced the idea of organizing Critical Mass cycling rallies, with the first march being held in 2006 in Nicosia.

16)

Faneromeni Square was also known as “Square of Manolis”. Manolis was the name given to the tree located in the square by the youth that used to hang out there at that time.

17)

The group maintained a social space located on Sapfous Street in old Nicosia. After the group fell to inactivity, the space was maintained for a short period under the name “self-managed Hangout Space Sapfous”.

18)

The group launched one of the first attempts to create an alternative online media site, releasing the “Falies Online Magazine” in 2005-06. It was from this project that Falies later took its name. For several years (2009-13) the Falies website was a reference point for alternative information, as well as for news and actions related to the extra-parliamentary milieu.

19)

Around 2010-11 an abandoned field in the old town was also converted into a self-managed park, known as “Parkouin” (Little Park).

20)

A student group called “Anti-capitalist, Anti-fascist Student Struggle – ANTAMA” (TOGETHER) was also active in 2013.

21)

It is worth mentioning here the presence of islandanarchy (2009-13), an online forum of the Cypriot anti-authoritarian milieu.

22)

In 2018, the “Platypus Nicosia” group was also formed, a small Marxist organization linked to the “Platypus Affiliated Society”. The group is mainly organizing political debates.

23)

It is worth mentioning that in 2014 there was also a small self-organized social space in the old town of Nicosia called “Hangout Space Areos 11”, which was run by students.

24)

The original name of the group was “antifa nicosia”, but it was soon renamed “antifa λευκοσα”, combining the Greek (Λευκωσία) and Turkish (Lefkoşa) names of the city.

25)

The group originally appeared under the name “Antifa Oroklini”. Another group that appeared during this period is “Antifa Aradippou” (2020), which was later renamed “A.C. Errico Malatesta”.

26)

Two more “Os Dame” marches followed in the following months.

27)

The strike was actively supported by “IWW-Cyprus”, a small political organization linked to the global workers’ trade union “Industrial Workers of the World”. The organisation first appeared in 2020.

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