

For other unsigned, unknown or not otherwise archived material, [press here](#).



This translation was created for the purposes of archiving and does not originate from the original creators of the text.

# Cyprus, the National Issue and Nationalism - A Libertarian Analysis (Pamphlet)

## Historical Note

This pamphlet was published in 1984, by an anonymous Cypriot Anarchist and was first published in "FILLA POREIAS" (lit. Drafting Papers), issue 4, edited by Leonidas Christakis, in Athens. It was originally written and discussed with the group that produced the magazine [Mavres Pinelies](#).

This PDF file is a republication of the pamphlet, from the [Ano Polis Open Struggle Assembly](#) in Thessaloniki, in June 2018. The typed text below is based on this republished version of the pamphlet. In addition, the first edition has been located and scanned for archival purposes.

References to notes 10, 11, 31, 32 and 33 were not identified within the republished text of the pamphlet. References to these notes in the typed text below have been placed in places where we thought the notes were to be referenced.

## Content

**filla porias [drafting papers] 4**

**alternative parallel information**

## CYPRUS THE NATIONAL ISSUE AND NATIONALISM

## A LIBERTARIAN ANALYSIS

**ATHENS 1984**

**PLEASE NOTE:** You may republish part or all of this document, provided that the source is mentioned, which is: "FILLA PORIAS", Issue No. 4, published by Leonidas Christakis, Athens 1984.

it is published -issue by issue- without the obligation of a regular date. Responsible for their

publication and circulation: Leonidas Christakis. P.O. Box: P.O. Box. 21028, 114 10 ATHENS.

## **bibliographic note**

Most of the writings before '74 on Cypriot history are classic nationalist texts with the main aim of convincing people of the Greek identity of Cyprus. It is a history where everyone adds and subtracts what they like, since the goal is well established in the social imaginary. Not that these stories are completely stupid or a bunch of lies. But it is precisely in these histories and texts that you have to look behind the words and between the silences. There is of course Hill's history (which as far as I know is not translated yet), which is quite interesting, but of course it has its own biases and the problem of interpreting foreign consulate documents that Hill uses a lot. From '74 onwards (and in the context of the crisis of the Greek-Christian imaginary), several works with interesting elements start to come out. Several books are also being written abroad both on recent events and on the more modern history of the island. (I am using two or three extracts from one such book "Cyprus: a case study", written by various scholars of Cypriot reality).

The bomb that is Graikos' "History" explodes in 1980. Mr. Graikos, an AKEL supporter and one of the intellectual fathers of the Neo-Cypriot consciousness, by collecting various information and making a "Marxist" critical analysis of the classical nationalist texts, proposes a historical foundation-justification of the Neo-Cypriot consciousness and the Cypriot state. The positive thing about Graikos and those who followed him is that he brings together various elements and builds another pole vis-à-vis the Greek-Christian one, which can also lead to the birth of a discussion-study on Cypriot history. Apart from this, the history of Graikos needs its own critical interpretation, since here the goal (ideological-historical support of the Cypriot state and of AKEL) determines the analysis and presentation of events.

This text is an attempt to intervene beyond the two poles (Greek Christian - Neo-Cypriot). The elements, which support my historical analysis, come partly from a critical analysis of what the above ideologists or historians cite. And I mention all this in case anyone is willing to look at the sources, but also so as not to create any illusion that the following analysis is based on a history that has been fully written. Cypriot history as facts, documents and evidence is only now being discovered and written. We note this, so that anyone reading this text or anything else on Cyprus may retain their doubts and reservations.

And one last note: various topics (e.g. education, state, etc.) appear in various analyses - this is not a repetition. Rather, it is an attempt to bring out the dimensions of a phenomenon in its totality and to look at the interactions of various structures.

### **Not dedicated to Makarios or the heroes of EOKA**

This text was written with the main aim (and hope) to provoke some dialogue through disagreements and exchanges of views. From this point of view, it is a personal attempt to form some kind of reflection and critique on Cypriot reality. Within the framework of a libertarian analysis, which places class structure, patriarchy and the state as the main social contradictions, an attempt is made to construct an alternative reflection on the historical and contemporary Cypriot reality. The centring on nationalism is done because this ideology has had and continues to have a decisive influence in Cyprus, and as I try to show in the first part it has played and continues to play a decisive role in the development of various groups and individuals in the non-institutionalised left. And to a certain

extent, this is the milieu to which the text is addressed, which is why there are also several references to Trotskyists and Marxists. Not because they have played or are playing a decisive role in Cypriot reality, but because they are the only counter-positions that this 'milieu' has offered and has been offered. Now, to tell the truth, I don't expect any substantial response from the pure blooded Trotskyists or Marxists, since they don't seem ready for anything other than pressuring you to agree with them.

The hope for a response goes more to people who are positioned in the libertarian milieu, or to those who are unaffiliated and wandering. Beyond the hope for some discussion, the text does not offer itself as the positions or final conclusions of any group or individual. This is an exploration, it is neither a history textbook nor static political positions. The only useful political function this text can serve is to be overcome.

Methodologically, one might get the impression from reading this text that I am proposing a critical analysis, based on the structural dynamics of power relations, with minimal influence from those in power either as groups or as individuals. And this is possible, by the very nature of the text-critique of the ideological hegemony of nationalism and the processes it promotes. In this context, the emphasis falls asymmetrically on structural changes. My understanding, which is evident in various parts of the text, is that structural changes are results of the dialectic between the autonomous dynamics of power structures and of those subordinated to them. In other words, the present evolution is the result of the prevalence of power, insofar as this evolution was determined by the need to eliminate or assimilate social conflict. The dynamics of structures are altered by the intervention of people, and an analysis of today's reality as a whole (and not only of nationalism) must look at the hidden contradictions in structures as a result of previous social conflicts that were defeated. Another point to emphasize in this context is that the defeat or assimilation of social conflict in different historical periods is not inevitable. That is, the historical course could have been different if the subordinated won in the social conflict. This is why I call structural changes the "defeat of social conflict" - unlike Marxists, I don't think capitalist or state-socialist modernization is the inevitable path of social evolution.

A special note is also needed on the role of the individual in these processes - if nothing else, because the tendency to avoid responsibility of the individual is predominant in Cyprus. The victimization and simultaneous exoneration of the Greek Cypriot community after '74 is typical of this funny, as well as sappy, tendency to avoid responsibility. Blame the imperialists, the Turks, EOKA B, the whole world except the "poor", "as it should be" Cypriot house-keeper. In fact, alongside all of them, a large part of the responsibility lies with the Greek Cypriots as individuals. For 14 years they sat on their eggs or ran like sheep to the rallies, and in the coup most of them went home even though they 'knew what would happen next'. The responsibility is immediate and the only way to avoid it is to blame it on others or "divine fate".

And some preliminary clarifications on terminology and dealing with various issues:

By the nature of the subject, but also because of the alienating separation of knowledge, there was a constant problem from the beginning, that the text should not become an exercise in intellectual self-gratification. I have made an attempt to more extensively articulate various issues at a few points, to avoid clichéd expressions that need a dictionary to be understood. On another level, I have tried to avoid substituting familiar terms (e.g. neo-colonialism, national issue, etc.) even though my understanding of a topic may be slightly different or even often contrary to common usage. The term "national issue" is an example. Although I question the term "nation" itself, I use the expression "national issue" to express general dangers facing a group of people. Further, the wording of expressions such as Cypriots, Greeks, Turks, etc. is used in the everyday sense of the term, people

who reside in an easily distinguishable geographical area (e.g. Cypriots) or who reside on the borders policed by the homonymous state. Although one could (and to a certain extent I think rightly) accuse me of reproducing alienation in the language in this way, however, I think that at this stage there are important things to discuss rather than getting bogged down in terminology.

And a final note on the choice of topics:

1. Although there are sporadic references to Turkish Cypriots and Turks, when the text deals with nationalism, it basically refers to the Greek Cypriot variant. Apart from the outward hysterics of Turko-centric nationalism, very little is known about the processes it has promoted within the Turkish Cypriot community, in Turkey and the power groups that have promoted and are promoting it.
2. There are certain topics, which, although extremely important (e.g. the divide and rule policy of the British in the 1950s, the American interference and the financing of the CIA, etc.) are not much mentioned. And the reason is simple. These topics have been so much analysed (every year there is a book or a bunch of articles on them) that it would be pointless to repeat them. I repeat, however, that these are given in this analysis.
3. Various topics (e.g. education, state, etc.) appear in various analyses, this is not a repetition. Rather, it is an attempt to bring out the dimensions of a phenomenon in their entirety and to look at the interactions of various structures.

Although the responsibility for the final opinions is of course mine, however, in shaping the ideas and writing, I had a lot of help from 4-5 people who for various reasons might not want their names here.

And one last note for Cypriot pro-Enosis Marxists: the fact that our views differ diametrically and that there is a (strong or not) criticism of their views in the text, it would be a complete mistake to misinterpret this criticism of political positions as a criticism of the morality and consistency of these people.

---

## Useful terms

**AKEL** - Progressive Party of Working People, the Communist Party.

**EDEK** - Socialist Party of Vassos Lyssarides.

**DISY** - Democratic Rally led by Clerides and a party covering the space of the old Unionists [Enosis].

**DIKO** - Democratic Party, led by President Kyprianou and for now the "Party of the State".

**TMT** - Terrorist Turkish Cypriot Nationalist Organization.

**EOKA** - "National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters", struggle of '55-'59.

The terms "Neo-Cypriots" and "Neo-Greek-Cypriots" are used in the same sense, since the mass expression of identification with the Cypriot state is expressed at the level of the Greek Cypriot state and consciousness.

## short historical outline

~ The reference to the events is made in relation to the following analysis ~

**1571** The Turks occupy Cyprus from the Latins. In the early years, trying to gain access to the island, they treat the Orthodox favourably. Their administration thereafter depends on the rulers of the day and the various phases the Ottoman Empire goes through. There are various pro-Latin revolts at the beginning, which diminish with the passage of time.

**1660** The church becomes co-administrator, if not actual governor of Cyprus, with the granting of special privileges by the Sultan. There are local rebellions by members of both communities.

**1765** Joint mass uprising of Orthodox Christians and Muslims under the leadership of Khalil agha (governor of Kyrenia) against the economic misery and the new taxes imposed. The rebellion is crushed by troops sent from outside. It should be noted that during this period Muslims show more pronounced tendencies to revolt, perhaps because there is strong downward class mobility in their community.

**1804** A new uprising begins as a common one among the popular strata. The intervention of the church, which mediates the arrival of troops to suppress it, creates intercommunal antagonisms and incidents.

**1821** Greek revolution and settlement of accounts between the elites. Archbishop Kyprianos is hanged.

**1833** Three uprisings (of Theseus, monk Ioannikios and Gavür Imam) that start from popular discontent with the economic situation. There are attempts at cooperation between the various "leaders". Gavür Imam occupies Paphos for 4 months. This is followed by repression with troops coming from outside. Ioannikios and Gavür Imam are executed. Theseus escapes through foreign consulates.

**1878** Cyprus is ceded to England. The English restructure the administration of the island on a political basis and slowly lay the foundations of the modern state. At the same time there is a rapid rise in education. In the meantime, the first calls for Enosis [union with Greece] begin to be made by bourgeois intellectuals and the church. The Turkish Cypriot elite calls for a return to Turkey.

**1900-1910** Church crisis with multifaceted implications. Intransigent nationalists vs. moderates, bourgeois vs. clergy, metropolises vs. archbishopic, etc.

**1912** Intercommunal incidents in various villages and towns at the time of the Balkan wars. Although the incidents were not massive, they nevertheless show that nationalism is becoming entrenched and divisive. The first (even small) movements of inhabitants out of their residences in 2-3 villages take place.

**1914** England annexes Cyprus (until then Cyprus had theoretically belonged to Turkey and England administered it by special agreement) and proposes to Greece Enosis so that the latter can enter the war. Greece, with a pro-German government, refuses.

**1926** Crushing defeat of the intransigent nationalists in the elections. Formation of the [CPC \(Communist Party\)](#) by intellectuals and workers. Though fiercely persecuted, the party gains some influence in some areas.

**1931** Oktovriana [October Incidents]. Popular uprising against the new taxes. The uprising quickly takes on an Enosis character. The British respond with repression.

**1931-1940** The British impose a dictatorship and proceed with the effective establishment of the receptive Cypriot state. It is within the framework of the bureaucracy, which is created during this period, that the interests of various elites (bourgeois, gentry, etc.) converge. The oppression of Greek-Enosis nationalism makes it an anti-colonial symbol.

**1941** The British relax the dictatorship. AKEL is founded by illegal cells of the CPC, liberal politicians and popular strata. AKEL appears as an inter-communal party (although it too has Enosis as its goal). At first it looks like a broad popular movement against colonialism, the old bureaucracy (the "appointed ones") and social inequality. The degeneration is gradual but rapid in the years to come.

**1943-1947** Period of intense mobilisation of AKEL and of its spectacular rise. It crushes the right in the municipal elections and elects Leontios as archbishop, with a large majority.

**1947** Leontios dies soon after his election. The new AKEL candidate loses the election in a climate of increasing polarisation and mass fraud. The British propose a constitution of self-government. AKEL tries to achieve abstention and calls on right-wing leaders to resign from government posts. The right of course refuses and AKEL takes part in the talks which fail. Thus, AKEL already has a double defeat. It fails to gain access to both centres of power in Cyprus (the church and the state). Although AKEL followed a tactic of national "popular-front unity" even then, since '47 it puts this line above all else and follows the choices of the power centres, looking for the right opportunity to establish itself in their eyes and gain access to them.

**1948** Period of intense strikes. The English, the church and the right mobilize against the last mass movement of class conflict. Many strikes are intercommunal. Despite small material gains, the defeat is decisive. The defeat in the factory and on the street ensures the imposition of the AKEL leadership on large layers of the popular strata. The party's political choices become the only hope for these strata who want to get out of misery and defeat. In the same year and under the influence of the civil war in Greece, a frightening polarisation of left and right is created in Cyprus, the effects of which are still evident. Different football clubs etc. are formed. While the Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot rift is barely discernible, the left-right rift erupts sharply and breaks the Greek Cypriot community in two. The hatred between left and right has for many years been much more intense than that between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

**1949** New leadership in AKEL. The slogan is emphasised: ENOSIS AND ONLY ENOSIS with any Greek government. The new leadership of AKEL is the same one that exists today and which of course does not want to hear about Enosis.

**1950** Referendum on Enosis. 97% of Greek Cypriots voted for Enosis. While the signatures were being made public, 15,000 Turkish Cypriots demonstrated against Enosis in Nicosia.

**1955** The EOKA struggle begins. The struggle goes through several phases. Makarios is exiled to the town of Mahé in the Seychelles Islands, which were under British colonial rule. There are repeated truces. Some of the most liberal members of the EOKA are heroically killed (and under strange circumstances of betrayal). Afxentiou, Matsis etc.

**1958** Grivas and the Terrorist Turkish Cypriot Nationalist Organization start assassinating leftists and afterwards there are widespread intercommunal riots with unprecedented, for the relations between the two communities, massacres. The British are fostering division in the usual divide and rule

manner.

**1959-1960** The Zurich-London agreements are signed and the Cypriot state is declared. During the signing, the British, in order to put pressure on Makarios, revealed to him that they knew where Grivas was hiding in Cyprus.

**1963-1964** The Constitution does not function smoothly, while nationalists from both communities form task forces. Makarios tries to revise the Constitution. The Turkish Cypriots refuse. In late '63, clashes break out in Nicosia. There are widespread massacres of civilians. Sampson, the post-coup president, leads the massacres of Turkish Cypriots in Omorfita. Turkish intervention is threatened and clashes break out from time to time. (August '64, clashes in Tillyria). The end of '64 finds the Turkish Cypriots confined to ghettos, while their elite leave the government.

**1967** New clashes instigated by Grivas in Kofinou and Agios Theodoros. There are again accusations by Turkish Cypriots of violence against civilians. Meanwhile Makarios begins to promote theories of "feasibility". Enosis is the goal, but the practical aim at the moment is independence.

**1968** The first moves against Makarios by right-wing extremists begin.

**1971** EOKA B is formed by Grivas and a guerrilla war begins with bombs, assassinations, kidnappings, reverse state violence and reverse violence against members or followers of EOKA B. The junta's support of EOKA B is well known and the factionalism of Athens was also at work in Cyprus. It appears from published CIA documents that there was also an American funding of anti-Cypriot activities.

**1974** Coup d'état - Invasion. Occupation of Northern Cyprus by the Turkish army. The war lasts very briefly. Mass exodus of Greek Cypriots to the south.

**1977** Death of Makarios.

*The crisis continues.*

---

The text is divided into 4 parts:

**a)** The first is an attempt at a first approach and clarification, analysing the function of the national issue, and of nationalism on the general development and constitution of the Greek Cypriot far left. It is to some extent also a personal journey that leads to this text.

**b)** The second part is an introduction to the real dimensions of this phenomenon that could be called the national issue.

**c)** The third, which is perhaps the largest, is a critical analysis of Greek Christianity (and by this I mean all the ideological fanfare of Greekness, whether it is called that or is described in more sophisticated terms) as an ideology of the historical approach to the Cypriot context and as an ideological cover for various processes of reconstruction of power structures (class structure - patriarchal politics - state centralization). This text is at the same time an attempt to analyse the historical developments of the last decades.

**d)** The last part is a critical analysis of Greek Cypriot consciousness.

# 1. The "national issue", the far left and "milieu"

The "national issue" (which in this case expresses the occupation of Northern Cyprus by the army of the Turkish state and the "plots of the imperialists" against us) has been a key pole of reference of the Cypriot far left, which has timidly emerged after '74 and which for some parts of it is still of course the PROBLEM.

In a first phase, immediately after '74 and in a situation that smelled of general upheaval, the slogan of "conscription" of society, for a "popular defence" etc. was raised. Talking about a far left movement at this time is a bit of a stretch, of course. But the first processes had begun among various individuals and groups, [both within EDEK](#), which strongly expressed these currents at that time, and among AKEL members and unionists. It is also the period of efforts to [constitute the CPC](#).

EDEK, which also had the tradition of "resistance" to the coup, expressed for a time this willingness to reject any compromise with timid proposals for state socialist measures, in the face of the policy of social peace and appeasement adopted by AKEL and the state.

The contradictions of the ideology of conscription as a panacea for all problems (external and internal) did not take long to appear. The bourgeois, Makarios, the state, AKEL, used the same logic, but for exactly opposite goals. The workers accepted not only the freeze, but also the reduction of wages, the refugees were appeased, the whole society started to take the path of conformation again within the framework of "national unity" for the long-term struggle.

In the end, the argument of the promotion of entertainment and social peace was identical to that adopted by the "subversives". Yes, we need "conscription", but conscription without "national unity" is not possible, and of course "national unity" and "social conflict" are mutually exclusive.

The contradictions of the EDEK(1) as soon as it was forced to take a "responsible" position were indicative of the situation. In this context (and with the simultaneous decline of some of the "militant" mood that existed among the youth), frustration, and the realization that much of that whole ideology of "conscription" was determined by the ruling ideology, led several individuals to reject the whole issue. In particular, the realization of our personal misery (sexual, psychological, etc.) led to a rejection that carried with it a demand for a life that seemed completely unrelated to the political schizophrenia of the politicians. Of course this development was not general. Within EDEN a "rearguard battle" continued for a time, until the party left all pretext behind and threw out the Trotskyists, "entryists" and other leftists en masse.

["Aristeri Pteriga \[The Left Wing\]"](#) followed its own disintegrating course afterwards, to finally leave the "pure-bloods" to publish ["Sosialistiki Ekfrasi \[Socialist Expression\]"](#). "Conscription" still plays a key role in this group, only now charged with a more explicit "class" and at the same time "internationalist" component. The issue for them is to unite with the Turkish Cypriot workers and to take on the bourgeoisie and the occupiers all together in unity.

In the spectacular "left-right" polarisation, the Trotskyist spokesmen have aligned themselves with the so-called left (AKEL - EDEK) and have tried to "re-revolutionise" it with their entryism and party units(2).

From another point of view, various individuals passing from the effort for the [reconstitution of the](#)



CPC or other Marxist-Leninist groups or carrying an Enosis tradition or discovering the light of truth in Psyrroukis [Νίκος Ψυρούκης], jumped to the other extreme, and started looking for the revolutionary subject among the far right unionists(3). This milieu presented at one stage an interesting intervention, as it brought together people from the left (but not from AKEL) and from the former far right, thus presenting itself as an attempt to break the whole spectacular left-right polarisation. However, it was a game played on the ideological sophistry of the AKEL-Enosis polarisation. AKEL once supported Enosis, e.g. which means that Enosis is a demand of the popular movement (hence revolutionary) and that the popular movement was revolutionary at the time. In these contexts the national issue held the key status, but at the same time it had new dimensions. These Marxists put the problem of Enosis as a national problem and made various attempts to tie it to the occupation and the "imperialists". In a first step they argued, for example, that the coup and the invasion would not have taken place if the Union had taken place. In a newer step, the view of "what's done is done" was thrown out, but because the "Turkish bourgeoisie" is aggressive, the only way to save ourselves is Enosis (even if it is a double one).

What is amazing about this situation is the impression that something terribly new has been discovered. In fact, apart from the Marxist sauce that adorns the arguments, the substance is essentially the same as what we have all heard thousands of times in the schools of Greek-Christian education. As for dual Enosis, which is going to become a revolutionary solution for some, it was proposed by the Turkish state since the 1950s and by the Americans since '63.

The phenomenon has its funny side, especially when Trotskyists or pro-Enosis Marxists complain that the "Cypriot people" have lost their historical memory. There is, however, a serious -and sad- side. The far left, born and still trying to survive with the national issue as the PROBLEM, has made itself comfortable under the sun of Cypriot ideology and the imaginary left-right polarization. Arteriosclerosis, scaremongering and national, social, class, etc. unity created two more shops of this ideology.

The group that publishes [the magazine](#)(4), which anyway belongs to the libertarian space - not the leftist one, having taken a clear, negative position on the reduction of the national issue as the most basic problem of our existence, found itself in a dead end when it started an attempt to analyse the Cypriot reality two years ago. Given the lack of many in-depth libertarian analyses of such situations and the complete lack of any evidence in Cyprus to draw on, the search often turned into 'sailing'.

This text - which may well be another 'sailing' - emerged from last year's discussions as a first attempt at some kind of analysis. At the same time, it also expresses a personal opinion of mine on the disagreement, expressed within the group, as to whether it is worth dealing with nationalism and the national issue.

First of all, some clarification of terms is needed. "National issue" expresses a problem facing a set of humans (people, nation, etc.) regardless of the internal divisions (communal, class) and the power relations of this set (class, patriarchal, state). The problem usually stems from external intervention, dependence, exploitation, etc. Thus, e.g. the invasion of the Turkish state in '74 affected refugees as a whole, regardless of the power relations that had previously defined them ( the recreation of the same relations is another story).

Nationalism in any form projects this problem as the main and defining problem of all social life. Nationalism answers the national problem at the level at which the problem is posed. Ignoring internal divisions and power relations, it tries to put forward a resistance to an unknown, threatening Other. In this sense, nationalism reproduces, promotes and institutionalizes in new contexts already existing power relations.

Nationalism functions as a status quo ideology within society. To some extent, this is also due to the frequent discovery and projection of an Other within the country(5), e.g. traitors, conspirators, etc. It is a practical method for the state to get rid of any nuisance, while at the same time intensifying the pressure on society for unification-homogenization, suspending social conflicts and leveling out differences.

However, the equation “nationalism” is bullshit, oversimplifies the situation and avoids the problem. Because apart from the fact that nationalism is presented as at least an alienated response to a nonetheless real problem, there is also the fact that people take the issue seriously and believe it. The appeal of nationalism as an ideology reflects to some extent the importance of the problems it tends to address. But at the same time, this resonance is tied to the power relations that permeate society and are reproduced by nationalism.

In this context, the distinction between the “national issue” and nationalism is important. The national issue must be seen in its real dimensions as a real problem, while nationalism as an ideology needs to be analysed and criticised in order to be able to articulate an alternative discourse.

But not to confuse things, what I'm essentially saying is that the “national issue” is a problem imposed on us by various power structures (internal and external). Nationalism is the ideology that institutionalizes the problem internally, projecting it distorted through the power structures that exist. If there is an immediate need, it is to revalorise the national issue and critique nationalism, so that we can see the true dimensions of the problem and how much it concerns us.

Nationalism is an ideology that legitimizes the status quo, but to understand it, you have to try to analyze it, not exorcise it. Criticism of ideology, no matter how exhaustive it has to be, must at some point find reality and will need to propose alternatives. This, of course, does not mean that we will immediately run with magic recipes, getting into the rhythm of power, “if it were us we would do this” or “this is what must be done”. Instead, a critique of reconstruction may be needed (and in Cyprus this is what is needed after all). A critique and activity on specific issues that will allow the creation of an autonomous space and discourse. But a critique that will know that as long as its discourse and its counter-power cannot counter those of the institutionalised voluntarism at all levels, it will be more or less captive to the power of the state and other mechanisms in times of crisis. In a war, the solution will be to flee or fight under the state for the state. And for a refugee the dilemma will be played between who will return and how strong the central state will be.

## **2. dimensions of a problem that can be called national**

Speaking today about the Cyprus problem - or the national issue- there is often a sense in the discussion of things being “self-evident”. And yet, this “self-evident” aspect is not at all obvious if one looks at what the “national issue” has meant for various groups of people in this area over the last decades.

For the Greek Cypriot far right, for example, it was not only the demand for Enosis, but also a strong anti-communism and anti-Turkism, for AKEL supporters it used to express an anti-colonial struggle with an extension of Enosis, while after independence the problem moved to the need to protect the Cypriot state. On the other hand, for the Turkish Cypriot far right, the problem was expressed more as a struggle against the “Greeks and the communists” and of course between these extremes there was a whole range of other confrontations (the danger of the Greek or Turkish state depending on the community or faction to which each belonged, imperialism, etc.).

This mosaic of approaches to the national issue is characteristic both of the complexity of the issue and of the ideological charge of nationalism, which, by fragmenting reality and its problems and projecting its separated fragments on the imaginary level, has laid and continues to lay the foundations of Cypriot ideological hegemony.

We will deal below with the ideological (and structural) function of nationalism. For now, we will attempt a brief analysis of the “national issue” in this geographical area, trying to see its real dimensions. In this context, the analysis is not limited to “communal or national” boundaries - a term I find quite questionable anyway, as seen elsewhere in this paper, when its interpretation identifies large groups of people with the nations and states that police them.

The national issue (or the Cyprus problem) expresses (for the purposes of the following analysis) the dangers that the communities of people living on the island of Cyprus face from 'external forces'. Ostensibly, some 'external dangers' appear to favour some communities or political factions (e.g. Enosis or the Turkish invasion) or even the whole (e.g. tourism). However, with the international institutionalization of nation-states as local mechanisms for the structuring of social power and of imperialism-neocolonialism as an international structuring mechanism, the relatively short-term benefits of a community from state or imperialist intervention gradually take on a negative flavour in the face of the leveling and exploitation of the 'former protectors'. Short-term gains gradually become long-term wounds. The experience of Greek Cypriots before the coup and Turkish Cypriots after the invasion is typical in this respect. In this context we will look at the “national issue” on 3 different levels.

- 1)** The problem of the strategic - geographical space of the Middle East.
- 2)** The neo-colonial dependence.
- 3)** The imperialism of the Greek-Turkish states in the Cypriot area and the competition between them.

## **1. the strategic space (Middle East), the interventions and peace**

This seems an issue solved and overblown before we even start. Cyprus in the Middle East, oil, the Arab-Israeli conflict, American machinations and so on. Although this analysis has enough truths, it nevertheless has a deliberately limited field of vision (which is basically reinforced by our tearful solidarity with the Arab states and their chauvinism and in the absolution of Russian imperialism for what is going on in the region). The aim of course for the Russians and the Americans is oil and political control of the region. In this context, the role of Cyprus remains what it has been since the British took over the island, an extreme “gendarmerie station”, helping whoever owns it to police their dependencies and prevent opponents from entering the region. The crucial role that this geographical location has played in the modern history of the island (in terms of foreign interventions, direct or indirect) is quite obvious. The British bases and the American radars are typical of these developments. Cyprus for the moment is a gendarmerie station of Western imperialism.

However, this is where we need to start to clarify things, because this is where the similarity of analysis with that problematic (so dear to our leftist “anti-imperialists”) ends, which, seeing the above, draws its line of confrontation with “American and Zionist imperialism” and places us on the side of “Arab anti-imperialism” etc.

Seeing the fate of the Palestinians (slaughtered for 30 years by Israel and the Arab states), the fascist structure and ideology of the Arab states, the growing expansionism of Israel (and of course not only Israel) and the intensity of the competition between the superpowers, there is a sense that the

problem does not fit into the comfortable and beloved clichés of “good and evil” that have suited and suit the left.

The problem is not simply “Western imperialist intervention”, but the whole game of superpower competition. Furthermore, the states of the region themselves have started to develop a relatively autonomous imperialism (within the framework of their growing economic power), which makes the situation in the region even more explosive and at the same time, of course, leads to an increasing oppression within themselves, showing in this process the real face of nationalism in this region.

In a first consideration of the issue there is a need to take responsibility. Because when 30-40 miles from your house there are bombs that can blow up the whole region, or radars that guide one faction in these massacres called wars in the Middle East, you have a responsibility for your tolerance. Still, when you sell hypocritical support (as the Cypriot state does), expressed in practice by heroizing every dictator of the Arab states and Soviet imperialism, you are in fact avoiding the problem and your responsibility.

This view (tolerating practically the use of your space by one opponent and tearing your ass apart in favor of the other) so characteristic of Cypriot ideology, makes guilt comfortable to a certain extent, while at the same time seeing the world in black and white, avoids any reflection(6).

However, beyond the moral responsibility and the ideological needs served by avoiding reflection on what is happening in the Middle East, there is another dimension to the issue. For the strategic interests of the superpowers, we belong to the Middle East and, consequently, developments in this area directly determine us. It has already been mentioned that the West's interest in Cyprus stems to a large extent from its geographical position. In this context, Cyprus will continue to be the target of direct or indirect intervention by the superpowers depending on developments in the Middle East. For the time being, AKEL and the DISY express a balance on indirect interventions. The suppression of even a basic “political dialogue” (even within the framework of a bourgeois democracy) or even the determination of their position on the Cyprus problem according to the interests of their patrons is a typical aspect of the results of these interventions.

These interventions, however, express only one aspect of the problem, beyond which there is a basic issue of physical survival. The over-armament of the states in the region, the vital interests of the superpowers and the volatile situation that prevails create serious risks of generalised war. Any dictator can declare even more stupid wars than the one between Iraq and Iran. And in a generalised war, Cyprus, as an enclave of one coalition, could become a battlefield for the missiles of the superpowers and their minions. And in this context, it is chilling to think that 65%(7) -at least- of Cypriots vote for affiliate parties that if they were in power alone would fill this place with the missiles of their patrons.

In this context, there is an immediate need for an autonomous peace movement, opposing both the two imperialisms and the nationalism-imperialism of the states of the region. The danger of war has become so real and its technology so dangerous that the problem of peace has become a basic problem of “natural survival” for the peoples of the region - and in this respect I can place it in this category of problems which I call “national”.

## **2. forms of “neo-colonial” dependence**

The increasing bureaucratisation of professions, foreign financial aid as a permanent support for the economy (in exchange for our wandering whining)(8) and the touristification of everything interconnectively create another form of dependency - neo-colonial dependency.

Before we go any further, however, we need to make one thing clear, because there is a critique (quite popular on the far left), which in its anti-consumerist fury gives you the impression for hours on end that it would prefer people to be hungry, rather than stupid consumers.

For me at least, the fact that the standard of living has gone up dramatically, the fact that people are not freezing their asses off, is both pleasant and positive.

However, this rise in living standards and the resulting consumerism became not only an end in itself and a mechanism for the reproduction of the spectacle, but also eliminated any trace of economic self-sufficiency and autonomy.

With the war in Lebanon we are slowly becoming a centre for "offshore businesses" (already the government announced last summer that this is one of its objectives after granting a licence to 4 international banks in two months). Our already over-stretched bureaucracy is getting a new boost as offices of European firms are popping up everywhere. The aftermath of this development has already begun to be seen at home, an arteriosclerosis of all thinking, an intensification of conformity in the context of being 'settled'.

In the international arena, the evolution is more underlying and of a longer term. Losing all productive capacity, this island is totally dependent on international capital for its economic well-being. It is a form of dependence that does not need "gunboat politics" to convince it of its will. Economic blackmail will work just as effectively.

And if the economic competition between European and American capital becomes intense in the region, we will be one of the possible centres of a conflict. And to the extent that these international interests serve not only the bureaucracies of their party-dependencies, but also economic elites, they create external pressures and blackmails, but also internal tensions (DIKO and the DISY seem to a certain extent to be predetermined schemas of these conflicts). And of course, no one should underestimate the Soviet economic interests, expressed in a network of private and state-owned enterprises and transactions, and of course the central role of AKEL as an intermediary. The economic aid<sup>(9)</sup> which largely set us on our feet after '74 has an ambiguous character. It was useful in the short term, but the fact that this economy has learned to live with these injections of stimulus in the long term creates such problems of dependency that our choices as a society are limited to the level of how many steps we take on the tightrope of our various (and often rival) benefactors. Tourism is a third aspect, an aspect of this problem that, while helping us economically, has also created a network of dependence and bondage to the various metropolitan centres.

With tourism, of course, various internal problems are already starting to be seen with the destruction of the natural environment, fenced beaches etc.

The peculiarity of tourism is perhaps the fact that the selling off of this area is taking place in broad daylight before our eyes. (Of course, tourism also has an enormous social impact as a lever for modernization. However, the analysis of this aspect and of tourism in general and its ideological function would require a separate analysis-discussion). In this complex set of problems, which increase dependency and at the same time rape the internal social and physical space, there is no alternative - except a stupid anti-tourism, as if tourists are to blame for our bullshit. Not to mention the fantasies of the pro-Enosis Marxists who see the root of evil -where else- in the non-realisation of Enosis. You see, the Greek state would have reservations about making us a resort island (as the Cypriot state is doing now).

### 3. Greece - Turkey - Cyprus

The Greek state (like the others created in the region with the gradual disintegration of the Ottoman Empire) for most of its modern history was characterised by a strong tendency towards geographical expansionism. Of course, this expansionism always had the cover of “liberation of ancestral lands” and Cyprus was of course no exception. State expansionism (which is both an expansion and a process of centralisation of the structure of the state) goes hand in hand in these contexts with an attempt at cultural leveling that crushes the autonomous cultures of various communities, integrating them into the homogenised 'national culture' of the intellectuals of the state. Below is an analysis of the negative effects of these processes within the community and their role in the formation of ideological hegemony. For now it will express a “cultural imperialism” of the Greek state towards the Cypriot communities.

Beyond the ideological and structural function of expansionism, there was also an economic dimension to the interest in Cyprus. The island (almost on the coast of the Middle East) began to become increasingly important, as Greek shipping capital gained an increasingly decisive position in the economic life of the country. Cyprus could have been a unique centre of traffic and trade for the ships and businesses of the shipowners. At the same time, in Cyprus the reconstituted ideological hegemony managed for a time (1930-57) to mobilise large masses through the nationalist imaginary. The Greek state, however, bound by its dependencies and internal pressures, was unable to take advantage of the opportunities (1914, 1945) and when it was finally half-dragged by those it had intoxicated with fairy tales in Cyprus, all it could do was to patch it up as it did in Zurich. Turkey's entry into the Cyprus conflict in the 1950s began to complicate the problem, gradually creating tension between the two states, tension that took on new dimensions after '74 and extended beyond the Cyprus problem, into the Aegean, etc. In the context of the evolution of the structures and ideology of the two states, the Cyprus problem acquired at times a particular function (either as a space of expansion or as a space of ideological discharge and cultivation of hatred towards the objectified Other, the enemy of the race).

In this context, the national issue is expressed at four (at least) levels:

a) On the one hand, it exists as a problem of expansionism and state annexation. By this problem, however, I do not mean the risk of annexation of one state (Cypriot) by the other (Greek). The prospect of nation-state creation is an inherent characteristic of nationalism and as such creates the problem of denying any liberating edge of nationalism. The prospect of the state denies the self-determination of communities and as such is (for me at least) a negative phenomenon in any form. However, annexation by an already large and constituted state increases the leveling, exploitation and dependence on the metropolitan centre. '74 was largely the result of that period when Cyprus resembled a colony of the 'national centre' of Athens and Ankara, depending on the community(10).

b) On another level, the cultural leveling promoted by the metropolitan centre not only destroys regional cultures, but also sets the basis of the ideology that undermines all cultural development. The 'province' exists as a relic of the past or as a tourist resort.

c) Furthermore, the possibility of state annexation or intervention has always been a central problem for the community that would be the loser of this development. Greek Cypriots have never been concerned with what Enosis meant for Turkish Cypriots. When they did get an answer (at least from a portion of that community) it came out sour. '74 turned things around, so that Greek Cypriots are now the ones in danger.

d) Another aspect - perhaps the most immediately dangerous - of the problem is the aggravation of Greek-Turkish relations (both for real differences and for internal consumption). However, the way the problem is now positioned, a conflict between the two states for any (external or internal) reason will

certainly make us their battleground.

And in such a conflict, apart from the fate of the defeated community, there will again be a problem of survival for all. Ultimately, those who survive after the napalms will hang around in the ruins. A rather interesting aspect of the Cyprus problem is the autonomous dynamic that the problem has acquired (as an ideology) among many people in Greece. And of course, the Cyprus problem and its "national" dimension are but parts of the ideology of "national integration", which the Greek state has been nurturing since its birth. But the important thing is that the self-sufficient perspective of the ideology among Greeks has always been an easy way of political abuse and exploitation. Thus, the Greek left has played on these feelings in order to emerge from its defeat and present itself as more royal than the king in its proclamations. The "refusal to accept the Zurich agreements" etc. is indicative of the political level at which the matter was played out.

The interference of the Cyprus problem in the Greek political scene was both harmful and disorienting. It was the issue that politicians have always used, either to criticize and gain support without touching other "taboo" issues or to draw people's attention "beyond the Aegean" and the danger from the "barbarians".

The junta had played this card heavily and for a while after '74 the issue seemed to have been abandoned by politicians. But the election of Papandreou quickly changed the scene. The new prime minister came to Cyprus and started selling "co-partisanship", "struggle" etc. There was nothing new in the story - he just went to play along like others before, anticipating what was in store for him during his years of administration. The Cyprus issue could be a relief valve to unemployment, policing, crisis etc. In the end, he did not succeed, at least for now. He was outflanked by the Cypriot statists when he got in their way. Papandreou's move, however, shows that although Turkey has the initiative on the island, the return of the Greek state to the conflict is not at all unlikely. (The joke of the affair was the incomprehensible hymns that were being sung at the time by pro-Enosis Marxists about Papandreou and Chrysostomos, a bit prematurely of course, but you never know what might happen.)

If there is an immediate need in this context, it is the development of a dialogue for understanding and peace, a language between people, different from that of the three states (Greece, Cyprus, Turkey).

### **3. the Greek-Christian - Enosis nationalism and its function**

#### **1. ideological components - hellenism as a phenomenon**

The "Greek-Christian History", which has been served to us for years by the intellectuals of the state and of "social peace", has been based on two main axes.

α) The existence and uniqueness of this phenomenon called "hellenism".

b) In a conception of history as a straight line, extending from antiquity to the present, and whose unchanging essence was the phenomenon of "hellenism". In this context, the relationship between the people who were supposed to embody this phenomenon (hellenism) and other peoples and cultural groups was a surprisingly asymmetrical one. The Greeks were "civilizing" or "liberating", while the rest of the world was corrupting or "barbarically conquering" this now metaphysical phenomenon.

The racism of these views is more than obvious to those who want to see it. It was the same kind of candy that was sipped by those who organized the massacres of Turkish Cypriots in '63 and '67. And of course, this bullshit is neither a discovery nor unique to our Greek Christians. What is, however, particularly interesting, and which has a key ideological function, is the linear relationship that is suggested to exist between antiquity and the present. This is because it expresses one of the main components of nationalism - the tendency to level cultural and other differences both temporally and socially - and the simultaneous denial of the opposing interests and perceptions that divide different groups of people within the power structures that govern their relations. Thus, for Greek Christians, various conflicts (local, cultural, etc.), even apparently mutually exclusive concepts, ways of life and philosophical tendencies express parts of a whole, of hellenism.

With various intellectualist stunts, everything is put in the same bag, - along with the aphorisms, of course, for those who still don't fit us today as "corrupt" etc. The natural and obvious question in the face of this construct is simply: why so? That is, why this whole? Why this area, which the modern geography of states calls "Greece" (which after all includes areas that the "Greeks" of antiquity considered barbarians) and not the Balkans, the Middle East, etc.?

Of course, it is no coincidence that the basic defining element of this whole is its state.

The rise of nationalism on the European and then on the international scene is intertwined with the rise of the modern state and the modernisation of other power structures (class relations, patriarchy, etc.)

## **2. the pro-Enosis Marxists**

Before proceeding to the specific case of Cyprus, it is useful to mention the pro-Enosis Marxist perspective (at least at its theoretical level), which seems to propose a more sophisticated view of the issue.

"The ethnogenesis of peoples begins when the social life of humans begins. But nations begin to crystallize as a complete historical category in the period of decline of the feudal middle ages."

Ignoring the fact that his views are based on Stalinist definitions (of the nation, for example), and this fact alone (the Stalinist basis of the analysis) should raise concerns for the analysis itself, which smells of a stale Marxism, Psyroukis basically proposes that in the course of ethnogenesis the bourgeoisie gradually loses the leadership of the struggle and it is taken over by the proletariat (who else?).(11)

As far as the Greek area and the Cyprus issue are concerned, Psyroukis finds that this issue becomes a crucial issue for the national liberation struggle of hellenism. As another pro-Enosis Marxist says in summary:

"...the Cyprus problem is the condensation of all the contradictions of Greek society and the regime of subordination and decadence..."(12).

According to this position, the struggle of the Cypriots against colonialism and imperialism (embodied by England) becomes the struggle of the Greek people for independence. The bourgeoisie, which is selling out Greece to foreigners, is betraying the struggle of the Greek Cypriots. (Typical cases for Psyroukis are the refusal of the British offer in '14, the condemnation of the Oktovriana by Venizelos and the non-inclusion of Cyprus in the "national processes" in '45.)

Thus, the bourgeoisie loses the leadership in the struggle for ethnogenesis and it must be taken over



by the working class. In this context, Enosis could not be achieved simply by ceding the island to Greece. On the contrary, the demand of Enosis (a demand that expresses the dynamic of Greek ethnogenesis and the anti-imperialist struggle of the nation) has an explosive dynamic that overturns the balance and challenges imperialist-capitalist dependence.

And Psyroukis observes that in the 1950s the Cyprus problem was the issue that challenged the nationalist right and gave a new impetus to the movement of the Greek left. And in Cyprus, in the 1940s, AKEL was at the forefront of the struggle for Enosis. Here then, always according to Psyroukis, is the working class slowly taking the lead in the struggle for ethnogenesis.

From a first point of view, it seems that here we have some distinctions (albeit class distinctions) within the flattening unity of the nation. It is, however, disappointing to see that this is only on the surface. Psyroukis is doing his own leveling. Following the Bolshevik analytical formula, Psyroukis sees a worker-peasant alliance led, of course, by the proletariat (through its party). The problem with all of this is that essentially, apart from the evil bourgeois, everyone else belongs to this imaginary unity, called the Greek nation, which has common interests and goals and essentially the historical necessity of national integration.

And the results are that Psyroukis does not ultimately escape from the framework of the classical ideology of hellenism. He ignores or does not take into account the differentiations of various social and cultural groups. There is also here the metaphysical concept of hellenism as a timeless entity (but evolving historically) and that the stumbling block in the Cyprus issue must be overcome in order to complete the national necessity. Of course, in this hypothesis the idiosyncrasies and dispositions of people are relatively indifferent to the interpreter and ideologist of historical necessity. Regardless of what Cypriots think they want, their duty and destiny are historically determined. Psyroukis and various pro-Enosis Marxists, for example, insist to this day on the '50s slogan "Self-determination - Enosis".

The slogan is funny and contradictory, because if Cypriots had self-determination today they would not of course choose Enosis. And yet the slogan is kept within the ideology of historical necessity and "national destinies". The only way to recognize the decision of the Cypriots as correct (and as self-determination) is when they choose Enosis. Otherwise, Cypriots don't know what is happening to them. A younger pro-Enosis Marxist tells us this very clearly:

"...but the Cyprus problem is too serious a matter to be left in the hands of lawyers, just as it is too serious a matter to be left in the hands of the Cypriots"(14).

Of course, when we talk about hellenism and its historical necessities, we are going to be concerned with what the Cypriots have say?

To a certain extent, Psyroukis grasps a contradiction, but it is overdrawn and belated. The Cyprus problem acted as a catalyst for developments in Greece in the 1950s. What it essentially did was to contrast the nationalism of the right with its dependency and ridicule it. And this of course gave the left the opportunity to come out of the margins.

But by re-emerging, the left, through the humiliation of the nationalist right, did not manage to overcome the ideology of the latter. The left emerged posing as more royal than the king in its patriotism (patriotism = refined leftist term for nationalism). The result of this story was finally to shift the "national enemy", instead of being the Bulgarians and Greece "crying" for Northern Epirus(15), the terms were transferred to England first and then (until today) to "NATO Turkey" and "martyred Cyprus" respectively. This not only shifted nationalism, it actually created a nationalism of all Greeks

again.

And of course, since then Cyprus played a big role in Greek developments (especially until '74). Left, right and centre, politicians and colonels quickly understood that the heart of Greek nationalism was beating in Cyprus. And this nationalism became a characteristic “ideological mechanism” of the state, which slowly re-established the state as the pole of reference of “all Greeks” the prelude to the social state of PASOK (to use the phraseology of RIXI). The results of nationalism for the left in particular are very obvious for anyone who wants to see them. The Greek-centric chauvinism about culture (from the exorcisms of Communist Youth of Greece of the youth subculture as an “American way of life”, to the quackery of Greek musical purity of Savvopoulos, Theodorakis, Markopoulos, etc. ), the “sink Hora” and the extreme nationalism of PASOK towards Turkey, the emergence among intellectuals of the Marxist-Orthodox or Neo-Orthodox current, etc. From one point of view, the pro-Enosis Marxist conception of this history, at the level of theory.

Apart from Psyroukis, the group around the magazine RIXI (which has its ideological roots in Psyroukis' group of '53) came to dig up the issue recently. Although they regurgitate the same old stuff about “national integration”, their proposal has its innovations. It essentially abandons the demand for “self-determination - Enosis” for all of Cyprus and settles for “Enosis of the remaining part” with Greece. A double Enosis. And the reason is that this is the only way to “save Cypriot hellenism” from annihilation (because the Turkish state is expansionist) and to ensure peace in the region.

Now, why the Turkish state is inherently “expansionist, barbaric, militaristic” (Psyroukis' expressions etc.), while the Greek one is simply the noble conclusion of the ethnogenetic process of hellenism, has never been explained to us. Just as they never explained to us how these “anti-imperialists” and revolutionaries against the “capital-state” have now decided to fight for the same solution that the imperialists have been proposing for years now (dual Enosis) and to be interested in the “integration” of the state they otherwise want to “overthrow”. If RIXI is really interested in peace, it would be more practical to fight Andreas Papandreou's nationalism. Instead, they prefer to return again to Psyroukis, get into the logic of hellenism and of course propose responsible and national positions (and not groupthink and fringe positions as they say). And of course, when you propose responsible and national positions, you cannot ignore the need to support and integrate your state.

### **3. Cypriot history from another perspective**

Returning to the Cypriot context, it is necessary to look at history without nationalist lenses, in order to see the extent of the Greek-Christian imaginary (including its pro-Enosis Marxist variant).

Because, ultimately, there is another history, which is not written because it does not suit the ideological hegemony and which you have to look behind the words and contradictions of our “historians” to see it.

Cyprus was inhabited for most of its history by various communities divided religiously, culturally and in some cases by class. In the most recent period we have communities of Maronites, Latins, Armenians, Jews, Muslims (Turks), Orthodox Christians (Greeks), Linobambaki (a religious group that believed in both Christianity and Mohammedanism). The rise and fall of these communities depended largely on the treatment they received from the rulers of the day.

In the first centuries AD the Jewish community was strong enough to revolt (115 AD). The rise of Christianity and oppression led to the marginalization of this community. The rise of Christianity was then accompanied by intense communal strife, as the Orthodox priesthood in conjunction with the

state waged an intense war on “pagans” and heretics (this for those wondering which wanker beheaded or mutilated most ancient statues). During this period the word “Greek” (much to the dismay of our Greek Christians) was something of a dirty word for orthodoxy since it was charged with this “pagan” past.

The Latin community appeared and developed during the Frankish rule<sup>(16)</sup> with the help of the state and almost disappeared during the Turkish rule, as this community became the target of the attacks of the new rulers, who went so far as to subordinate the Latin community to the Orthodox Church.

This other History of Cyprus is of course something that has been exorcised from the official or unofficial histories of our Greek-Christians. Insofar as they were historical facts and could not be completely ignored, the solution was easy. They expressed, at worst, a “moral decline”, or more commonly they were the results of the “oppression of the conquerors” (see the History of Zanetos). God forbid for an orthodox Christian (and a Greek one at that) to change his faith or become a heretic on his own. If I dwell on the racism expressed by Greek Christianity (alongside its ideological function), it is because it has so heavily infused our thinking that we take the abstraction of history it presents as true. We need to get behind the ideology to read the History of the lie as such.

Relations between the various communities were for long periods of time apparently quite antagonistic, and this was certainly due to their strong religious character, but also to the various power structures that determined their relations (class differences, who was favoured by the state apparatus, etc.).

The Ottoman period begins with the same facts and the Muslim community develops having support in the power structure.

At the same time, however, the Orthodox community also benefits from the change of rulers. The religious (and basically political) fury of the Ottomans is turned against the Latins, while the Orthodox church regains its rights and even assumes a regulatory role in the administration as the leader of the Orthodox “millet”.

The power of the church also gradually increases after the reforms of 1660 and its power rises sharply. Thus Turner, a former diplomat who visited Cyprus in 1815 observes: “Cyprus, though theoretically subject to the authority of a Bey appointed by the Sultan, is in fact governed by the Greek archbishop and his clergy.”

This created a variety of reactions. On the one hand, there was intense competition at the top of the power structure between the church and the Ottoman political power. At the bottom of the hierarchy there were various reactions. On the other hand, there was a convergence of Christians and Muslims - in class terms, there was the impoverishment of Muslims, culturally and religiously. An interesting element in this regard is the Linobambaki community. The tendency of Christians and Muslims of the time (which continued, however, to a lesser extent until the mid-20th century) to make joint pilgrimages to each other's historic temples is well known. The interference of this Christian-Muslim community (which of course for the Greek-Christian historians were merely Christians forced to change religion superficially) is typical of the tendency for symbiosis and political interaction in the context of each community's autonomy.

In this context, the growing corruption of the church and the Ottoman hierarchy began to lay the foundations for common revolts based on class demands (1765, 1804, 1833) from the middle of the 18th century.

Muslims and Orthodox Christians ate the same food, wore the same clothes, built houses and churches and mosques in closely related architecture. Islam's acceptance of polygamy and the prohibition on drinking alcohol did little to separate the two communities. Although the two communities were separated in religious worship, channels of political representation and family law, the division (and contradictions) between urban elites and peasants was socially more significant and the source of violent uprisings. Muslim and Orthodox peasants revolted together on several occasions. The bishops and rulers cooperated in the administration of the island despite their internal conflicts over power. "Case study: Cyprus".

In this context, the execution of the archbishop and other bishops in 1821 was more an expression of the internal strife of the power elite (since Kyprianos had opposed and condemned any activity on the island), than of national strife etc. However, this picture of coexistence and class confrontation, although typical of the 19th and early 20th century, is not unique as neo-Cypriot historians and apologists want to present it(17). The internal structure of the two communities, with the basic structure of social consensus being communal patriarchy (which underpins and entrenches power relations both in interpersonal relations and in the social whole), the complex political structuring of power (the theoretical power of the Muslim administration and the practical power of the church) and the gradual change in economic relations between the two communities (with the impoverishment of the Muslims and the gradual rise of the Orthodox) always left open the possibility of new communal antagonisms.

A typical case of this possibility is the 1804 rebellion, about which K. Kyrris observes:

"Although the revolt had to a large extent the character of a class conflict between the exploited masses of both communities against the exploiting classes of both, the relatively large number of Turks killed by the Turkish troops serving the interests of the latter (ruling classes) created resentment against the Greek authorities, who had actually had the upper hand in the settlement of the matter and had paid the salaries of the troops. Thus, the conflict soon acquired a national character (K. Kyrris: Symbiotic elements in the history of two communities in Cyprus p. 262 CK).

Communal strife is of course the card that both ruling classes are trying to play to stop the communal uprisings. It is in these contexts that the rise of Greek nationalism begins, the function of which we will discuss below.

It is a fact, however, that the communal strife and the real mass appeal of nationalism as a prospect of liberation come much later. The roots of the conflict, however - the power relations within and between the two communities - existed before.

The arrival of the British, the institutionalization of the economic and political rise of the Orthodox community, the development of Megali Idea in Greece and its introduction into Cypriot society through the schools and the reconstruction of various power structures, gradually lead to the 30 years of nationalism (1930-60).

#### **4. processes of power reconstruction and nationalism**

Nationalism is a very complex phenomenon. On the one hand, it expresses an attempt at liberation, of which the Greek state is the conclusion and security. At the same time, in the ideological landscape, nationalism goes hand in hand with and very often expresses processes of social reconstruction. We will try below to see the interaction and the degree of expression of three processes through nationalism:

- i)** The rise of the bourgeoisie and the attempt to avoid class intercommunal conflicts by the ruling classes.
- ii)** The process of the reconstruction of patriarchy from a private-family phenomenon to a communal one and the decisive relation of patriarchal ideology to nationalist ideology.
- iii)** The process of centralization of power, rationalization of administration, development of bureaucracy and the leveling cultural influence of metropolitan nationalism and the rise of the new ideological hegemony with the state intellectuals as the main interpreters (counterfeiters).

## **i. class reconstruction and the exorcism of social conflict**

The emergence of intense class conflict in the second half of the 18th and early 19th century (which would continue on a smaller scale throughout the 19th century and into the first half of the 20th) reflects to some extent a process of autonomy of the most oppressed class strata from the ideological hegemony of the communal hierarchies. In particular, the uprisings of 1833 are typical of an intensity and quality of these rebellions.

In contrast to the Halil rebellion of the 18th century, in which the insurgents looked for leadership among the ruling class, 1833 had a strongly popular character with implications of social upheaval. The uprisings erupted after massive inter-communal mobilizations over the economic situation and even its leaders<sup>(18)</sup> emerged from the best clergy of the two communities (Imam, monk Ioannikios) and declared opponents of the elite. But while the spontaneous class rebellion<sup>(19)</sup> is an extension and a moulding of the class inter-communal rebellions, the new leaders that emerge (especially the Christian Theseus - and to a lesser extent Ioannikios, who also collaborated with the Imam in Paphos) collaborated to an extent with the consulates of the great powers and it is in this context that the possibility of Enosis as "liberation"<sup>(20)</sup> appears (the neo-hellenic state had already been formed). This projection of annexation to other states as a prospect of liberation is a case which, although not decisive in 1833, nevertheless gradually rises in the 17th century and especially in the 20th, as the population itself is "taught" that this is the only solution of liberation, through the spread of nationalism.

The historical silencing and the current distortion of events (by neo-Cypriot and Greek-Christian historians) is to some extent indicative of the history of lies that tries to justify the current structure of power through a mythology of the past.

In this context, at that time, there was a need to split the unity at the grassroots and reconstruct imaginary divisions and unities in order to exorcise the growing social conflict. The Muslim administration tried to revive communal antagonism and conflict in times of crises (1341, 1853, 1862, 1871, etc.), however the success of this method was minimal and common local uprisings were still observed.

The Orthodox hierarchy follows a different path. An attempt to reconstruct the ideology of hegemony in order to shift the contradictions to the religious-communal level. In this it has two allies. The newly established Greek state with its expansionist tendencies and the bourgeoisie, formed in the cities, is experiencing a gradual rise in the 19th century. Of course, the bourgeoisie and the church (together with the *ciflik* owners) have to some extent competing economic and political interests. However, the desire of the bourgeoisie to get rid of rotten Ottoman feudalism (and later colonialism) and their fear of popular uprisings push them into a not-so-comfortable alliance with the church and the clerics against the Muslim elite and the danger of growing social conflict. The main contribution of the Greek state and the bourgeoisie lies in the gradual construction of the new ideology of nationalism.

Particularly, after the arrival of the British and the certain removal of the administration from the religious hierarchy and the development of the schools, the bourgeois began to play an increasingly central role in the Greek Cypriot community. Competition with other elites of course continues until 1930 when the development of the bureaucracy by the English creates the basis for a new relationship.

School education (strongly promoted by the bourgeoisie and, to a certain extent, by the church) played a decisive role in the constitution of the imaginary unity of the Greek nation and the repulsion of the prospect of social conflict. Communal schools (which experienced a tremendous rise in the English administration), taking their curriculum and teachers from the metropolis of Greek-centric intellectualism and chauvinism, encouraged intercommunal antagonism and the creation of national stereotypes (see Geest and Murvin's studies)(21). Education was perhaps the key element in the creation of ethnic division. In essence, the Cypriot population had to be taught new identities as Greeks and Turks, new forms of language and changed customs(22). Apart from splitting the class unity in the two communities, school education institutionalized on a new level both class and ideological contradictions. The teacher and the priest, the bourgeoisie and the cifik owners got a new level of hierarchical justification. To the extent that the Greek Cypriot community set Enosis and nationalism as the ideological background, the ruling classes immediately joined the imaginatively structured community that excluded the Turkish Cypriot neighbour and saw a "national" relationship with every orthodox Greek-speaking moneylender. This in the context of a new separation: those who had the power now also possessed the "knowledge". The Cypriot language was banished as "barbaric" in the face of the culture of the constructions of the metropolis (Athens), demotic and katharevousa.

The separated spectacle is structured hierarchically. The alienation of the commoner in the face of this hierarchical separation (which was justified in the liberatory perspective of Enosis) had already begun the process of conformity that characterizes contemporary Cypriot life. The last massive class conflict manifested itself in 1948, as the Stalinist bureaucracy of AKEL was caught between its internal conflicts and the spectacular polarisation caused by the extreme right-wing, the church and the colonialists. The defeat of the class confrontation had similar results to the gradual defeat of the class alliance in the 19th century.

A new division is permeating Cypriot society, this time between left and right. The acceptance by the Stalinist bureaucracy of AKEL of the ideological hegemony of nationalism validates the division. For twenty years AKEL has been looking for its entry into the state power structure - the issue was that the party lost the certificates of "patriotism" that allow it to enter the social power of the state. Apart from a few sporadic strikes, the class conflict in Cyprus has been and is being suppressed in the name of "national unity" and of nationalism (Greek or neo-Greek-Cypriot). What is most visible in the political arena are the conflicts of different groups of elites and bourgeois tied to different economic interests (European or American capital, Russian state socialism, etc.).

There is, however, another dimension of the class structure of Cypriot society, which is often overlooked, the growing economic dependence of Turkish Cypriots on Greek Cypriot capital. Of course, Greek Christians will complain, saying 'well, why on earth are we to blame for their incompetence'. Of course, the comic-tragic in the whole affair is to hear Marxists saying the same thing (for capitalism's apologists it's a bit obvious since they say the same thing about workers but for Marxists...).

The main aspect of this development is of course the prospect of the rise of a class-national movement of Turkish Cypriots even if the anti-colonial struggle had independent reasons, as the neo-Greek-Cypriots dream of.

## ii. nationalism and patriarchy - from communal to social patriarchy

At first sight, the ideological-imaginary framework of nationalism is quite loaded with patriarchal images. Nationalism is the theory of "racial purity" and national dignity, which passes through the possession of the woman-object.

The "motherland" in the hands of the "barbarian conqueror", her sons who will liberate her and of course will have her as their own. Even the practice of nationalist movements is quite explicit. Apart from the anti-colonial struggle there is usually a parallel attempt to extract and "purify" the race - the usual victims of this story (apart from political opponents) are the lowlives of the "lumpen" and especially the prostitutes (which of course is not so coincidental)(23).

Furthermore, at the level of the images and models projected by the nationalist imaginary, the determination of the whole edifice by patriarchal values and idealizations is evident. The model of the hero is the disciplined hard man or the leader who seems to refrain from any contact with women beyond giving orders or praising them when hiding, when giving birth and when supporting the men-heroes.

EOKA(24) was of course the culmination of this model. A small elite of men-heroes(25) under the guidance of "strategists" and "ethnarchs" undertook to "liberate" the island.

Patriarchy of course pre-exists nationalism. But at least as we know it in the European sphere, patriarchy has changed significantly in recent centuries. Whereas before it was founded on the personal power of the man-patriarch-father in the family context (we will call this relationship communal patriarchy), it has now spread and diffused, in 'modern society' with the infusion of modern, mass institutions and power ties (e.g. state-patriarchy, pornography) with its own characteristics (social patriarchy) (26).

This differentiation, between communal and social patriarchy, is not something static or divisive like capitalism-feudalism.(27). Although it has some things in common with the above distinction (based on class relations), it is nevertheless much more complex. Patriarchy in any society (whether modern or older) is the main lever of social consensus and perhaps the archetypal power relationship. And the family is one of the key institutions of this power structure (a structure that extends from culture to economics and politics). In this sense both the family and the social diffusion of patriarchy are historical phenomena. However, in modern society, with urbanization, the gathering of thousands of people in cities, the spread of mass media, the breaking of blood ties, the 'extended family', etc., are leading to a crisis of traditional patriarchy, the family, traditional morality, etc.(28).

Nationalism appears in Europe (and later on globally) at about the same time that communal patriarchy seems to be disintegrating under multiple pressures (patriarchy itself seems to be in crisis in some cases).(29) In this crisis of patriarchy, which is also a crisis of the ideological imaginaries of society, nationalism does not appear as an irrelevant parallel phenomenon. It is essentially the ideology that helps to reconstruct and consolidate patriarchy at new levels. In any of its forms, whether as warlike masculinism or as a cultural turn to the roots of patriarchal culture, nationalism reestablishes social consensus on imaginaries directly identified with patriarchal configuration.

The relationship between nationalism and patriarchal structures became quite clear when nationalism reached its peak with fascism and Nazism. But analyses on these phenomena have, to some extent, dwelled on the extremes of nationalism and the relationship of these extremes to totalitarianism. Particularly after the emergence of the anti-colonial movements in the 1950s and 1960s, the analysis of the relationship between nationalism and patriarchy was overtaken and Lenin's thesis of good and

bad nationalisms (the nationalism of the oppressed is “good” and the nationalism of the oppressors is “bad”) came to the fore again.

However, in the late 1960s and during the 1970s the idyllic images began to fade as the supposed “good nationalisms” continued to produce abominations with astonishing similarity. A more critical reflection of these movements and of the new 'national-liberation' nationalism thus began (particularly with the intervention of the feminist movement). Before we begin a more detailed analysis of Greek Cypriot nationalism, we must also mention a contradiction in the so-called “national-liberation movements”.

The ideological differences-imaginaries of nationalism as an extension of patriarchal values and images were mentioned at the beginning of this section. This tendency of nationalism encounters a direct problem in the needs created by the anti-colonial “liberationist” edge of national liberation movements. Ultimately, nationalism as a 'national' (in the sense that it is at least theoretically addressed to the whole population) movement must offer something to women, in order to gain not only their tolerance, but in necessity their participation (as helpers of men, of course). The tension between these two tendencies is expressed on another level as a contradiction between modernising-modernist tendencies (promoting a reconstruction of power in new domains) and more conservative-traditional ones. This contradiction is a variable that changes from movement to movement and although modernist tendencies prevail in most cases, there are nevertheless different phases and stages of development.

The interesting element in the Cypriot case is that this contradiction still survives and creates various comic tragedies (e.g. the 'medieval' moralism and the position of women as second-class citizens in a seemingly reconstructed social patriarchy). It is in these contexts that the influence of more traditional patriarchal concepts is characteristic.

The tension between these two trends, however, has not yet become particularly intense, and this is because the relatively limited scope for women's pressure within Greek-Christian nationalism and the peculiar historical circumstances (which have so far led to an alliance between “modernists-traditionalists”) have led to a rapid assimilation of women's efforts and to the formation of a social patriarchy with a traditional ideological background (a certain tendency and pressure for liberalization lately on a personal level is not unrelated to the crisis of nationalist imaginaries after the defeat of '74), we will try below to analyse the reconstruction of patriarchy promoted by nationalism on the basis of 3 characteristics of this power relation:

**a)** The need for the existence of a patriarch.

**b)** The need for “racial purity” based on sexual repression and the objectification of an Other of the woman in the archetypal relationship.

**c)** The establishment of immortality as a core value of patriarchal culture.

**a)** The need for a patriarch -someone with authority to decide, command, punish, submit, etc.- is self-evident in the power structure we call patriarchy. In communal patriarchy the role is played by the male father and his authority, passing from the interpersonal level, is established at the communal level on the basis of his authority in the family. With the crisis of communal patriarchy, the individual man-father is no longer enough. In modern society, the state slowly takes over many of the functions of the old individual-man (this of course does not mean that men cease to be the dominant sex, but the state takes away many of their traditional powers).



Nationalism promotes this process in two ways. On the one hand, it tries to re-establish the family as a stable molecule of power reproduction and 'racial community' and on the other hand, it promotes a supra-individual institution, which undertakes to re-establish social consensus.

Σ' αυτά τα πλαίσια εντείνονται με την άνοδο του εθνικισμού (το 19ο και 20ο αιώνα) τα "ηθικοπλαστικά" κηρύγματα(30) της εκκλησίας, των αστών διανοουμένων και των ποιηταράδων, που ήθελαν να παραστήσουν τους ηθικούς μπάτσους. Στα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα φτιάχνεται το πρώτο σχολείο-αναμορφωτήριο για τα "αλητάκια" που γύριζαν στους δρόμους, ενώ στις αρχές του 20ου αιώνα αρχίζει η "φιλανθρωπική δράση" των αστών για την "ηθική διαπαιδαγώγηση" των φτωχών. (Είναι ειρωνικό ότι αυτή η "φιλανθρωπία", που εμφανίζεται σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο και είναι βασικός μοχλός χειραγώγησης και ξαναστεριώματος της οικογένειας, γίνεται μέσω των αστών γυναικών, που ψάχνουν ίσως για μια διέξοδο από τη δική τους μιζέρια, βλ. στο "POLICING OF THE FAMILIES".) Έτσι, την ίδια εποχή με την ανάγκη εξορκισμού της κοινωνικής σύγκρουσης, μπαίνει η ανάγκη να ενισχυθεί η οικογένεια, να ξαναποκτήσει κύρος η εκκλησία και να φτιαχτούν κοινωνικοί θεσμοί που να περιορίζουν την εκτροπή από τα ήθη.

From:

<https://movementsarchive.org/> - Κυπριακό Κινηματικό Αρχείο  
Cyprus Movements Archive  
Kıbrıs Sosyal Hareket Arşivi

Permanent link:

[https://movementsarchive.org/doku.php?id=en:brochures:unclassified:kipros\\_ethniko\\_ethnikismos&rev=1736091226](https://movementsarchive.org/doku.php?id=en:brochures:unclassified:kipros_ethniko_ethnikismos&rev=1736091226)

Last update: 2025/04/20 19:43

