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Who's the Chemtard, in the End? (Online Article)

Historical Note

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Content

Who's the Chemtard, in the End?

I have felt the need to write about the phenomenon of the 'chemtards' for a long time, and the reaction after their last march and the Sigma incidents pushed me to finally do so.[1]

'Chemtard' [Psekasmenos] is the pejorative name that has come to be given to those citizens who express skepticism about what the rulers tell us about the pandemic. The media and proponents of the measures tend to portray any skeptical citizens as ridiculously graphic conspiracy theorists who deny the scientific rationality of the pandemic experts. This presentation is wrong. Citizen scepticism comes in varying degrees and trends: it ranges from scepticism towards specific measures to manage the pandemic to questioning the existence of the virus, or even adopting theories of deliberate construction of the virus for sinister purposes. Therefore, the so-called 'chemtards' are not a homogeneous group. Or, rather, the so-called 'chemtards' are not all chemtards.

Many citizens believe that the virus exists and is dangerous, but they do not agree with the way our government has managed and is managing the pandemic. They agree that some measures are needed to deal with the pandemic, but they disagree or disagreed with the ban on protests, the curfews, forced vaccination, etc. These citizens denounce the management of the pandemic as authoritarian, racist and irrational, speaking from the perspective of human rights and freedoms. Their criticism is made with rational arguments, some of which you can read in the footnotes.[2][3][4] This political tendency was expressed both on the left by the As Dame movement and on the right by indignant citizens who participated in various demonstrations against the measures. It is inconceivable to consider the spokespersons of this trend as spraying conspiracy theorists.

Unfortunately, there is also a significant proportion of citizens who deny the existence of a pandemic and subscribe to more or less improbable conspiracy theories. The term 'chemtard' seems appropriate for these citizens. Or does it not? In my opinion, although the attitude of these citizens has irrational characteristics, it also contains an important rational moment. I find it perfectly rational for a citizen to distrust what the government and the controlled establishment media tell them about the pandemic. This is true all over the world, but especially for citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, as

they know that their state is highly corrupt, incompetent and untrustworthy.

When a state, which has clearly shown that it does not serve the good of its citizens, asks them to radically change their way of life for the worse and sacrifice their basic freedoms, it is logical and rational for people to react with suspicion. This suspicion seems even more rational when we consider the erratic measures imposed by the Republic of Cyprus over the last year and a half, the constant changes to these measures, and the many times it has been quick to tell us that we are coming out of the pandemic. People rightly do not trust either the Cypriot state or its experts.[5]

The state's response to the suspicion of the citizens is to demonise them as paranoid conspiracy theorists, i.e., as 'chemtards'. The state uses the media it controls like the Dias group of companies to portray any criticism of the measures and any mobilisation against them as irrational and socially dangerous, by over-promoting the minority of graphic anti-vaccinators and conspiracy theorists. This has been his attitude with both right-wing and left-wing mobilisations, from the first demonstration at the Ledras checkpoint to the recent demonstration outside the presidential palace. This betrays that the state's aim is to divide citizens into two opposing camps -responsible law-abiding citizens on the one hand, and irresponsible 'chemtards' on the other- and turn one against each other. By demonizing the 'chemtards', the state succeeds in channeling the public's discontent virally to the 'chemtards', thus avoiding being the recipient of this discontent itself. In other words, the Cypriot state follows the classic tactic of 'divide and rule' to impose its measures as easily as possible.

In its attempt to demonize skeptical citizens, the state has the unconscious support of the majority of the Greek Cypriot left and the so-called progressives/liberals. Although the Greek Cypriot left despises the Anastasiades government and criticizes some of the pandemic measures, it is even more despised by the right-wing, conservative, and nationalist citizens who oppose the measures. It tends to lump all these citizens together as dangerous fascists or as stupid conspiracy theorists, and does its best to separate its criticism of the pandemic management from the criticism of the 'chemtards'. The disparaging comments on the internet come and go. Leftists write in favour of vaccination enforcement, downplay the police brutality suffered by the so-called 'chemtards,'[6] and even tell us that they would rather die from vaccines than live with people who refuse to be vaccinated.[7] Even the [Os Dame](#) movement has denied any association with the 'chemtards,' even though many of the demands of the two movements are common. In essence, the majority of the Greek Cypriot left and the so-called progressive/liberals are acting as a crutch of the state in the management of the pandemic.

If suspicion of pandemic management measures is justified, however, what can we say about the support for management by leftists and liberals? And more generally, what can we say about all those citizens who are fanatical supporters of the measures? As the Cyprus Mail recently wrote, the 'chemtards' may be doing more research on the pandemic than the supporters of the measures.[8] The vast majority of the supporters of the measures are content with the establishment propaganda on the subject, either by Tsouroulis or the supposedly more authoritative international media, without having looked into it further. Most of those who are waving us to get vaccinated know no more about the virus than the 'chemtards' - far from it. Most of the people who trust and follow government management do so blindly. They don't have the knowledge and critical thinking to judge whether what the 'experts' and scientists tell them is true. So, the distinction between rationalists and 'chemtards' is hogwash. At least people who are critical of the pandemic management are showing some reflexes against the violation of their basic rights and way of life. The most chemtard of all are those who follow the measures uncritically, not those who treat them with suspicion.

It is also important to recognise that the vast majority of the 'chemtards' belong to the working class. The traditional task of the left is to build the working class into an independent political force that seeks to overthrow capitalism. To achieve this historic task, it is necessary, among other things, to

channel any generalised working class discontent against its real enemy, namely the bourgeoisie and its state. This is also the case with the present generalised dissatisfaction of many people with the management of the pandemic. A real left must recognise and highlight the attractive core of this discontent, while at the same time distancing the discontented people from irrational and/or reactionary conspiracy theories.

Finally, it is worth noting that scientists are not independent of the state and the bourgeoisie, which should be obvious to a leftist. There are scientists who have been silenced and their videos taken down from the internet because they proposed different measures from the ones that eventually prevailed.

We are living through one of the greatest crises in the history of capitalism, and the left must try to lead the working class's discontent with the state, not support the bourgeois state against the working class. As long as this is not done, the government will continue to play games with our health and our way of life. There is no health without freedom, and there is no possibility of freedom without the left.

Phedias Christodoulides

[1] Unfortunately, I find it necessary to make it clear that I myself take the virus seriously. I belong to a very vulnerable group, I have been vaccinated for months and recently I became seriously ill with the virus and even went to the hospital. I would prefer not to have to make this statement, but the polarisation and demonisation of those who are critical of the management of the pandemic forces me to make it.

[2] You can find such critiques of the management of the pandemic at the following links:
<https://thejusticeproject.com.cy/2021/07/28/sto-onoma-tou-iou/>

[3] <https://thejusticeproject.com.cy/2021/07/17/dikeoma-arnisis-emvoliasmou/>

[4] <https://thejusticeproject.com.cy/2020/12/01/ekmetalefsi-tis-pandimias/>

[5] Neither are the experts and foreign states, as they too are following a similar erratic management and are also mumbling on the question of the origin of the virus.

[6] As far as I know, [Defteri Anagnosi](#) received videos of police officers using excessive force against protesters at the recent demonstration outside the presidential palace, but chose not to publish them.

[7] The situation is the same abroad. There is a demonisation of any criticism of the measures and an attempt to impose vaccination, while the leftists remain allied with the essence of state management. Even prominent philosophers popular with the left like Agamben are now being portrayed by the left as obscurantists for opposing the management of the pandemic:

<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/5125-agamben-wtf-or-how-philosophy-failed-the-pandemic>

[8] <https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/07/25/coronavirus-the-great-divide-over-vaccinations/>

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