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another greek cypriot social patriot - some remarks on the occasion of the article by Ch. Eliades (dialogue)

The [article by Ch. Eliades](#) in the March issue of Within Walls on the Cyprus problem appears to make a radical leftist critique of views that appeared in previous issues. Even more, he also aspires to make a more comprehensive critique of the positions of other leftists.

Its basic positions, however, do not differ from those of others except in a few points. He agrees with all the rest that the Cyprus problem is a national liberation and anti-occupation issue, that it is the creation of imperialism, and of course he does not fail to use the Palestinians and the Catholics of Northern Ireland as heroic examples for the Greek Cypriots to emulate. A comparison that 'forgets' the huge social and economic distance that even now separates Turkish Cypriots from Greek Cypriots. It does not even cross Ch. Eliades' mind or of others, to ask whether there is any contradiction between the comparison of the Greek Cypriots who were the privileged and dominant ethnic group with the impoverished Palestinians and the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland. If there is anyone who has much more in common with them, it is the Turkish Cypriots.

His disagreements (obviously with AKEL, which expresses the dominant left-wing policy), apart from his "intransigent rejection" of the federal solution, are basically about who could and can do this "national-liberation struggle" for, as he writes, the "self-determination of the whole (and not dismembered) Cypriot people":

"The historical misfortune of the Cypriot people starts from the fact that the social class that was literally allowed to monopolize the leadership of the national liberation struggle for the implementation of the principle of self-determination was and is historically incapable of completing this goal".

It is with this position that he claims a "more left-wing" position than AKEL.

Of course, this position is not original either. The [Left Wing of EDEK](#) and various others have long been denouncing all Greek Cypriot capitalists as "pawns", "incompetent", "weak", and other similar cosmetic adjectives, which unfortunately they do not deserve at all. They also argue, like Ch. Eliades, that only the working class (we assume that this is what Ch. Eliades means with the cute and poetic characterization "creative forces") can complete this liberation struggle, with socialism (what we again assume Ch. Eliades means by the phrase "new social perspective". Why so tactful, we wonder?).

The "national liberation struggle", the effort to "reunite Cyprus", the blaming of the great and foreign imperialists, are common features of all of them. Their differences lie in who and how they can successfully carry out this "national liberation struggle". For the dominant leftist policy it needs an alliance with the patriotic part of the bourgeoisie, for its critics from the "left"... "only the working class" can achieve it "by fighting for socialism".

In fact, despite what seems to divide them all, their main characteristic is social patriotism, to use the successful characterisation established by the internationalist workers' movement at the beginning of our century (Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and generally the internationalist workers' parties that later founded the Communist International), for their equivalents who combined socialist leftist and even internationalist phraseology with the practical defence of their own nation's interests, i.e. with a patriotic policy.

We have made a critique of this policy, together with a more general analysis of the Cyprus problem, in our book ["THE CYPRUS PROBLEM and the Internationalist Tasks of Greek Cypriot Revolutionaries"](#).

Here, in the inevitably small space of a magazine article, the most we can do is to use Ch. Eliades' article as an opportunity to show some of the contradictions of right-wing and "left-wing" social patriotism.



The "Turk-eating" Sampson with the Turkish flag, a spoil from a battle of the "national liberation" struggle against the Turkish Cypriots in 1964-64.

And first this famous "sovereign and inalienable right of self-determination".

Ch. Eliades does not of course mean the "right of self-determination" as the UN understands it, which he ironically refers to (no objection to this). He obviously wants to mean it as established by the tradition of the revolutionary workers' movement, especially by Lenin, whom everyone uses as an authority on this issue. The only thing is, Lenin meant it "a little" differently:

"Gorter is against the self-determination of his own country but in favour of self-determination for the Dutch East Indies, oppressed as they are by "his" nation! Is it any wonder that we see in him a more sincere internationalist and a fellow-thinker...he general and fundamental principles of Marxism undoubtedly imply the duty to struggle for the freedom to secede for nations that are oppressed by "one's own" nation, but they certainly do not require the independence specifically of Holland to be made a matter of paramount importance—Holland, which suffers most from her narrow, callous, selfish and stultifying seclusion: let the whole world burn, we stand aside from it all..."(1)

Lenin was by no means the fanatical supporter of the struggle for the self-determination of "our" nation, as today's social patriots would like him to be. On the contrary, for him the support of the right of self-determination was the task especially of the socialists of the oppressive nation, the nation that had to lose from the implementation of the right to self-determination to the point of secession, and not of the socialists of the oppressed nation, the one that was calling for secession or national independence, etc.

As for the "militant" insistence on the implementation of the right to self-determination of "the whole (and not the dismembered) Cypriot people", Lenin had something to say about that too:

"The right to secession presupposes the settlement of the question by a parliament (Diet, referendum, etc.) of the seceding region, not by a central parliament."(2)

Such a position of “self-determination of the people as a whole”, apart from Kyprianou, Vassiliou, Lyssarides and the rest, suits Thatcher in Ireland, and the Spanish bourgeoisie in relation to the Basques, and the Turks in relation to the Kurds, and... and... and... and... and without end.

And it is this policy that Ch. Eliades is being seduced by to write perhaps the most naive (we say naive, not to say anything worse) of all he writes: *“it is more painless to support the inalienable rights of Palestinians than those of Cypriot refugees”*.

Of course he means the Greek Cypriot refugees, because nobody accuses the Greek Cypriot government of not allowing the Turkish Cypriot refugees to return. But anyway, everyone is going off about the rights of Greek Cypriot refugees. I wonder how 'painful' it is to join Chrysostomos, Kyprianou, Vassiliou, Papaioannou and so on in supporting the 'right of return of all refugees'? Who will persecute you for this in southern Cyprus? The only one you might be in danger of being “bothered” by is RIK (CyBC), who will be after you to film you as they did with “Women Walk Home”.

And who in our “incompetent ruling class” will victimize you when you blame Özgür, like Ch. Eliades does, that:

“Özgür's admission (despite his opposition) that settlers are today a historically irreversible reality, that the (future) federation will be based on the ethnically pure character of the two geographical areas (so refugees forget your homes), advocates the preservation and not the overthrow of barbarism... But never has one barbarism ever undone or reversed another previous barbarism (if we admit as 'barbarism' the situation in which the Turkish Cypriots lived in 63-74”.

““Every single settler must go”. This is the genuine and desperate cry of the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie. And the leftist chorus from next door, whether it is a big party like AKEL or a lone social patriot like Ch. Eliades, keeps it steady.



[The image reads: The groups of people's militia in 1964 under Vassos Lyssarides liberate the then enslaved Pentadaktylos.]

Others are trying to “forget” 1963-64 and others continue to boast about those achievements... from a Lyssarides' election brochure for the '88 presidential election.

But no one, as far as we know, made the blunder of linking this claim to the argument “But never has one barbarism ever undone or reversed another previous barbarism”. Ultimately, Eliades is original in something.

If the expulsion from northern Cyprus of over 60,000 impoverished settlers from Anatolia is not also “barbarism”, then we wonder what is? A triumph of civilization? Does anyone believe that such a thing could be done without the most barbaric violence, either through Greek and Greek Cypriot arms, or even of Turkish arms, if the two bourgeoisies for whatever reason come to some sort of agreement?

The contradiction of support for such positions by leftists is so great that it allows even the right-wing

DISY, which houses many of the “Turk-eaters” of the 63-74 period, to give lessons in basic humanism to AKEL and critique all of them from the left:

“We will dwell for a moment on Papaioannou's pompous declaration - via Haravgi - that 'AKEL has never accepted or will never accept a solution to the Cyprus problem that does not include the removal of the last soldier, **as well as the last settler from Cyprus**.”

We reiterate that **for reasons of principle we consider the above position to be correct** <but of course....> However, if and when the time comes to call for its implementation, we will encounter difficult problems even on the issue of the withdrawal of the last settler...

On this matter the president of the Democratic Rally (DISY), Mr Glafkos Clerides, speaking in parliament on the budgets in February '82, also said the following:

“The number of settlers has gone from 35,000 to 62,000. That is more than half of the Turkish Cypriot population, which before the invasion was 110,000. And if this rate of settlement continues (and indeed given that many settlers marry Turkish Cypriot women and have children in Cyprus) how will families be divided in a possible solution to the Cyprus problem? What will Mr Papaioannou do? Will he ask for the settlers to be sent to Turkey and for their wives to stay here?...”(3)

As for the “incompetent” Greek Cypriot ruling class, there is not a single reference in Ch. Eliades' article about the speed with which it is increasing, together with the Greek, its military power. Strange that he too did not propose a “People's Militia” to overcome its “incompetence” to conduct the 'national liberation struggle'.

If a Greek-Turkish war finally takes place, and Greece wins it (why is out of the question? why should only the Greek Cypriot and Greek bourgeoisie be “incompetent”) and thus “enforces the dissolution of an occupying puppet regime”, as Ch. Eliades desires, we wonder what he and the rest of the social patriots on the “left-wing of AKEL” will then say about “our” “incompetent” bourgeois class, and about the role they themselves played at the time when, as leftists, they should have resisted its aggressive plans.

Publishing Group "Workers' Democracy"

1. Lenin “Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism” p. 159 [Translator's note: For the purposes of this translation, quotes were taken from [here](#)].
2. Lenin's “Critical Notes on the National Question” English Edition p. 93 [Translator's note: For the purposes of this translation, quotes were taken from [here](#)].
3. “ALITHEIA” 18/4/87, “THE POSITIONS OF DISY Part 5”.

[Needs Turkish Translation, Within the Walls \(Issue 31\), Workers' Democracy \(Group\), Decade 1980-1989, 1988, Nicosia \(south\), Nicosia, Cyprus Problem](#)

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