

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 certainty 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)

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/jul/x01.htm>

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