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From socialism via anti-imperialism to nationalism : EDA-TIP : socialist contest over Cyprus

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5.3 Patriotism, Internationalism and Binary Divisions

The Manichean scheme that expounded a “good” versus “bad” version of nationalism, dominant during Comintern’s Seventh Congress resolution, seems to have been taken up by both the EDA and the TİP as a means of identifying the “true” patriotic forces of the country.¹ This patriotism, as well as the internationalism of both parties, or at least some traces of it, can be discerned through the demonstration of the above “good/bad” bi-polar scheme of nationalism as well as through the political decisions the parties made or had to make.

It was claimed that the good version of nationalism, i.e. patriotism, was not opposed to internationalism. When the EDA referred to “universal values” and the just struggles of anti-colonialists, the party tried to link that “good” version of nationalism with Marxism and then show the true patriotic forces of the country (itself)² in contrast to the “bad” nationalism of the conservative right. In the same vein, the TİP – and the EDA for that matter, but in a less discernible way – tried to present a version of nationalism that was reconcilable with socialism.

Aybar’s “Turkish socialism” brought to mind the communist movement which had to “acquaint itself with *national peculiarities*, and, thus, make socialism a national case.”³ Aybar stressed that the path towards socialism was different for every nation and was dependent upon its particular historical and national conditions, among other things. Aybar differentiated between capitalist Western countries from dependent underdeveloped countries, and he stated that “...in advanced capitalist countries the major contradiction is between the bourgeoisie and industrial worker,” whereas in dependent countries the major contradiction was determined by the conditions of imperialism,⁴ making it thus impossible for the Soviet model to be applied. In this way, the proletariat acquired a national dimension with a distinct national “motherland.” In the conditions of the twentieth century, he argued, workers are citizens of countries and hence socialism should be built into the motherland,⁵ in opposition to the dictum that “workers do not have a motherland.” In specifying what distinguished communism from other beliefs, Marx and Engels noted the following: “1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries, they point out and emphasize the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of

¹ For an example of “good/real” and “bad/pseudo” nationalism, see Gökhan Atılğan, *Yön-Devrim Hareketi*, pp. 103-106. According to *Yön*, the Turkish people were polarized politically into “pro-American” versus “nationalist,” “leftist” versus “rightist,” “fake Atatürkist” versus “real Atatürkist” camps. Özgür Mutlu Ulus, p. 36.

² See among many EDA, *The Program of Patriotic Alliance*, EDA, Athens, 1961.

³ Yannis Sygkelos.

⁴ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Türkiye Sosyalizmi,” p. 658, in Mehmet Ali Aybar.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 653.

development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”⁶ These principles were not followed by the TİP, but as noted again in the Communist Manifesto “the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.”⁷

In this sense, the proletariat, a universal class by definition, seemed to have acquired a certain national content. Lastly, proletarian internationalism had to “*acclimatize itself* in each country in order to strike deep roots in its native land”⁸ in relation to the national forms of the proletarian class struggle. Thus, proletarian internationalism acquired a national image, peculiar to each place in which it took root. As Aybar noted:

The TİP is not a part of any international organization. It does not have any relations with any international groups. We do not take orders from anyone or from any center. We consider this kind of behavior to be contrary to socialist solidarity. Solidarity takes place between independent, powerful, and equal entities. Socialism has developed everywhere in the form of independent movements since the end of the Second World War. In the Third World in particular socialist movements have clung tightly to their independence. For instance, newly independent states seek out and find away to socialism with their own strength and resources without accepting any tutelage... Socialism, above all, is a nationalist movement.⁹

It should be understood that national struggles for liberation granted a strong nationalist element to internationalism, which was based on national phenomena and elements, while the first principle of internationalism was the nation itself.¹⁰ Revolutionaries who internalized internationalism in its deepest sense saw their own countries as their motherlands, and the nation they belonged to was their own nation. Turkish socialists believed that they could be as nationalist as they liked¹¹ without necessarily coming into conflict with internationalism. In

⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, introduction by David Harvey, Pluto Press, London, 2008 [1848], p. 52.

⁷ Ibid., p. 50. Engels insisted that “a sincere international collaboration of the European nations is only possible if each of these nations is entirely autonomous in own house” as quoted in Monty Johnstone, “Internationalism,” p. 260, in Tom Bottomore (ed), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, 2nd ed., Blackwell, Oxford, 1991.

⁸ Yannis Sygkelos.

⁹ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Bağımsızlığı Neden Kaybettik, Nasıl Kazanırız,” pp. 612-613, in Mehmet Ali Aybar; translation by Erkan Doğan.

¹⁰ “Many leaders of the national liberation movement have characterized nationalism as the cornerstone of the ideology and policy of the patriotic forces.” K. N. Brutents, *National Liberation Revolutions Today*, vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 127.

¹¹ Erkan Doğan, p. 176.

fact, it was argued that the more nationalist you were, the more international you became,¹² but this should not be seen as a paradox. The editorial of a review rightly and eloquently argued this point:

After 1945, this double connection – capital/the national, labor/the international – was upturned. Nationalism became predominantly a popular cause of exploited and destitute masses in an intercontinental revolt against Western colonialism and imperialism. Internationalism, at the same stroke, began to change camps, assuming new forms in the ranks of capital. This was to be a fateful mutation. The new type of nationalism that became dominant on a global scale after 1945 was anti-imperialism, and its principal geographical zones were Asia, Africa and Latin America.¹³

Additionally, it was believed that the period “was characterized by the process of the nationalization of the idea of socialism (and communism). What we witness in that age was a radical shift from the idea of international (or world) communism to independent national/or state communisms.”¹⁴ In other words, international socialism was a collection of independent national states, each pursuing its socialist development in accordance with its particular national ends.

The TİP, and more generally Turkish socialists, tried to distinguish their nationalism not only from liberal/cosmopolitan accounts, but also from racist, irredentist, Turanist, conservative, or reactionary type of nationalisms. The TİP, for instance, stated on every occasion that it had nothing in common with any irredentist (aggressive) fascistic types of nationalism and shunned insulting other nations and separation on the basis of ethnicity, religion, language and race.¹⁵ The Cyprus Issue however, presented an irredentist agenda, which, however, was not considered however as such but as an anti-imperialist struggle to free “brother Turks” from Greek and Anglo-Saxon colonial and imperialist policies. For the TİP, that was understood as “internationalism” was the act and ideal of international solidarity in relation to the given political situation. Additionally, the leadership of the TİP, due to the

¹² The sources of this understanding of “internationalism” were various, ranging from theories of “socialism-in-one country” developed in the late 1920s and 1930s in Russia and the theories of Third World socialism which became popular after the Second World War, especially with the Chinese Revolution in 1949. What the Turkish socialists of the 1960s actually wanted to achieve was not international working class power that superseded nations, but independent national development within the borders of a single country against non-national and external forces supposedly undermining the process of national development.

¹³ Perry Anderson, “Internationalism: A Breviary,” *New Left Review*, no.14, March-April 2002, pp. 5-25, here pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ Erkan Doğan, p. 177.

¹⁵ TİP, *TİP’i Tanıyalım*, Karınca Matbaası, İstanbul, 1965, p.16. The same point was made by Erkan Doğan, who presents a very interesting account of TİP’s nationalism. See Erkan Doğan, pp. 173 ff.

extreme anti-communist environment in which they were living, was forced to come closer to succumbing in every significant step towards nationalist aspirations. The policy of the party on Cyprus in the summer of 1964 caused major chauvinist reactions. Due to these reactions, the party itself was forced to modify its political agenda and adapt itself to the new conditions of Turkey, as these were shaped by the dominant circles.¹⁶ Ultimately, taking into consideration the Cold War environment and Turkey's negative perception of Russia, the emergence of a pro-Soviet movement was precluded.¹⁷ Even the remote suspicion of a pro-Soviet stance, or even, based on Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish constitution, a "class based" party structure were enough to shut a party down and cause serious issues for the leftist movement in general.¹⁸

The EDA, on the other hand, although it was not stated outright, followed a similar bipolar scheme in which there were, on the one hand, the true patriotic forces that hoped and struggled for a peaceful international order, where there was, or should have been, a "climate of friendship and solidarity,"¹⁹ and on the other, the bourgeois forces of the country that throughout Greek history were in collaboration with foreign capital and interests in general and which sought to bring the country into a state of vassalage.²⁰ The EDA followed Lenin's anti-imperialist theory, according to which a comprador bourgeoisie, obedient to the dominant/imperialist nation, reigns within the borders of the oppressed nation, expressing thus its own nationalism which is servile to the interests of the dominant or imperialist power, but distinct and definitely alien to the people's national idea.²¹ For the EDA, "change" was an issue that "relates with all the democratic-patriotic forces of the country [...] that comprise the Patriotic Front [...] and thus, [we will] achieve *National Democratic Change*."²² Contrary to the comprador bourgeoisie, "The EDA is in favor of defending the national bourgeoisie against monopolies. The national bourgeoisie will stand on its feet when it manages to free

¹⁶ Ergun Aydınoglu, *Türk Solu (1960-1971)*, p. 125, and fn. 106, p. 194; see also Artun Ünsal, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1961-1971)*, p. 255, fn. 1.

¹⁷ This was a general adaptation to new realities for many socialist parties, as, for example, the German *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD), the French *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO) and the Dutch *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA). After World War II, "[T]he most profound impact on the parties' organization was the disappearance of the red family." Dietrich Orlow, *Common Destiny. A Comparative History of the Dutch, French, and German Social Democratic Parties, 1945-1969*, Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, 2000, p. 273.

¹⁸ It was also within this framework that the TİP staunchly proclaimed an equal distance from all great powers. See also Artun Ünsal, pp. 255-256.

¹⁹ EDA, *For a National Democratic Change*, EDA, Athens, 1961, pp. 26-27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²¹ For a list of agreements referred to as "colonial contracts" of the comprador bourgeoisie with imperialist/capitalist countries, see EDA, *The Podium of the Parliament in the Service of the Nation*, EDA, Athens, 1958, pp. 100-105; for a brief summary of Lenin's theory on anti-imperialism, see also the introduction.

²² EDA, pp. 9-51.

itself from the competition of local and foreign monopolies that put it out of competition on the domestic market and lead it to disaster. The national bourgeoisie [...] can become a factor for the economic restructuring of the country.”²³ As mentioned before, the TĪP adopted the same line of argumentation when it referred to the DP and to later governments. Thus, the anti-patriotic ruling classes that comprised the comprador bourgeoisie also consisted of those agents that served American and British interests. Thus, the left, both in Greece and in Turkey, associated the “comprador” classes with “bad” nationalism, allowing it to monopolize “good” nationalism and the progressive movement for itself.

However, the dependency theory that the EDA adopted overemphasized the anti-imperialistic, national-patriotic struggle at the expense of the domestic social and political issues and contradictions that the latter created. The dependency theory of the EDA disorientated the left, since it did not lead the analysis and political intervention first and foremost to the class and political balance of power in Greek society. “The class struggle inside a social formation defines mainly the strains of development of that given social formation. International relations act through these class balances of power and power relations. [...] In other words, national claims define the way the ‘national’ becomes part of the international. ‘Dependencies’ cannot but be considered an ‘aftereffect’ of the class power relations.”²⁴ Dependency however, should be sought “within the dependent countries themselves, where these relations subordinate labor-power on an increasing scale and it corresponds to both a prodigious socialization of labor processes and to a marked internationalization of capital on the world scale.”²⁵

The EDA’s patriotism, and to an extent, internationalism, as with the TĪP, also was a reaction against the political beliefs and ideological stand of the conservative right. In their own words, the EDA’s nationalism was patriotic because it was a friendly nationalism, containing true national elements and love for the country and more generally, for the world. As regards the essence and ultimate goals of the party in National Democratic Change, it was noted that the EDA promoted

The unity of all patriotic forces of all the people. The opponents of the Change, in order to perpetuate the regime of vassalage, are trying by all means to keep the people divided. They slander the progressive democratic forces of the country. They cultivate anti-communist hysteria, the spirit of vassalage, chauvinism and cosmopolitanism. By

²³ Ibid., pp. 41-42. See also Alec Gordon, “The Theory of the ‘Progressive’ National Bourgeoisie,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1973, pp. 192-203.

²⁴ John Milios, *The Greek Social Formation*, Kritiki, Athens, 2000, p. 111.

²⁵ Nicos Poulantzas, *The Crisis of the Dictatorships. Portugal, Greece, Spain*, NLB, London, 1976, p. 17.

making use of the fairy-tale about a danger from the north, they aim to keep the nation divided. [...] [They] aim at the division of the nation [which] constitutes the essential condition for the hammering out and consolidation of the National People's Unity.²⁶

The EDA claimed that the contributions of the communist/democratic movement in resisting the foreign occupiers, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during WWII, was ample proof of its patriotism. The EDA's patriotism, which was defined through the resistance of the communist/democratic movement, had internationalist dimensions. The resistance of the movement was considered to be the struggle *par excellence* of the working masses against fascism. "The program [of the EAM] and its actions correspond with the demands of a big part of the petite bourgeois groups that constantly become more and more radicalized. With its political and generally cultural actions in the countryside, it also contributes to the politicization of the peasants. [...] The EAM places the cornerstone for the creation of an independent group from the old parties and autonomous political formation."²⁷ All the oppressed groups of Greek society—workers, peasants and wageworkers—were gathered within the EAM and also took part in the revolutionary movement along with petite bourgeois groups of the state machinery, such as freelance workers as well women, youth and intellectuals.²⁸ Starting in 1943, "the EAM was transformed into a massive national liberation, an antifascist, anti-imperialist democratic movement which was inspired by the spirit of national and social liberation," and the EDA was the continuation of the EAM in light of the new developments that were taking place in Greece. In other words, it was "the legal revolutionary massive party of the working class."²⁹

For the Greek case, patriotism and internationalism were linked and even associated, as in other countries, with the defense of their lands and the liberation of other countries through its own struggle for liberation from the fascist yoke. The Greek fight against fascism made things easier for the left, since Greece was one of the first countries that fascism tried to invade. This particular theoretical framework provided the link and association of patriotism with internationalism. In the post-war years, this framework changed and took on a new shape with "national unity at home and international alliances with peaceful socialist countries against

²⁶ EDA, *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54; see also EDA, *Positions for the Second Pan-Hellenic Conference of EDA*, Athens, 1962, pp. 35-36; EDA, *Program of Patriotic Alliance*, EDA, Athens, 1961.

²⁷ Nicos Svoronos, "Greece 1940-50: Meaning and Problematique," pp. 34-35, in John Iatrides (ed), *Ibid.*

²⁸ Christoforos Vernadakis and Yannis Mavris, p. 26.

²⁹ Stavros Karras, "Letter to the C.C. of KKE, 25 November 1966," p. 435, in Panos Dimitriou, *The Split of the KKE*.

the imperialist powers, respectively.”³⁰ The civil war led to a pause in the communist movement, which was continued in the 1950s and 1960s by the legal EDA.

In Turkey, the situation was different in the sense that Turkey adopted a neutral stance in WWII and therefore the left could not make claims about “glorious” acts of resistance in the past as Turkey had not joined the Allies. The TİP had to claim its patriotic and internationalist content, as noted earlier, through the Kemalist national liberation struggle of 1919-1922. Through the process of attributing to Mustafa Kemal an anti-imperialist and revolutionary content, and therefore, a socialist one as well, the TİP presented itself as the continuation of the great leader’s patriotic and anti-imperialist struggle. As with the EDA, the TİP entered a stage of propagating national unity at home and allying with Third World countries without having the experience and legitimization of WWII.

The working class, the engine behind internationalism, was replaced by the unity of nations that were oppressed by imperialist/capitalist states, becoming the agency of the revolution and internationalism. However, what is of great importance for our case was that the socialism of the Greek and Turkish left had as a goal the perseverance of national independence and the national integrity of the country’s sovereign rights. It will be useful to recall the program of the TİP, according to which the party asserted that it was “a one hundred percent national” party.³¹ While keeping an equal distance from all powers and maintaining friendly relations with all countries was seen as being crucial, along with a peaceful foreign policy, national independence was perceived as being a patriotic duty that had to be defended at all costs. In other words, the nation, defined not strictly as a territory or limited to the boundaries of a nation-state but in possession of transcendental elements, was above all else.³²

Regardless of the origins of their ideological standpoints, Cyprus was, for both parties, the issue that would guarantee the national unity of their respective countries and counter the dominant bourgeois political parties and stances. During the process of “national unity contestation,” there was also a rejuvenation and adoption of hostile images of the “other” in leftist rhetoric. The hostile image of the “other,” combined with the imperialist character of the respective parties, helped mobilize the masses on the national issue of Cyprus. Thus, we see, as noted before, that the EDA referred to “chauvinist Turks”³³ who collaborated with American and British imperialists, and the TİP referred to Greeks as collaborators of the great

³⁰ Yannis Sygkelos, p. 129.

³¹ TİP, *TİP Programı*, TİP, İstanbul, 1964.

³² TİP, *TİP Tüzüğü*, Töyko Matbaası, Ankara, 1968, p.6. EDA, *Statutes of the EDA*, EDA, Athens, 1963, pp. 5-6.

³³ Depending on the given situation on Cyprus, or in Greek-Turkish relations, the image of Turks changed in terms of degree of negativity. See, for example, articles in the newspaper *Avgi* during the period of the September Events, or later.

powers as they sought to fulfill the *Megali Idea* and its irredentist plans, which ultimately could mean the occupation of Turkey.³⁴ Of course, this just didn't happen with regard to Cyprus, but the island presented the safest means by which both parties could prove their patriotism and love of their country. By integrating the left into the socialist anti-imperialist/anti-colonial bloc, both the TIP and EDA defined themselves and were placed among the world's progressive forces in contrast to the reactionary "other" of the capitalist imperialist bloc.

Lastly, what Orlow argued about German and French socialists can easily be accepted as a valid argument for this case as well. Although the left was not in charge of formulating foreign policy in either Greece or Turkey, they did provide a font of new ideas. "These included severe reservations about the efficacy and reliability of geopolitical power, linking national self-determination to the maintenance of democracy, de-coupling political and economic sovereignty, and, perhaps most important, the conviction that democracy is the best foundation for national and international security."³⁵ Needless to say, the "national" always takes precedence over the "international."

³⁴ All leftist trends in Turkey have adopted a similar rhetoric concerning Greece, depending on the current situation in Cyprus or in Greek-Turkish relations.

³⁵ Dietrich Orlow, "Between Nationalism and Internationalism: French and German Socialists and the Question of Boundary Changes after World Wars I and II," pp. 99-114, here p. 114, in Christian Baechler and Carole Fink (eds), *L'établissement des Frontières en Europe après les Deux Guerres Mondiales/The Establishment of European Frontiers after the Two World Wars*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. – New York – Paris, 1996.