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

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5.4 Anti-imperialism/Colonialism

The anti-imperialist element in the ideology of the left owes much to the strategy of self-determination as formulated by Vladimir I. Lenin. Lenin's formulation of national self-determination was based on the Marxian differentiation of oppressed and oppressor nations,¹ a core-periphery distinction based on capitalist exploitation. Lenin's stratification divided the world into three main types of nation: advanced capitalist nations, that is, imperialist powers (Western Europe and the United States of America); the nations of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Russia; and the semi-colonial countries and colonies (China, Persia, Turkey).² Within this Leninist frame of reference, it could be suggested that a Balkan nation (in this case, Greece) could be proletarianized in times of imperialist crisis and reduced to a semi-colony or mere colony.³ On the other hand, socialists in countries like Turkey,

must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation – and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing more nor less than the recognition of the right to self-determination – but must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their rebellion.⁴

Lenin “extends the distinction of oppressed and oppressor nations to the colonial context and declares Asian and African nationalism progressive, while European nationalism comes to be seen as reactionary.”⁵ Lenin stated, in contrast to other theoreticians, that the issue of self-determination belongs to the sphere of political democracy, and as such, to the realm of the right of political secession and the establishment of an independent nation-state.⁶ Again, according to

¹ The differentiation was made by Marx himself so that he could support the national liberation movement in Ireland within the context of the struggle of the English and Irish nationalisms.

² V. I. Lenin, “The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-determination (Theses),” pp. 143–156, here pp. 150–151, in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, trans. by Yuri Sdobnikov, vol. 22, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964; first published in *Vorbote*, no. 2, April 1916.

³ For a similar approach on the Bulgarian Communist Party, see Yannis Sygkelos, *Nationalism from the Left: The Bulgarian Communist Party during the Second World War and the Early Post-war Years*, Brill, Leiden, 2011, p. 41.

⁴ V. I. Lenin.

⁵ Shlomo Avineri, “Marxism and Nationalism,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 26, no. 3/4, 1991, pp. 635–657, here p. 645.

⁶ Michael Löwy, *The Fatherland or Mother Earth? Essays on the National Question*, Pluto Press, London, 1998, p. 41. In contrast, others before him stressed the economic factor above all else. J. A. Hobson argued that imperial expansion is driven by a search for new markets and investment opportunities overseas. Hobson did not neglect other factors, such as political ones, maintaining that the meaning of imperialism is the establishment of political control; nevertheless he argued that “the final determination rests with financial power.” J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Cosimo, New York, 2005 [1902].

Lenin, imperialism provides the vessel of legitimization for all national struggles for liberation that would follow in the colonial or semi-colonial world.

In Lenin's dialectical view, imperialism played a dual role in the colonies and dependent countries. It was, on the one hand, a role of despoiling and plundering these countries, and, on the other, of drawing them into international politics and thus hastening the independent activities of their people in the fight to overthrow international imperialism. In 1919, he characterized the approach of world revolution as one in which "the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism."⁷

Nationalism of the periphery, which is intensified with capitalist expansion, turns into "an anti-capitalist force, as the national movements in the non-European colonies emerge as a response to the exploitation of the colonial people by the European capitalist powers."⁸ Lenin insisted on the anti-imperialist character of the national liberation movements of oppressed people and argued that it would be a mistake "to ignore the national movements against imperialism," adding:

National wars waged by colonies and semi-colonies in the imperialist era are not only probable but inevitable. Some 1,000 million people, or more than half of the world's population, live in the colonies and semi-colonies (China, Turkey, Persia). Here, national liberation movements are either already very powerful or are growing and maturing. Every war is the continuation of politics by other means. The continuation of policy of national liberation by colonies will inevitably lead them to wage national wars against imperialism.⁹

Here Lenin suggests that a national war will be waged against the international system of imperialism. The outbreak of the First World War seemed to contradict theories of peaceful co-operation, notably that of Kautsky. Lenin agreed that capitalism was carving up the world but argued that war was an inevitable part of modern imperialism. After the Second World War,

⁷ Research Unit for Political Economy (RUPE), "On the History of Imperialism Theory," *Monthly Review Press*, vol. 59, no. 7, 2007.

⁸ Shlomo Avineri; see also Erkan Doğan, p. 45.

⁹ Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart Schram, *Marxism and Asia*, Allen Lane, London, 1969 as quoted in Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historic Introduction*, Wiley-Blackwell, London, 2001, p. 125.

Western imperialist states cooperated under US leadership, but war remained significant in securing and defending imperialist interests.¹⁰

Since the end of WWII, the consensus view of imperialism as an extension of empires changed because of two major developments: “decolonization or the end of empire and the rise of two new empires, those of the United States and the Soviet Union,”¹¹ the former clearly dominating the scene. What followed WWII was a new world order dominated by two superpowers that differed from the older empires; but this is not to say that imperialism ended along with the empires.¹² Rather, one form of imperialism was replaced by another, and some (both new and old) states became more “involved in, and dependent on, the Western-dominated world system than they had been under colonial rule.” This became known as neo-colonialism or semi-colonialism. Empire is not the only form of imperialism, and a theory of imperialism should embrace formal and informal empires. A theory of imperialism is also an analytical tool useful for studying international relations and power politics in general. Imperial power relationships involve the interaction of economic, political, social and cultural “imperialisms.”¹³ There are continuities and discontinuities between the two forms or modes of imperialism, but the central theme of both is the economic, political, and even cultural domination of less powerful states by the dominant power.

In Greece and Turkey, imperialism did not become colonialism *sensu stricto* during the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁴ But the fact that the left took up rhetoric targeting the close and dependent ties of the metropolises with peripheral countries demonstrates the collaborationist character of imperialism, between “empires” and their domestic partners,¹⁵ hence the strong critique of leftist

¹⁰ Barbara Bush, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism*, Pearson Longman, Great Britain, 2006, pp. 82–83.

¹¹ H. L. Wesseling, “Imperialism and Empire: An Introduction,” p. 2, in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds), *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1986.

¹² As regards the notion of “empires” the present study follows the ideas of Julian Go in *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York and Melbourne, 2011. According to Howe, “A kind of basic, consensus definition would be that an empire is a large political body which rules over territories outside its original political borders. It has a central power or core territory – whose inhabitants usually continue to form the dominant ethnic or national group in the entire system – and extensive periphery of dominated areas.” Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 14.

¹³ H. L. Wesseling.

¹⁴ Turkey has never been colonized and, except in the immediate aftermath of World War I (1918–22), has never been threatened by any Western country. Hamit Bozarslan, “Turkey: Postcolonial Discourse in a Non-Colonised State,” pp. 423–427, in P. Poddar, R. S. Patke, L. Jensen (eds), *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures – Continental Europe and its Empires*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2008.

¹⁵ On the collaborationist character, see Jürgen Osterhammel, “Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis,” pp. 290–314, in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen

parties regarding their respective governments. In the case of American foreign policy, starting in 1945 the US acted in an imperialist manner with respect to regimes more weakly constituted and more pliable,¹⁶ a policy that was also both anti-colonial and anticommunist, and at times the use of force was part of this policy. The US has never held a large number of direct colonies. The Vietnam War¹⁷ was emblematic of US imperialism: “consistent with its Cold War foreign policy, the United States assumed the role of protector of a weak, antidemocratic but anti-Communist regime and intervened to thwart the self-determination of the Vietnamese people.”¹⁸ In doing so, it often resorted to violence:

America’s imperialism certainly could be coercive and militarized, but it was conceptually a grand strategy of economic penetration, a substitution of dollars in trade and investment for the armies and bullets of wars and occupations. As part of the imperialist pursuit for areas in which to invest, manufacture cheaply, find consumers, or trade, American military forces did in fact frequently intervene abroad, but usually pulled out after those lands were made secure for American political and economic objectives, often leaving proxy armies and puppet governments in their stead.¹⁹

With regard to Greece and Turkey, the EDA and TİP presented imperialist powers as foreign conquerors who were maintaining their countries in a state of virtual occupation through the Marshall Plan. Greece and Turkey had been transformed into the colonial, or semi-colonial, subjects of imperialist powers (chiefly the US) which exploited these nations and the Balkans to reach the wider Middle Eastern region due to their geographical, military, strategic and economic position. In other words, it was believed that Greece and Turkey were among those countries of the periphery that supplied imperialist powers with an important market, raw materials, and soldiers for imperialist wars, as in Korea. Therefore, both countries could neither create nor execute an independent national policy, as imperialist powers were oppressing, denationalizing and colonizing them. In this sense, anti-imperialist theory vindicated an anti-colonial national

Osterhammel (eds); see also Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, trans. Shelley Frisch, Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, 1997.

¹⁶ Tony Smith, “American Imperialism is Anti-Communism,” p. 41, in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds).

¹⁷ See Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2008.

¹⁸ Stanley Aronowitz, “The New World Order,” p. 19, in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed), *Debating Empire*, Verso, London and New York, 2003.

¹⁹ Robert Buzzanco, “Anti-Imperialism,” p. 49, in Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, and Fredrik Logevall (eds), *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 2002.

liberation movement in Lenin's terms. The question of Cyprus was conceptualized in terms of an anti-colonial national liberation movement for both countries, which used this as the basis to legitimize their struggles.

The Cyprus Question

The most interesting and challenging element of the left's anti-imperialist rhetoric is the fact that it is imbued with a strong nationalist content, which in turn paradoxically justifies anti-imperialist rhetoric. Nationalism, in turn, was considered in the Third World (and elsewhere) as a "progressive" movement precisely because of its anti-imperialist content. In other words, when we talk about anti-imperialism of the left of the 1950s and 1960s (and later), nationalism is an indispensable element. Both cases (Greece and Turkey) present distinct common characteristics that help clarify the environment in which such politics and rhetoric took place.

Anti-imperialism in the EDA and Cyprus

Within the Cold War environment, the EDA took a critical stance regarding British and American imperialism. In its program, the party identified the main causes of the country's dependence: Greece was under the control of foreign imperialists – the Americans, the British, and the neohitlerites (i.e. neo-Nazis) of Bonn, as the party called them. Thus, "the hopes of the nation should be turned to the great "Change," which has been in preparation for years through the people's struggles – the change that has matured and *can* be changed."²⁰ The content of the program of change was dictated against:

The American imperialists and the local plutocratic oligarchy together with its political parties [who] were in every way aiming to preserve the state of vassalage, which had been imposed through imperialist intervention, to keep Greece bound up on the chariot of the warlike imperialist policy.²¹

For the EDA, Greece was engaged in a continual struggle between the people and the oligarchy, which allied with the imperialist powers at the expense of the people. In other words, the civil war continued unabated under the disguise of "democratic constitutionalism," a situation that was triggered anew with:

²⁰ EDA, *For a National Democratic Change*, Athens, 1961, pp. 7–8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

The approval of the Truman Doctrine by the Greek oligarchy, [and this] was followed by adherence to NATO and by a series of political, financial, and military agreements that conflicted with the interests of the nation.²²

The post-civil war situation was characterized by the attempts of the Americans, the foreign-serving oligarchy and their supporters to maintain Cold War conditions.²³ Because of the Truman Doctrine, Greece was transformed into a bridgehead between America and the socialist and Middle Eastern countries. The severe economic conditions in Greece that began at the end of the war led to dependence on American products, both agricultural and industrial, thereby increasing its dependent relationship.²⁴ The basic cause of the economic stagnation of Greece was the fact that foreign monopolies were hindering its economic development. “They [foreign monopolies] aim to let the country remain financially backward, [and be] a market for their own industrial and agricultural products, a source of cheap raw materials and cheap labor, [creating] a financial and political dependency.”²⁵ Thus, imperialism (in both its military and economic variants) held the country captive. National independence, according to the EDA, could not be won by remaining captive in foreign imperialist vassalage. “There can be no pretense,” the party stated, “of assistance or interest in justifying a regime of suffocating tutelage in which authority is exercised not by the Greek people and its legal representatives but by foreign omnipotent ‘advisors.’”²⁶ The creation of a new type of International Financial Commission²⁷ was considered by the EDA to be a “pretext for legislature and agreements that guarantee the intrusion of the foreign capitals.” Further, such agreements would legitimate the “protective” nature of foreign interventions.²⁸ In this way, political and economic tutelage supported and protected each other.

²² EDA, *Draft Program of the EDA*, Athens, 1957, p. 4; EDA, *Program of the EDA*, Athens, 1961, p. 13–14.

²³ Ioannis Pasalidis, “Opening Speech in the Meeting of the General Council of the EDA,” p. 4 and p. 6, in EDA, *First Pan-Hellenic Conference of the EDA*, Athens, 1956.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ EDA, *For a National Democratic Change*, Athens, 1961, p. 15.

²⁶ EDA, *Programmatic Principles of the EDA*, Athens, 1952, p. 7.

²⁷ The new type of International Financial Commission used was in juxtaposition with the International Financial Commission which had existed in Greece for 81 years (1897–1978) in order to make sure that the loans Greece took out would be repaid to her creditors. See Greece: Commission Financière Internationale, *Dette Publique de la Grèce: Historique, Lois, Décrets, Conventions, Règlements, Protocoles, etc.*, Sakelarios, 1905.

²⁸ EDA, *Programmatic Principles of the EDA*, Athens, 1952, p. 19.

All this led to a lack of independent foreign policy and loyalty to the interests of the great powers. When the discussion turned to the issue of Cyprus, the EDA's anti-imperialistic rhetoric became even more dynamic. By sending troops to the Korean War to help the US, the Greek government hoped it would receive additional aid. When this did not materialize, tensions rose in Greek political circles, forcing the Greeks to realize that Greek interests and NATO membership did not matter. When the Greek attempt to bring the Cyprus Question onto the UN agenda was halted by the US, the situation escalated. The American stance on Greek policy concerning Cyprus vindicated the EDA's argument that the state was dependent on foreign interests, and backed the claim that the oligarchical government was unable to act on the Cyprus issue.

The right of self-determination was not discussed during the Tripartite Conference in London. For the EDA, this proved that the conference was another dangerous imperialistic maneuver by the British and Americans. The Karamanlis government, the party argued, was compromising the national issue of Cyprus by attending the conference even though the Greek and Cypriot people had never agreed to it. But more importantly for the party, the Karamanlis government allowed the presence of "those Turkish officials who have no clue what is going on in Cyprus" in discussing the colonial ambitions of the British who were seen as aiding "the Turkish chauvinists."²⁹ The events of September which occurred the following month proved once more that the US and Great Britain were supporting Turkey's claims. Thus Turkey was also presented as an imperialist country collaborating with the great powers. The leader of EDA stated that:

The problem cannot be faced with impressive declarations and demonstrations to the Turkish government and at the NATO Council. There has to be substantial and determined action: Immediate and definite notice of termination of relations with Turkey and their imperialist and colonial "allies."³⁰

The "Turkish chauvinistic and barbarian anti-Greek demonstrations, the continuation and perpetuation of the problems of the recent past [the September Events], and hostile attitudes towards Greece were combined by the Tripartite Conference with threats against the territorial

²⁹ EDA, "Announcement of the E.C. of the EDA," September 11, 1955, p. 19, in EDA, *Decisions and Announcements of the General Council and the Executive Committee of the EDA on the Vital Problems of the People and the Country*, Athens, 1955.

³⁰ Ioannis Pasalidis, *Declaration*, 7 September 1955; Tasos Trikkas, p. 309.

integrity of the country [Greece].”³¹ The Turks were called “partners of the imperialist powers” which:

Makes the situation in Cyprus more critical than ever before, [because] there is a ruthless conqueror in Cyprus and attempts in any case to stop the struggle of the people of Cyprus [...] are supported, organized and guided by the British authorities in Cyprus and by Turkey. This could lead to genocide [...].³²

Thus the extermination of Hellenism on the island was presented as a real danger for Greece and for the Eastern Mediterranean. The shared politics and tactics of Turkey and Great Britain in Cyprus, and those of the US through NATO, were presented by the EDA as those of a “common imperialist camp” which acted on the basis of a common agenda: the perpetuation of the imperialist system. Within this framework, the EDA employed an alarmist rhetoric in an attempt to mobilize the masses in the face of an alleged Turkish attack against either Greece or Cyprus. “Behind the attempts to partition Cyprus by the Turks and the British are hidden American imperialists, as are the French and all these sworn colonialists that hide in the colonial nest of NATO.”³³

Therefore, it was argued that Greece should adopt a policy of national integrity and that a radical change was needed for the country to be saved from “constant humiliations” and to disengage itself from the national crisis presented by the threat to her territorial integrity.³⁴ “The adventure in the Cyprus Question, the brutality of the British imperialists, and the brutality and the threats of Turkish chauvinists represent symptoms of the general policy that have forced Greece’s accession to NATO. Therefore, in light of the real causes of today’s intense national crisis, the immediate release of the country from the commitments, concessions and obligations that were imposed upon the Greek people *in absentia* is absolutely needed.”³⁵

It was argued that the Cyprus cause could be saved only if it achieved a prerequisite goal: gaining the support of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist forces. Within this framework, the

³¹ “Announcement of the Organization Committee of the EDA,” September 11, 1955, p. 19, in Ibid.

³² Antonis Brillakis, *CQGP*, vol. 1, p. 267.

³³ Ioannis Pasalidis, *CQGP*, vol. 3, p. 281.

³⁴ “Announcement of the Organization Committee of the EDA,” September 11, 1955, p. 19–20, in Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 20. Trikkas mistakenly dates the announcement September 10, 1955, see Trikkas, Ibid., vol. 1, p. 309; many city councils through declarations ask for the retreat of NATO (Kaisariani, Thessaloniki, Kavala, Dafni, Sikes, Keratsini, Nikaia, etc.) ASKI, “Declarations of City Councils,” *EDA Archive*, Box 479.

alliance and friendship between Greece and Turkey would be severed, at least until there was official recognition and an apology on behalf of the Turkish state for the events of September.

The situation in Cyprus and the atrocities committed by “the British imperialists and the chauvinist Turks” were seen assigns of the general political situation that was imposed on Greece by NATO. The EDA’s response to these imperialist organizations was a proposed alliance with Third World and independent countries at the Bandung Conference.³⁶ The Soviet Union (the representative of the socialist camp) and the US (the main opposing power) were immediately rejected by the left in the quest for help and support. “For the first time, the states of Asia and Africa,” the party notes, “despite the will and directives of the imperialist powers, were gathered to manifest their will for independence, to condemn colonial policy, and to contribute to the peaceful cooperation of all peoples.”³⁷ Therefore it was argued that the future for Greece lay in good relations with the countries of the Middle East and the Balkans, especially at times when the imperialist system was in decay. Indeed, the party thought that imperialism was in a state of decay, and the claim was made that this was becoming evident through the issue of Cyprus. “Their [the imperialists’] ideology and their methods of action were revealed in our [Greek] Cyprus – after these were tattered in Indochina, Kenya, Guatemala, and Algiers.” Pasalidis makes a crucial remark at this point when he mentions that at “the time that the world is more united than ever before, national sentiment becomes more developed than ever.” It was a “vigorous reaction of the peoples that had lost their freedom living under the imperialist regime.”³⁸ But what became obvious was that the independence of Cyprus would come through self-determination, the latter being a transitory stage to *Enosis* with the political and national center of Athens. In other words, the EDA expressed the same irredentist agenda as the conservative right but via a different path, that of self-determination.

It was national sentiment that was seen as being betrayed by the continuation of the policy of vassalage backed by the right.

The Cyprus Question is the lighthouse that illuminates and guides the Greek people to the path of removing the traces of foreign domination and shaping a foreign policy that serves the genuine interests of the Greeks. This issue of strategic importance can no longer adhere to the

³⁶ See the introduction for more on the Bandung Conference.

³⁷ Ioannis Pasalidis, “Opening Speech in the Meeting of the General Council of the EDA,” p. 16, in EDA, *First Pan-Hellenic Conference of the EDA*, Athens, 1956.

³⁸ Ibid.

scheme of Right–Center–Left, but it places the Greeks either in the movement of Change, Independence, and Equal Friendship, or in the camp of the “bowed”³⁹

Cyprus was considered to be a national issue “beyond argument.” *Enosis* with Greece “carries the exact moral and historical content and meaning of the self-determination of the people.” In addition, “nobody dared to question the Greek-ness of Megalonisos [the Great Island] and the inalienable right of her people to unite with the national whole.”⁴⁰ On the contrary, the government was accused of abandoning its people: “while it [the people] is fighting and also has on its side the anti-colonial countries, [...] it [the government] abandoned the struggle [of Cyprus] and left it in the hands of the Ethnarchy and to the exiled Ethnarch.”⁴¹ Indeed, the EDA believed that the government condemned the Cypriot cause to failure through “allying schemes” that followed imperialist interests, but if it hadn’t: “Our country [Greece] would be an independent state, it would have real allies [...] and it would turn to her advantage the existing anti-colonial spirit.”⁴²

It was argued that these “allying schemes” brought violence to the people of Cyprus, which was under pressure to accept the plans of the colonial administration. The London and Zurich Agreements were cited as prime examples, and were considered to be the ultimate sign of collaboration between the Anglo-Saxon imperialist powers and their domestic collaborators, the government of Karamanlis. Indeed it was argued that Karamanlis was assigned to the premiership of the county as a reward for bringing the Cyprus Question to a close. The issue was solved, as the government had hoped from the beginning, through the “alliances” for which it fought. “The American and British imperialist circles congratulated” the government for its stance on the issue, proving (for the EDA) that the Karamanlis government’s ultimate goal was to close the issue.⁴³ The EDA continued its criticism, presenting evidence of the government’s abandonment of the issue, when it referred to “the shaking of the unity of NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean.”⁴⁴ On another occasion, the government refused to acknowledge the atrocities

³⁹ Elias Eliou, *Avgi*, January 1, 1956.

⁴⁰ Vasilis Efraimidis, *CQGP*, vol. 1, p. 37.

⁴¹ Ioannis Pasalidis, *CQGP*, vol. 1, p. 176; for the Ethnarchy and Ethnarch, see the introduction.

⁴² Ioannis Pasalidis, *CQGP*, vol. 2, p. 30.

⁴³ EDA, *The Cyprus Question and the London and Zurich Agreements*, Athens, 1959, pp. 4–7.

⁴⁴ Government announcement, December 10, 1957 as quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 11; see also Ioannis Pasalidis, *CQGP*, 18 November 1958, vol. 2, p. 262.

committed by the British, in which the latter hanged members of the EOKA and other Cypriots who provided any kind of assistance to them, by saying that “undoubtedly the [British] government had not ordered these measures, and of course did not approve the use of such inhumane methods.”⁴⁵ Government propaganda, in obedience to the leadership of the “free world,” meaning the US, and following their propaganda, tried to make the Greek people believe that only the US could “give her [Cyprus] to us [Greeks].” But the interests of the Atlantic community came “above any national interest,” regardless of whether a country was a member of NATO and the Western group. Besides, the Americans had always struggled to include Cyprus under the authority of “colonial NATO,” as was obvious from the numerous times that such attempts had taken place regarding the Cyprus Question. Whenever the colonial administration of Britain came up with a plan, the Americans and other colonial powers rushed in to accept it, allowing the Turks to return to Cyprus.⁴⁶

The London and Zurich Agreements “did not grant Cyprus the independence to exercise a policy that would be in accordance with the will of the people.”⁴⁷ Rather, they provided “excessive” rights to the Turkish Cypriot community. The EDA took a negative stance on the granting of rights to the Turkish Cypriots, as it was claimed that they violated the self-evident rights of the majority Greek Cypriots. The rights of the minority should be preserved, the party claimed, but not against the rights of the majority,⁴⁸ while in exchange for the services she provided to the imperialist powers, Turkey was granted the right to be one of the guarantor powers.⁴⁹ The following argument suits the Cyprus case quite well:

Colonial self-determination left a vast number of national aspirations unsatisfied. It eschewed innovative forms of self-expression (devolution); it excluded secession but failed to distinguish secession from other forms of decolonization in a morally coherent manner; and, it prolonged the disenfranchisement of majorities in new, often authoritative, independent states.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Government announcement, December 10, 1957 as quoted in *Ibid.*; Averoff also asked for these reports “not to see the light of day and to be kept secret.”

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–19.

⁴⁷ Elias Eliou, *CQGP*, vol. 3, pp. 23–25.

⁴⁸ Komninos Pyromaglou, *CQGP*, vol. 3, p. 124.

⁴⁹ Elias Eliou, *CQGP*, vol. 3, pp. 28–29.

⁵⁰ Gerry J. Simpson, “The Diffusion of Sovereignty: Self-Determination in the Post-Colonial Age,” *Stanford Journal of International Law*, vol. 32, pp. 255–286, here p. 274.

For the EDA, the questions of Cyprus (even after the proclamation of the Republic) never stopped being an anti-colonial issue that could be solved only through the united anti-imperialist struggle, which it was argued should have at its core a policy of denunciation of the London and Zurich Agreements and international organizations and alliances. Pasalidis sent a message to Archbishop Makarios reassuring the Cypriot people that:

We [the EDA] stand by the side of the Cypriot government, which resists NATO's armed forces on the island. [...] The EDA demands the denunciation of the London and Zurich Agreements and of any NATO attempts at intervention, and supports recourse to the UN and complete self-determination of the Cypriot people.⁵¹

In the name of maintaining NATO colonialist "unity," it was claimed that the government of the "foreign-serving oligarchy" betrayed the heroic cause of "our brothers in Cyprus and signed the disgraceful agreements of Zurich and London." For the benefit of these imperialist interests, this same government refused to establish the friendly relations that were proposed by neighboring countries in the Balkans and socialist countries in general, relations that would serve the financial interests of the country and peace in the Balkans, as well as peace all around the world.⁵²

The EDA sided with the proposal suggested by the Soviet Union, that "no agreement between sovereign states can solve the problem if there is foreign intervention in the domestic matters of a sovereign country." The Soviet suggestion also aimed at the issue of the competitive relations between the US and Great Britain with regard to Cyprus which, starting with the London and Zurich Agreements, not only sustained the crisis in Cyprus but, because of the increasing competition, cultivated and prolonged it. On one hand, the US, aware of the deepening Middle Eastern oil crisis, sought to drive the British away from the island so it could exercise hegemony over the region; while on the other hand, the British tried to remain on the island, retaining military bases and practical control of the island.⁵³ Indeed it was maintained that Cyprus was at

⁵¹ ASKI, Pasalidis' message to Makarios, January 31, 1964, *EDA Archive*, Box 31 and *Avgi*, January 31, 1964; quoted in Tasos Trikkas, p. 1097.

⁵² EDA, *For a National Democratic Change*, Athens, 1961, p. 14.

⁵³ "Chronicle," *Helliniki Aristera*, n. 2, September 1963, p. 85. In this way, for the US, with the help of the extremist Turkish Cypriots, the island would become an anti-communist bridgehead to the Middle East and a military base for Polaris submarines.

the center of the imperialist military, economic and diplomatic competition for power, and that the island had fallen “prey” to imperialist agendas.⁵⁴

The collaboration of the imperialist powers with the Turks never ceased, but it seems to have acquired a new role on the island. The fighting in Erenköy/Kokkina in August of 1963 was presented as an outcome of Turkish obedience to the NATO alliance and destabilizing the situation on Cyprus. In that case, the claim was made that “the NATO allies [were] willing to intervene [...] as long as, from that point onwards, they were allowed to do [in Cyprus] what they want to do, [...] reminding [Greeks] that what the Turks did could happen again.” Imperialism was presented as a conspiracy against Cyprus, Greece and, generally speaking, all Middle Eastern and independent countries. By striking Cyprus, the imperialists “wish to numb the morale of liberation movements. They want to establish an offensive military base facing the ‘worrying’ voices of the Afro-Asian shores.”⁵⁵ This conspiracy also managed to drag the Greek government in, because “the Greek government never realized that, behind the official declarations, *Enosis* through the establishment of an independent Cypriot state and ensuring self-determination means a national and fortified solution.” Lastly, it was argued that the Cyprus conspiracy aimed at both “Makarios AND Papandreou, Cyprus AND Greece, and above all, the Greek People.”⁵⁶ The same fate was expected for Malta, of which “until recently its independence was strongly opposed” but in light of the loss of bases in Libya and Cyprus, “this is the only way NATO could establish base and control the Middle East.”⁵⁷ In that way, the imperialist plan was seen as retaining the neo-colonial system. This was also the case in the “American bloody intervention in Congo, the insolent aggressiveness against Vietnam and Laos, and the frenzied quest for bases in the Indian Ocean.”⁵⁸

Within this EDA narrative, the countries of the Third World were presented as being the true bastions of freedom and independence and that their national struggles for liberation were supported by the Soviet Union, as was the case for Cyprus. The argument was made that it was clear from the promises of the Russian leader to “guarantee the independence and integrity of Cyprus,” and the fact that the Soviet Union exhorted Great Britain to withdraw its troops and

⁵⁴ Ch. Odysseos, “The Cyprus Question in the Light of the Anglo-American Oppositions,” *Helliniki Aristera*, n. 6, January 1964, p. 28 and p. 30.

⁵⁵ A. Diamantopoulos, “Cyprus in the Centre of Conspiracy,” *Helliniki Aristera*, n. 13, August 1964, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁷ Ch. Odysseos, “Cyprus in the Plan of Imperialist Counter-Attack,” *Helliniki Aristera*, n.16 October 15, 1964, p. 49.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

warned Turkey to stop offensives on the island that it was the only country which truly sided with oppressed countries and with Greece and Cyprus.⁵⁹ And a declaration was made to the effect of: “The efforts the NATO coalition is making to intervene in the domestic matters of the Cypriot Republic are very dangerous for peace in the Mediterranean, as well as for world peace.”⁶⁰ The reaction of the imperialist powers to the murderous bombardments that took place on the island disclosed the goals the former were hoping to achieve and alarmed the Arab world, who realized through the Cyprus struggle the jeopardy they were also in. Cyprus, therefore, was considered to be a part of the greater Middle Eastern crisis, and was linked with the politics of the wider region of the Mediterranean. It was argued that by placing the Cyprus Question within its “proper” Middle Eastern and Mediterranean framework, Greece would understand why “a solution that would ‘nuclearize’ and make the island a NATO base, and thus help the imperialist powers fulfill their goal of oppressing people who are rising up in revolt, is not acceptable to the socialist world and independent countries.”⁶¹

Anti-imperialism in the TİP and Cyprus

The progressive element of this specific kind of Third World nationalism was dominated by its true, just, and “real” content due to the economic and political elements it carried with it. During the 1960s in Turkey, as in other parts of the world, the dominant type of nationalism was Third World nationalism.⁶² Aybar argued that the nationalism of the East differed from that of the West in the sense that the latter’s goal was to serve the interests and needs of imperialism. This was clear in the demonstration of a typology offered by the party in which nationalism and imperialism were depicted as two elements of the same equation:

Turkish nationalism is the ideological expression of the reaction of our people against the foreign yoke, imperialism and capitalism. It is resolutely attached to the idea of independence [...] It is essential that we distinguish between Turkish nationalism and the concept of nationalism as it is practiced in the West. Turkish nationalism is not a racist, chauvinist, irredentist and regressive ideology which despises other nations. [...] Nationalism in the West is a belligerent tool in the

⁵⁹ Ch. Odysseos, “Cyprus, USSR and Imperialism,” *Helliniki Aristera*, n. 14, September 1964, pp. 79–80.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁶¹ Ch. Odysseos, “The Middle Eastern Crisis and Cyprus,” *Helliniki Aristera*, no. 21–22, April–May 1965, pp. 79–89.

⁶² Artun Ünsal, “TİP’in Ulusal Bağımsızlık Anlayışı,” pp. 247–252, here p. 248, in Gündüz Vassaf (ed), *Mehmet Ali Aybar Sempozyumları, 1997–2002*, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 2003.

hands of imperialism and destroys other nations. In our Turkey, Atatürkist nationalism, apart from protecting the existence of the Turkish nation and keeping it on the path of survival, has shed light on the awakening and liberation of all oppressed nations in the world.⁶³

According to the party, there was an attempt to keep the nationalist element away from the people and to establish a “myth” that nationalism and socialism were not compatible. Aybar argued that this was a conscious decision and strategy of the imperialists/capitalists as they sought to keep the people in darkness and “keep them from awakening.”⁶⁴ However, he thought that the awakening in Turkey would take place, and Turks “will build socialism on the basis of national independence.”⁶⁵ The nationalism of the left, and more specifically that of the TİP, differed substantially from that of the conservative right because:

Independence and nationalism are the foundation stones of socialism. Without a doubt, the nationalism in question has nothing to do with fascist nationalism which demands that other nations to be enslaved and oppressed and belittled. All oppressed nations which take up socialism and fight against imperialism are empowered by a humanist sense of nationalism. They all want to be freed from foreign domination and develop their own cultures and economies. [...] They fight so they can secure an honorable place within the family of humanity with their own sciences, cultures and arts.⁶⁶

Moreover, in line with Kemalist tradition and policies and as another element of Turkey’s “national independence” strategy, the party adopted Atatürk’s principles when it added his words to the party program in one of its fundamental anti-imperialist statements: “Gentlemen! We, as the national committee, are people who fight against imperialism which seeks to harm us and against capitalism that wants to devour us.”⁶⁷ This arose both as a tactical move to mobilize the people and legitimize the party itself, and also because it was truly believed that Atatürk fought imperialism and capitalism.⁶⁸ Boran (among others) shared the opinion that Kemalism was a prerequisite of socialism. Notably she stated that “a reinterpretation of the principles of Atatürk

⁶³ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Hürriyet ve Demokrasimizin Temeli Anayasa,” *Sosyal Adalet*, no. 11, 1963, pp. 8–9, here p. 9.

⁶⁴ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Gerçek Milliyetçiler Sosyalistlerdir,” p. 563, in Mehmet Ali Aybar.

⁶⁵ Ugur Mumcu, *Aybar ile Söyleşi – Sosyalizm ve Bağımsızlık*, p. 175.

⁶⁶ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Tarihin Çizgisi Antiemperyalist Savaş Çizgisidir,” p. 621, in Mehmet Ali Aybar.

⁶⁷ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kıbrıs Tezimiz,” p. 327, in *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Artun Ünsal, pp. 248–249.

in accordance with the realities of social life and structure naturally gives way to a socialist system. Socialism appears as the requisite and logical outcome of the principles of Atatürk.”⁶⁹ For the Turkish left, and for the TİP in particular, anti-imperialism was one of the most prominent claims of the period. But the TİP's distinct anti-imperialist characteristic was that it proposed an equal distance from both great powers. Thus, Turkey would be “neither a Soviet satellite, nor accept American imperialism.”⁷⁰

The TİP managed to become the main anti-imperialist voice in the Turkish Grand National Assembly starting from 1965. The party based its criticisms of the Demirel government on the friendly relations of the government with the US.⁷¹ These relations, according to the TİP, caused “35 million square meters of Turkish land [to be] under American occupation.”⁷² It was argued that the loss of Turkish soil, which was completely controlled by the US, was brought about by bilateral agreements. Aybar declared that Turkey should not be the satellite of any foreign power: “We cannot tolerate being the satellite of either the West or the East... Turkey belongs to the Turkish people.”⁷³

The claim was made that imperialism in Turkey was based on a relationship between the great imperialist powers and the ruling classes, or the comprador bourgeoisie. The latter, since Atatürk's death, were argued to be in the DP circles that wanted to join NATO and other international organizations, and the claim was made that they surrendered the country unconditionally to the hands of the imperialists. This relationship is best demonstrated in the case of Cyprus. According to the party chairman, “beneath the Cyprus Question lie the interests of imperialism” and Turkey “is not able to pursue an independent foreign policy”⁷⁴ because, since the 1950s, the DP administration had compromised the national interests of the country and

⁶⁹ Behice Boran, “Atatürkçülere Çağrı,” *Vatan*, October 29, 1962, reprinted in Behice Boran, *Yazılar, Konuşmalar, Söyleşiler, Savunmalar*, vol. 1, Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, TÜSTAV, 2010, pp. 504–507.

⁷⁰ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Her Şeyden Evvel Her Şeyin Üstünde İstiklal,” p. 97, in Mehmet Ali Aybar; Uğur Mumcu, pp. 117–118; “Çekoslovakya Olayları Karşısında TİP'in Görüşü,” *TİP Haberleri*, no. 20, 1 September 1968, pp. 2–3. This represents a difference or a deviation from the Comintern directives, considering that both of them were at some point in the past TKP members. According to Atılgan, this was not the case throughout Aybar's political career. Gökhan Atılgan, “Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketinde Anti-Emperyalizm ve Bağımsızlıkçılık (1920–1971),” pp. 662–704, in M. Gültekingil (ed), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8: *Sol*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2007.

⁷¹ TİP, *Seçim Bildirisi*, Yenilik Basımevi, İstanbul, 1963; TİP, *Yaşasın Emekçiler Yaşasın Türkiye*, Sosyal Adalet Yayınları, Ankara, 1965.

⁷² Mehmet Ali Aybar, *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 7th session, November 7, 1965, p. 176; see also Turhan Salman, vol. 1, p. 102, in which the date of the session is mistakenly referred to as October 7, 1965. Reprinted as a party brochure, as Mehmet Ali Aybar, *Türkiye’yi Adalet Partisi Kalkındıramaz*, İstanbul Matbaası, İstanbul, 1966, here p. 47.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 179.

⁷⁴ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kıbrıs Tezimiz,” p. 322, in Mehmet Ali Aybar.

betrayed it to the imperialists, Anglo-Saxon colonialists.⁷⁵ It has already been mentioned that the issue was portrayed by the Turkish left as a national cause pursued not only in the interests of the Turkish community on the island, but also in Turkey's national interests (*milli menfaat*). Therefore, it was considered "not only the right thing to do, but it a duty" to "take up arms" and protect the country. Moreover, the Cyprus Question was seen as not being limited to Turkish borders. It was argued that were three interwoven factors in relation to Cyprus that had to be taken into consideration:

- "Ensuring the safeguarding of the rights and interests of the Turkish community.
- Protecting the national security of Turkey because through Cyprus imperialists could control the Mediterranean and the Middle East.
- The Cyprus Question is part of the anti-imperialist struggle – i.e. the anti-American struggle because it is the US that leads contemporary imperialism – against which we fight, and it is taking on great proportions in our country."⁷⁶

According to the Turkish left, Turkey seemed to be living out a *déjà vu*, as Greece was acting as she had "forty-seven years ago, and not just for her own interests and policies. She had come to be a tool of Anglo-Saxon imperialism. On a smaller scale, she had also come to serve the imperialist policy of the *Megali Idea*, supported by Anglo-Saxon imperialism." In the same vein, the party continued its argument by linking the Cyprus Question with anti-imperialism, claiming that in the event of "a war breaking out on Cyprus, this will transform into an anti-imperialist and anti-American war against the US, NATO and Greece, and it will end with the ousting of US imperialism from Turkey, regardless of the consequences."⁷⁷

The party was of the opinion that the Cyprus Question was a complex one, and claimed that it involved two dimensions. On the one hand, it seemed to be an anti-imperialist national liberation movement, and because of that, the Third World and Arab countries offered their support to Makarios.⁷⁸ However, there was another point of view which it was claimed should be used in its favor in the anti-imperialist struggle by explaining the true content of the issue to neutral countries and the Turkish public. It was believed that this would help the party emerge from its state of isolation. For that reason, Behice Boran presented an account of how Cyprus came to

⁷⁵ See, among others, the Bursa speech referred to earlier.

⁷⁶ Behice Boran, "Antiimperialist Mücadelede Öncü, İşçi Sınıfın Partisidir," *TİP Haberleri*, no. 3, December 16, 1967, p. 10. Reprinted in Behice Boran, *Yazılar, Konuşmalar, Söyleşiler, Savunmalar*, vol. 1, Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, TÜSTAV, 2010, pp. 652–653.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See also İbrahim Çamlı, "Kıbrıs Meselesinin Çözümü Üçüncü Dünyanın İçindedir," *Yön*, no.108, April 23, 1965.

play a leading role in the anti-imperialist/colonialist struggle in Turkish politics. The point of criticism returned to the rhetoric of the Bursa speech, since the main line of argumentation was repeated: the party claimed that Turkey did not have a policy concerning Cyprus until 1950, when the British forced it onto the political agenda. It was claimed that this was the worst policy mistake any Turkish government had ever made.⁷⁹ However, the struggle of the Greek Cypriots against the British entailed a contradiction: on the one hand, it aimed at removing the British, but on the other hand, it aimed at *Enosis* of the island with Greece. International public opinion and Third World countries interpreted this as the *Enosis* of a community with its country and therefore, they responded positively. However, the party argued that:

[...] *Enosis*, in its current circumstances, is completely beneficial for Anglo-Saxon imperialism. Greek capitalism, as it developed in its own way, had since the 19th century created strong bonds with British imperialism and ended as the latter's representative and tool in the Eastern Mediterranean. The invasion of the Greeks in Asia Minor was a result of this, and now *Enosis* means the same for Anglo-Saxon imperialism. In the end, they were forced to accept the liberation of the island but they managed to save their bases. Now, *Enosis* will secure the continuation of the existence of these bases. Additionally, the US, because of its interests in the Middle East and the military and broader politics of the situation, prefer *Enosis* of Cyprus with Greece to independence. In particular, an independent and neutral Cyprus, demilitarized and without bases, is not in the interests of the USA.⁸⁰

"If," the party argued, "we explained the situation to the world and its importance for the Anglo-Saxon imperialism, then we would be able to bring the Third World to our side," but to do this, the government had to focus its foreign policy on independent countries carrying out anti-imperialist, national liberation struggles. In a similar vein, the party argued that Turkey should not expect any help from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, like capitalist countries, did not believe in the Turkish policy on Cyprus. The party "sides with the Soviets, as far as the position of federation and *Enosis* are concerned. But [...] since they [the Soviets] do not side against the instrumentalization of Cyprus as a base of operations for the Anglo-Saxon interests in the Middle East, neither the Soviets nor Third World countries (especially Arab countries) will support

⁷⁹ Behice Boran, "Kıbrıs Meselesinde Niçin Amerika da Sovyetler de Bizi Desteklemiyor?," *Dönüşüm*, no. 5, June 1965; Reprinted in Behice Boran, *Yazılar, Konuşmalar, Söyleşiler, Savunmalar*, vol. 1, Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, TÜSTAV, 2010, pp. 575–578.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

us.”⁸¹ Therefore, it was argued that the full attention of Turkey had to be turned to a foreign policy based on Atatürk’s principles.

For this reason, the Turkish government was urged not to accept the Acheson plan proposed by the Americans. Johnson’s initial letter was rightly viewed as a prime example of foreign intervention. The Acheson plan that followed was seen as another imperialist intervention, and seemed to put Turkish national interests at risk. The Acheson Plan was perceived to be a “disguised” form of *Enosis* and acceptance would hence mean the approval of a solution contrary to Turkish national interests. Furthermore, the claim was made that Turkey would acquire the profile of a country that orbits around Anglo-Saxon imperialism, an inaccurate profile, despite the fact that she fought for a national issue for a long time.⁸²

Within this context, and at the height of the Cyprus Question, on September 6th, 1964 Mehmet Ali Aybar, who was also supported at the time by the *Yön* circle (the latter playing an instrumental role in the anti-imperialist struggle and the formation of a common front) called upon all anti-imperialist forces, both socialists and Atatürkists:

Let us unite our power for an independent foreign policy. Everything depends on our being independent; planned development, the establishment of a democratic regime, carrying out radical reforms – all these goals can be attained only when we become fully independent in our foreign affairs.⁸³

Both the TİP and *Yön* called on all those in the “nationalist, real Atatürkist, leftist camp” to unite in a passive resistance movement,⁸⁴ a “Second Liberation War” or a second *Kuva-ı Milliye*, the term used by the TİP, and fight imperialism and its local collaborators. The collaboration and alliance between the imperialists and the domestic bourgeois class would not be tolerated by the party, which stated that:

Forty-four years after completing the First National Struggle for Liberation we must start the second one. [...] Until now we have allowed our rights to be violated by America, under the excuse that

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Behice Boran, “Kıbrıs Meselesinde Niçin Amerika da Sovyetler de Bizi Desteklemiyor?”

⁸³ IISG, “Speech Delivered by TİP Chairman Mehmet Ali Aybar in Ankara,” September 6, 1964, *Kemal Sülker Papers*, Box 551; see also Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kıbrıs Tezimiz,” pp. 317–336, in Mehmet Ali Aybar, Ibid.

⁸⁴ Passive resistance would force the Americans to abandon Turkey because “Merchants were urged not to supply Americans, hairdressers were urged not to do the hair of their wives, and ministry officials were urged not to talk to American specialists.” Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kuzu Postuna Bürünenler Ancak Koyunları Aldatabilirler,” p.473, in Mehmet Ali Aybar; see also Erkan Doğan, p. 162, fn. 61.

they will protect us from future dangers. We are no longer in favor of this. And we are determined to fight until the last American soldier has left our country. [...] The Second National Liberation Movement has started. And this time it is certain that victory will also mean a victory for socialism.⁸⁵

The local collaborators, the comprador bourgeoisie, were argued to be the real betrayers of the nation, and were defined by leftist circles as the “lackeys of US imperialism.”⁸⁶ The socialist struggle, as it was called, would be waged by socialists and not by the Atatürkists, as the party believed that political and economic independence could be achieved only through a socialist system. According to the TİP, within the socialist camp in general and among socialists who were dealing with the issue of anti-imperialism/Americanism there were two different approaches.

The first one was promulgated by the TİP and claimed that “the issue of independence is a socialist issue and the second national struggle for liberation will be successful only under the leadership of the working classes and their party. Thus, we have to organize the working class and the masses and turn them into a political force.”⁸⁷ The other approach claimed that the goals of the national liberation movement could be achieved only through an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle, with the “middle classes” playing an important (even a leading) role during that process, while socialism *per se* would come later. The second formula, that achieving independence entailed the collaboration and leadership of the national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, “is for underdeveloped countries. Generally, it is for countries that are not independent or for countries that have recently earned their political independence from colonial states; [in other words] the ‘new African/Asian states’ and the countries of Latin America.”⁸⁸

But for the TİP, Turkey held a distinct position within the current system. “It is the first country that waged a national liberation struggle; 44 years ago it won, but nevertheless it became dependent again because it could not materialize its development. Therefore, there is a 50-year

⁸⁵ IISG, “Basın Bülteni,” November 20, 1966, *Kemal Sülker Papers*, Box 610, folder 1.

⁸⁶ Özgür Mutlu Ulus, p. 35. “The supporters of the American protectorate [*Amerikan mandacıları*] felt an endless joy of satisfaction that has fulfilled the dream of the years of armistice [*mütakere*].” Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kıbrıs Tezimiz,” p. 332.

⁸⁷ Behice Boran, “Az Gelişmiş Ülkelerde Anti-Emperyalist Mücadelelerin Niteliği,” *Dönüşüm*, no. 10, January 1967. Reprinted in Behice Boran, *Yazılar, Konuşmalar, Söyleşiler, Savunmalar*, vol. 1, Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, TÜSTAV, 2010, pp. 627–632.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

experience, and this stage, that the second formula talks about, has passed.”⁸⁹ The party argued that there was no resemblance between Turkey and the situation in countries such as China, Vietnam and South Korea. Indeed, Turkey was different from many Asian, Latin American, and African countries because of the fact that Turkey had never been colonized and had always been independent starting from the first liberation war of 1919–1922 onwards.⁹⁰ According to this second formula, the leading role of the revolutionary process was attributed to the national bourgeoisie. No matter how revolutionary the role of the national bourgeoisie might be, it also presented some other crucial characteristics that had to be taken into consideration. According to the party, the national bourgeoisie sought to take advantage of the national market and was therefore in favor of an independent state and stood against foreign capital. Even those who accepted the participation of the national bourgeoisie in the national struggle for liberation agreed that it was unstable, held a double agenda, and had a tendency to ally with imperialism and feudalism, thus transforming itself into a comprador bourgeoisie.⁹¹ Thus the party of the working class, i.e. the TİP, had to wage the anti-imperialist struggle.

It was argued by the party that during “the classical period of capitalism, the working class of Western capitalist societies was the object of capitalist exploitation. However, in the imperialist era, the subjects of capitalist (and imperialist) exploitation were the backward countries of the Third World.”⁹² Therefore, due to the structural change in capitalism, there was a change in the revolutionary center which moved from the West to the East, and the prime revolutionary force appeared to be the national liberation struggles of underdeveloped countries against imperialism and its internal collaborators. It was argued that to an extent the liberation of a country was closely linked with the prime goals of national integration and independence. In Turkey, as in other Third World countries, national independence bore a content that was not restricted to foreign policy but also entailed economic, social, political and even cultural aspects.⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Behice Boran, *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm Sorunları*, pp. 144–6.

⁹¹ “If the national bourgeoisie wants to protect the national market from foreign capital then it will try also to give a place to socialists and to their party in the anti-imperialist struggle. But in Turkey there is no such bourgeoisie. The socialist party of a country needs to take leadership of the anti-imperialist movement from the bourgeoisie, or if it cannot do it by itself then it should show to the world the above-mentioned character of the bourgeoisie.” Behice Boran, “Az Gelişmiş Ülkelerde Anti-Emperyalist Mücadelelerin Niteliği.”

⁹² Erkan Doğan, p. 158.

⁹³ Artun Ünsal, p. 249.

The Turkish national war of liberation of 1919–1922 was portrayed by the TİP as the historical basis of its understanding of nationalism. In the party’s narration of the war, those years of national liberation were depicted as an era of national awakening for the people living within the borders of the national pact (*misak-ı milli*). It was through this national war against imperialism that the members of the Turkish nation came to realize that they belonged to a common community and shared strong common material and spiritual features. Atatürk’s nationalism was perceived to be the battle-standard against Western imperialism.⁹⁴

This national struggle for liberation was then transferred to Cyprus, where it was expected to continue to fulfillment so that Turkey could achieve complete national independence. To be independent and sovereign, according to the TİP, meant that “the nation defines its own fate.”⁹⁵ However, the undisputed right of the Turkish nation to decide its own future was taken away by the American and Turkish governments who were complicit in providing excessive rights to the Americans.

We, the nation, that carried for centuries the disgraceful pain of the Judicial Capitulations [*Adli Kapitülâsyonlar*], will never forgive those who signed this agreement.⁹⁶

The claim was made that the situation in Turkey resembled the situation during Ottoman times. National independence was lost to the Turkish left, especially after the Prime Minister’s decision to invade Cyprus. Regardless of whether this decision was right or not, the fact that it was dictated by a foreign country suggested that Turkey had lost its independence and sovereignty. Turkey was presented by the party as “the first country that waged a national struggle for liberation” which shared no similarities with any of the other struggles of Turkey, because:

In this war our people fought without orders, initiating the struggle impulsively and knowing that it [the people] was fighting for itself. In this war, we came into possession of our national consciousness.⁹⁷

But the national struggle for liberation carried an additional meaning for the TİP: that of fighting against an unjust global system, capitalism. The Kemalist national struggle was carried

⁹⁴ Murat Sarıca and Nurhalp Devrim, *TİP’i Tanıyalım*, p.16, as quoted in Erkan Doğan, p. 160.

⁹⁵ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kıbrıs Tezimiz,” p. 325, in Mehmet Ali Aybar.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 326.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 327.

on and waged by the TİP against imperialism and colonialism, as it had been by Atatürk. But the situation in Cyprus and the crisis of 1964 changed the perception of the situation that Turkey had until that moment. A new reality emerged, according to the party of the left, showing the degree of Turkish dependence on the US. Thus the party claimed that all bilateral agreements Turkey had signed sooner or later should be nullified so that Turkey could adhere to a national, neutral foreign policy, keeping her distance from both the US and the Soviet Union (without meaning that she should adopt a hostile policy towards the US). Such an approach, it was claimed, would be a national policy in favor of the national interests of Turkey. For the previous 17 years, Turkey had been living in “a protective friendship” with the US, but the real fact was that Turkey had no friends, even including the US. The perception was that there can be no friendship between a colonizing state and the colonized people.⁹⁸

According to the TİP, Turkey had consumed excessive energy finding foreign capital and borrowing money, which turned her into a semi-colony. This resulted in a situation in which the Turkish people were placed in a disadvantaged position. In reality, the alliances that Turkey signed with the US and NATO in the name of the alleged security of national independence, territorial integrity and sovereign rights, “caused the violation of [Turkish] national independence and sovereign rights themselves,”⁹⁹ as became evident in the case of Cyprus.

Through the case of Cyprus, the TİP was trying to mobilize the people, organize them and turn them into a political force that would eventually bring socialism to Turkey. This political force (the people and its party), it was argued, was the only one that carried the true patriotic duty of bringing the country into alignment with the desired and expected course. In other words, it would bring Turkey to her true place in the world, and attempts would be made to establish friendly relations with neutral states and the countries of the Third World that had recently earned their freedom, following the path that Turkey had been on years before.¹⁰⁰ The place of Turkey was thought to be with the countries of the Third World. It was argued that Turkey, due to underdevelopment and exploitation of her resources, belonged to the camp that fights capitalism and imperialism. And because of that, as noted before, if Turkey returned to an independent, anti-imperialist policy, she would earn the support of the Third World and would play a leading role for such countries and in the international arena. The party’s opinion

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 334.

⁹⁹ IISG, “Dünya Durumu,” October 28, 1967, *Kemal Süler Papers*, Box 561.

¹⁰⁰ Mehmet Ali Aybar, “Kıbrıs Tezimiz,” p. 336.

concerning its role in the international arena is revealing in many respects. It was argued that Turkey waged the first national struggle for liberation in modern times because she was more developed than other underdeveloped countries, and with her 600years' experience of administration (referring to Ottoman times), Turkey held one of the required qualifications to be in a position of leadership. In this way, it was claimed that Turkey would have the honor of being the first country to discover the correct path of development for underdeveloped countries.¹⁰¹

The crisis in Cyprus caused Turkish people to become aware that Turkey was confronting the same imperialist powers that she had fought in 1919–1922. In other words, she was confronting Anglo-Saxon imperialism and the ambition of the Greek bourgeoisie to fulfill the imperialism of the *Megali Idea*. However, there was a difference, according to the party, from earlier times: now the US, not Britain, was leading the imperialist agenda. The party referred to Turkey's dependency on foreign capital as the trap of Anglo-Saxon imperialism. This dependency, and the true nature of Turkish–American relations, became apparent with the Johnson letter, and at the same time forcing the Turkish government to acknowledge how far it had been driven from Kemalist principles.¹⁰²

Not a single government, the TİP argued, “had not realized, and did not want to realize, that Great Britain and the US, in relation with the Cyprus Question, would be on the side of the *Rum*¹⁰³ and the Greeks [*Yunan*],” because their interests are best served that way.¹⁰⁴ The British bases in Cyprus, and support for *Enosis* with Greece in order to make Cyprus a NATO member, were of prime importance to British and American interests, so what the Turkish governments called “alliances” and “friendship” represented policy not to be trusted by the people. With the Johnson letter, the people realized this, and so they began participating in an anti-imperialist struggle in which “the Cyprus Question is the most tangible, most discernable and sensitive issue

¹⁰¹ IISG, “Dış Politika. Dünya Olayları,” n.d. [1967?], *Kemal Sülker Papers*, Box 558.

¹⁰² IISG, “Dış Olaylar ve DışPolitika,” 1966, *Kemal Sülker Papers*, Box 558.

¹⁰³ *Rum* is the word used in Turkish to denote the ethnically Greek citizens of Turkey. Under the *millet* system in the Ottoman era, the Orthodox Christians were referred to as the *millet-i Rum* without any ethnic connotations. The description was based solely on religions terms. After the disintegration of the empire, the concept lost its original meaning and was used only to identify ethnically Greek citizens of Turkey. *Rum* as a term is originally derived from the Eastern Roman Empire. However, in the Cyprus case, the word *Rum* is used to differentiate the Greeks of Cyprus, i.e. the Greek Cypriots, from the mainland Greeks. When the crisis in Cyprus was escalating and things seemed to reach a critical point, mainly after 1964/65, Cyprus was referred also as the *Rum Bölgesi*, the Greek Cypriot Territory/Zone, to differentiate it from the part of the island that was inhabited by Turkish Cypriots.

¹⁰⁴ IISG, “Dış Politika. Dünya Olayları.” It is noteworthy that the party differentiated Greek Cypriots from mainland Greeks, but the same did not hold true when it came to Turkish Cypriots and Turks. Instead, the word *soydaş* is used, which is equivalent to brother, of the same the soy, “blood,” “breed,” or “ancestry.”

of the anti-imperialist struggle and the Second National Liberation movement for the masses and public opinion.”¹⁰⁵ “The Cyprus Question is a point of reference,” the party remarked, “and of highest importance for the anti-imperialist struggle,” but the government seemed unable to realize this and oppose the US.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the Cyprus Question seemed to be a lost cause, since the government was unable to prevent the sole administration of the island by the *Rum* government which pushed aside the Turks, who played no part in the administration.

The strategic importance of Cyprus is also evident in the TİP’s political agenda, though filtered through anti-imperialist elements. It was argued that any power that was dominant in Cyprus and kept bases on the island could control Turkey and the Middle East. The party argued, through both Aybar and Boran, that since Cyprus could not be returned to Turkey as it ought to be, the best possible solution was the demilitarization of Cyprus. The demilitarization of the island, one of the fundamental positions of the TİP throughout the 1960s, was argued to be a prerequisite for permanent peace in the Eastern Mediterranean. Demilitarization would also benefit Arab and Third World countries, the socialist bloc, and smaller European states that feared Anglo-Saxon imperialism.

Conclusion

This section has offered a discussion of how imperialism was perceived by the left in Greece and Turkey and how they approached their policies regarding it. It was also argued that imperialism and resistance to it (i.e. anti-imperialism) were inextricably linked, defining and competing with each other.¹⁰⁷ During the 1950s and 1960s “[T]he revolutionary movement has never been so powerful in the world, now that the Third World movements for liberation and economic independence have been joined to the anti-capitalist struggle in the imperialist centers.”¹⁰⁸ An anti-imperial/colonial stance was constantly taken by both the TİP and EDA in their policies, which also coincided with the global anti-colonial movement and the spirit of the times. The

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.; IISG, “Dış Olaylar ve Dış Politika.”

¹⁰⁶ The party noted that Çağlayangıl would visit the US to meet with high-ranking officials in an attempt to solve the Cyprus Question and bring Turkish Cypriots in front of a *fait accompli*.

¹⁰⁷ See the path-breaking studies Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1978 and Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994. According to Said, Western imperialism and Third World nationalism advanced together. “Western imperialism and Third World nationalism feed off each other, but even at their worst they are neither monolithic nor deterministic.” The “structure of attitude and reference” that Said used refers to the common experience of the oppressor and the oppressed. *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xxiv.

¹⁰⁸ Etienne Balibar, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, New Left Books, London, 1977, p. 194.

liberation of formerly colonial countries was considered to be the force that dictated the revolutionary character of the period. As has been argued, “Every successful revolution has defined itself in *national* terms – the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and so forth – and, in so doing, has grounded itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the prerevolutionary past.”¹⁰⁹

The identification of the Greek and Turkish leftist parties with the semi-colonial and oppressed status of their respective countries (a situation that was aggravated by a strong comprador bourgeoisie) rendered the leftist parties putative anti-imperialist forces. Greece and Turkey, through the Cyprus Question, were both embarking on an anti-imperialist struggle for liberation in order to gain national independence and freedom. Embarking on the course of anti-imperialist and national struggles for liberation allowed the left to deploy a nationalist discourse whilst retaining a Marxist idiom.¹¹⁰ Thus in order to compete with the conservative bourgeois forces the left developed the theory that their countries could be transformed from oppressed, semi-colonial and humiliated nations to free, independent and productive countries. However, unlike other communist countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania in the 1940s and 1950s, their anti-imperialist struggle would not be assisted by the Soviet Union but by the Third World, which had gone through a series of national struggles for liberation. Thus, we see a break with internationalist principles and perspectives of the Soviet Union.

¹⁰⁹ Benedict Anderson, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ The same holds for the Bulgarian Communist Party, as Sygkelos showed very eloquently.