Enosis in the Left Discourse: EDA’s Talks in the Greek Parliament

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Abstract

This presentation provides a first interpretation as to what extend the official left political stance differentiates itself from the dominant hegemonic national approach to the Cyprus issue, and more specifically in the rhetoric of Enosis, the Cypriot demand to unite with Greece. EDA’s parliamentary minutes, being the legal representative of the Greek left, will be used as the main archival body to be researched. However, party decisions, programmes, as well as its political organ, the newspaper Avgi and secondary sources will be used supplementary in order to make our arguments stronger.

This paper is offered as work in progress, at an early stage of a PhD, and no strong conclusions are made.
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Introduction

Cyprus became the keystone to Greek politics during the whole post civil-war period. All the parties sloganized and argued in favor of *Enosis*, the unification of Cyprus with Greece, placing Enosis as an immediate national claim. The Left, which was trying to reinstitute itself within the Greek Nation, played a significant role in that respect. For EDA, being the legal representative of the Left, Enosis will take place as soon as the right for self-determination is achieved, because for the Left self-determination was considered as equivalent to Enosis. Therefore, as it will become obvious EDA is using self-determination and Enosis interchangeably. It is our main aim to show EDA’s approach to Enosis as this was depicted inside the Greek Parliament.

EDA (United Democratic Left)

EDA made its first appearance right before the second post civil-war elections. It was established in August 1951 and it presented itself as a coalition of parties and personalities, and right from the start, it was more than a simple electoral coalition. President of EDA was I. Pasalidis, while leader of the parliamentary team was Elias Eliou. Its emblem was Peace – Democracy – Amnesty, three words which were the goals the party was trying to achieve throughout its existence.

After 1956 EDA forms a united party, a decision that was ratified during the 1st Conference of the party. It was formed by three categories of parties and citizens: communists, socialists and left democrats, sharing a common cause, the *National Democratic*

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1 Jean Meynaud (2002), *The Political Forces in Greece, 1946-1965*, 2nd edition, Savvalas, Athens, p. 229; The parties and the personalities that merged were: *The Socialist Party of Greece* (Ioannis Pasalidis), *The Democratic Alarm* (that took part in the elections of April 1951, Dimitris Mariolis), *The Left Liberals* (Stamatis Hajibeys and Neoklis Grigoriades), *The Democratic Radical Party* (Mihalis Kyrkos), and a few days later, on 5th August, it was announced the joining of a part of *The Democratic Left Union* (Ioannis Kokorelis and Heracles Papachristos). Kokorelis and Papachristos were representing the *Democratic Left Union* after the death of the founder of the party, Ioannis Sofianopoulos a few days before the joining with EDA. The record of the party founding was signed in 3/8/1951

2 EDA (1952), *EDA Party Program*, EDA, Athens

3 EDA (1956), *1st Pan-Hellenic Conference*, EDA, Athens
Change. In other words, it was the legal representative of the left movement formed under a “Party coalition of EAM”. EDA is a party that “functions within the frame of the democratic constitutional legality and parliamentary system”; a party principle which does not refrain from bringing it constantly up. As a party of the “national democratic change” that substitutes its socialist garment with respect to the will of the “majority of the People” and the rigorism to the “democratic methods”, EDA promises the “peaceful” waging of the “united struggle inside and outside the parliament” for the effectiveness of the “Change” which is recapitulated to the “minimum programme” of democratization of the structure of the Greek society.

The President of EDA, I. Passalidis, underlines in a session of the National Cabinet (1st December 1956), that the issue that is imposed by EDA is not a demand of a socialist transformation, but a change in direction which has as its aim the national, anti-imperialist and democratic inspiration. Thus, the political strategy which had to be followed consists of the attempt of the conceptualization of the support on all the national patriotic forces, for the accomplishment of deliverance from foreign dependency. The adaptation of such a tactic indicates that the path to the socialist transformation gets through national independence. EDA’s persistence on the non-socialist transformation of Greek society becomes apparent in later talks too. For example, during the 1st Pan-Hellenic Congress in 1959 Passalidis explicitly states that “… the content of Change that EDA is professing is anti-imperialistic, national and democratic. EDA does not pose a question of change of the social status-quo. EDA does not program a Change of socialist character and the layout of our program emphasizes that we are a party of national democratic Change. It suggests however, measures on the economic and political field which will secure its headway according to the will of the majority of the People”.

EDA was the first and only party that during the campaign of the 1952 elections was against NATO, and although a pro-Soviet party it tried to keep equal distance from all the other powers proclaiming constantly the peaceful essence of the party and its neutrality. Thus,

4 Takis Benas (1995), A Conference that was Never Made; Delfini, Athens, pp. 9-11 and 13-21; Manolis Glezos, “15 years of fights of EDA”, Greek Left, issue 38, September 1966, p. 15
5 Panagiotis Noutsos (1992), Socialist Thought in Greece, Gnosi, Athens, vol. IV, p. 55; Meynaud seems to agree with that stating that “[EDA] was an attempt of reconstructing EAM”, ibid; Manolis Glezos introduction to Tasos Trikkas (2009), EDA, The New Face of the Left, 1951-1967, Themelio, Athens, vol. 1, p. 19
6 EDA Party Programme, ibid
7 Jean Meynaud, ibid, p. 243 For example in the Party program of 1959 and later programmes too
8 Panagiotis Noutsos, ibid, p. 61
9 Avgi, 4th December 1956, p.1
10 EDA (1959), 1st Pan-Hellenic Congress, Athens, EDA, Athens, p. 70
11 EDA (1952) Programmatic Principles of EDA, EDA, Athens
the main thesis of EDA can be summarized as follows: full independence to the island of Cyprus, abolition of the London-Zurich agreements, as well as of the various mechanisms which derive from them and unconditional rebuttal to the intervention of NATO for the solution to the problem.

**EDA in the Greek Parliament**

EDA is represented constantly, since its formation in 1951, in the Greek Parliament, by its leader I. Pasalidis, Ilias Iliou, K. Gavriliidis, L. Kyrkos and others, and it is not an exaggeration to claim that the Left was there to play anew a significant role in Greek politics, as it did in World War II and in the civil-war. As early as in 1951, EDA tried to show that it was as much patriotic as the rest of the parties and in that respect the Cyprus Issue would be the keystone in its politics.

Right from the start, EDA took a clear-cut position in the Greek parliament with K. Gavriilidis and coalesced with the student movement that was starting to be active in the beginning of the 1950s. The internationalization of the Issue was the reason behind the great student demonstrations (22/11/1951) at Propylaia, Athens that were suppressed by the police, and an incident that was discussed at length in the Greek Parliament. The next day, EDA deputy, suggested that, since the Cyprus Issue is a National Issue and it stirs everyone’s emotions, the Parliament should issue a decree in favor of Enosis and present it at meetings, demonstrations etc. however, without being anti-British.  

A few months later, EDA through its Parliamentary team pledged its “full solidarity to the Pan-national demand of enosis” and openly accused the government for not acting nationally to the Cyprus Issue. Moreover, it was the first party that called for immediate enosis to the U.N. with explicit proposals, in other words that of self-determination.

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12 K Gavriilides (1997), 23 November 1951, vol. 1, *Cyprus Issue in the Greek Parliament* [hereafter CIGP], p. 33; Gavriilidis finishes his speech stating “This is our opinion, purely national, and no one can raise a point on that no matter how hard one shouts”. His suggestion was refuted by the anapliwrítis Foreign Minister Varvoutis who claimed that the government should handle the issue “not with rallies and irresponsible demonstrations, but with diplomatic means”. Varvoutis, *CIGP*, p. 34; my emphasis

13 The declaration was prepared after the Pan-Athenian demonstrations in favor of *enosis* and signed by E. Mantakas, B. Efraimidis, Th. Vlamopoulos, G. Simos, L. Brillakis, G. Spiliopoulos, and P. Katerinis. EDA, 14 May 1952, *CIGP*, p. 36; my emphasis. The same views were expressed during the same session by V. Efraimidis who stated that “the Enosis of Cyprus with Greece bares the moral, the historical rational and the freedom with the sense of the sovereignty of the peoples. […] With special statute of the national Delegation to raise a point of claim from the British government”. V. Efraimidis, *CIGP*, p. 40; see also the speech of mistrust towards the
After the elections of 1952, where EDA managed to be represented in 62 voting districts (9.55%), it starts the “impressive expansion of EDA”\textsuperscript{14} with the repetitive and municipal elections of 1953 and 1954 respectively. Moreover, the “expanding” stage of the party coincides with the signing of the Agreement in 1953, between Greece and the U.S. with which the U.S. are authorized to use the Greek soil for their military tasks and the process by which the U.S. started their active intervention to Greek politics. EDA as a party that has among its main goals the independence of Greece from any foreign help went against the agreement issuing a declaration through its Organization Committee in 20.10.1953 which characterized the agreement “a fatal blow to the independence of the country”,\textsuperscript{15} and proclaimed that new elections should be conducted in order for the people to decide.

EDA’s increasing political influence on the people, and the launch of the EOKA struggle in 1955, made its political leader I. Pasalidis proceed with fierce criticism of the Karamanlis government in the Parliament concerning Cyprus. Specifically, he accused the governmental policies that “lay down the Cyprus Issue to ruin, as they lay down in general to all national interests”.\textsuperscript{16} He went on to state that the government transformed Cyprus “from an international issue to an issue that concerns Greece, Great Britain, Turkey and NATO”,\textsuperscript{17} to abandon the demand of self-determination and become loyal to NATO. Therefore, what needs to be done according to EDA is the re-examination of the Greek foreign policy \textit{in toto},\textsuperscript{18} to conclude on another session that “unfortunately, for us [EDA], the government transformed Greece to a non-independent state”.\textsuperscript{19} Moreover, EDA’s criticism did not limit itself in the Parliament. The Organization Committee of the party demanded the exit from NATO in 10.9.1955: “The events in Cyprus, the brutality of the British imperialism, the ferocity and the threats of the Turkish chauvinists testify to the general policy, that impose also in Greece the accession to NATO. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the immediate disengagement from the obligations that were imposed upon her in absentia of the Greek people”.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{14} Ilias Nikolakopoulos (2001), \textit{The Cachectic Democracy}, Patakis, Athens, p. 176 where the author notes that the expansion is conducted through the Thessaloniki, Karditsa, Piraeus, Evros, Drama and Fthiotida districts. In that respect, the Centrist support cannot be ignored since it was with their help that EDA managed to be expanded.

\textsuperscript{15} As quoted in Tasos Trikkas, \textit{ibid}, vol. 1, p. 224

\textsuperscript{16} I. Pasalidis, 5 April 1956, \textit{CIGP}, p. 102

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{ibid}

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ibid}

\textsuperscript{19} I. Pasalidis, 23 May 1956, \textit{CIGP}, p. 229; On a previous session Pasalidis, with the occasion of not revealing the government “top secret” documents on Cyprus, accused the government for compromise. I. Pasalidis, 25 April 1956, \textit{CIGP}, p. 176

\textsuperscript{20} O.C., 10/9/1955 as quoted in Trikkas, p. 309
EDA in the beginning of 1957 found fertile ground to accuse openly not only the government but the colonial powers also that “instigated the Turkish brutalities in Nicosia”. The Cyprus issue, Iliou declared once more, is an issue of “national need” and it should unite the whole Nation to the “sacred” cause of the Cypriot self-determination.21 EDA’s suggestions went in vein and two months later EDA accused the government of operating badly concerning Cyprus.22 In addition, Pasalidis, accused the government of lying to the Greek people and of compromising to the Cyprus cause, because he transformed Greece into a tributary country, transformed Greece to a slave country and thus, the government cannot decisively help the struggle of the people of Cyprus for self-determination.23 By the end of 1958, Pasalidis states that the “Cyprus Issue goes through extreme dangers”, not because of the British and U.S. policies, but because of the government that believes that nothing can be done unless these two powers change their policies, and he points out that “this is not the policy of the [Greek] Nation”. And the “policy of the [Greek] Nation” is the liberation of Cyprus through self-determination.24

The following year the negotiations between the Greek Foreign Minister Averoff and his Turkish counterpart, Zorlu led to the signing of the London-Zurich Agreement. EDA, which managed to become the leading opposition party in the elections of 1958 obtaining 24.43% of the votes25 criticized the government policy fiercely both inside the Parliament and outside it through its newspaper Avgi.26

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21 I. Iliou (1997), 25 January 1957, vol. 2, CIGP, p. 5; Moreover, he calls for the authorized police force of the UN in Cyprus to become the rallying pole for the whole nation, all the parties and constitute from today onwards the common national policy on the Cyprus issue.
22 The certain misgivings as regards to government policies however, were not introduced to the session to be debated since according to article 78 of the Constitution it needs at least 20 signatures. EDA’s proposal was signed only by 12; 6 March 1957, CIGP, p. 11
23 I. Pasalidis, 11 March 1957, CIGP, p. 30; On another session, he accused both the government as well as the leading opposition party, Papandreou’s Liberals. On the one hand, EDA accused the government for monopolizing the foreign affairs and deliberately does not disclose crucial documents because it owns the majority of the Parliament. On the other hand, openly accuses the Liberals because they falsely think that they can dominate the opposition voices in the Parliament. I. Pasalidis, 24 October 1957, CIGP, p. 154
24 I. Pasalidis, 13 December 1958, CIGP, p. 280
25 In the elections of 1958, EDA managed for the first time in the Greek history to become the leading opposition party. However, EDA was not accepted as a legitimate party within the Parliament, since the Greek political spectrum was still divided among “ethnikofrones” (loyal to the nation), and “communists”. The efforts of the Left party to be included again in the Greek society and prove its patriotism took place also through its newspaper Avgi with a series of articles referring to the national resistance in which the KKE contribution proved more than effective. This does not mean that the Left conduct its political fight based on the past, but the past, especially for the Left, “becomes the main axis of the identity of its party structure”; Eleni Pashaloudi, “Memory and Political Speech”, p. 152 in Alkis Rigos, Serafim I. Seferiadis and Evanthis Chajivasiliou, eds. (2008), The “Short” Decade of the 60s, Kastanioti, Athens
26 For the articles criticizing the Greek government concerning the London-Zurich Agreement, see the news report in Avgi, 13 March 1959 ff.
The government as soon as it returned from abroad signing the London-Zurich Agreement claimed that “all the Greeks of Constantinople and all the Greeks of diaspora” as well as “the Cypriot people, besides the Leftists” sided up with it and acquired further respect because of its policies.\textsuperscript{27} Iliou urged to disconfirm Foreign Minister’s claims because they “lacked legitimization. He continued stating that “Cyprus is neither a Republic, nor independent”.\textsuperscript{28} The London-Zurich Agreement is “diabolical, it will create dead-ends, obstacles which Greece will come up against”\textsuperscript{29} and the constitutional status of Cyprus will be too “complicated” to function.

In addition, EDA deputies seem to adopt the official stereotypical historiographic approach, presenting the Turk as “eternally bad”, and therefore, the consequences of the Agreement on the Greek-Turkish relations will be “tragic”. “Nevertheless”, Iliou continues, “it will not only be on the relations per se, but on the security of the integrity of the independence of Greece also”.\textsuperscript{30} However, the fierce criticism and his fighting spirit of the EDA deputy launched upon the government was restricted finally to say that “it is considered [the Agreement] powerless and not-binding the country”\textsuperscript{31} and it “may be interrupted but it did not terminate the unalienable demand of self-determination of Cyprus”\textsuperscript{32} to be supported a few days later by EDA deputies M. Kyrkos and A. Brillakis.\textsuperscript{33}

As noted, EDA’s critic was not limited to the Parliamentary talks, but through the publication of a booklet on the Agreement and through its newspaper Avgi. According to the booklet, which analyzes in extent the governmental policies even before the signing of the Agreements, it is stated that “all the oppositional parties condemned this agreement”, but the “factitious Governmental majority of the Parliament approved them”.\textsuperscript{34} In addition, the booklet is quite revealing in many respects.

It is argued that the Agreement, “while, in fact, it prolongs the colonial slavery in Cyprus, it adulterated the pure anti-colonial character of the Cypriot struggle which was confronting the British colonial power”, and therefore, the Issue does not concern only Cyprus and Great Britain anymore.\textsuperscript{35} It concerns also the Turkish state, and the return of “Turkey in

\textsuperscript{27} Averoff-Tositsas, 25 February 1959, vol. 3, \textit{CIGP}, p. 22-23; the word Constantinople is preferred because it is estimated that this would be the word, instead of that of Istanbul, if the speech was conducted in English
\textsuperscript{28} I. Iliou, 25 February 1959, \textit{CIGP}, p. 23
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{ibid}, p. 28
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ibid}
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{ibid}, p. 36
\textsuperscript{32} I. Iliou, 18 March 1959, \textit{CIGP}, p. 153
\textsuperscript{33} M. Kyrkos, 28 February 1959, \textit{CIGP}, p. 131 and A. Brillakis, 28 February 1959, \textit{CIGP}, p. 144 where they claim basically that “the Agreement should not be considered as final”
\textsuperscript{34} EDA (1959), \textit{The Cyprus Issue and the London-Zurich Agreement}, Athens, p. 17
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{ibid}, p. 18
Cyprus creates a new status full with dangers, both for Cyprus and Greece”. Therefore, EDA claims that the London-Zurich Agreement does not provide a democratic solution to the issue. In the contrary, the self-determination of the Cypriot people is eliminated and the Agreement demonstrates the first victory of the British and the Turks. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that an independent state was born, but signing the Agreement is the actual signing of the partition of the island.

Avgi on its return codifies, as Trikkas rightly observes, the main reasons EDA is against the London-Zurich Agreement: 1) Self-determination is eliminated forever, 2) Independence is fake, and 3) it is not a democracy. The will of the majority will be depended upon the veto of the Ankara organs. While two days later, on another article Iliou claims that “… the capitulators believe that accepting the humiliation they will close up a “disturbing issue”. It is obvious that they are opening an issue much more dangerous than the fixed Turkish blackmails, threats of war and frictions. Thus, it is a national salvation matter in the capitulate spirit of Zurich to go against to the unity of the national powers.”

However, EDA continued its criticism on the Karamanlis government for not disclosing the documents concerning the London-Zurich Agreement. According to Pasalidis, the government’s claim that it was in a hurry and therefore, it could not keep records on the Agreement signifies the lies on behalf of the government to the people, because actually, the Karamanlis government was working on behalf of the NATO. Moreover, he argued that “it is customary for a matter to be discussed in the Parliament first, and then the agreements to be signed. In the Cyprus case the reverse happened”. 

During the 1963-1964 crisis caused mainly by Makarios’ proposals for constitutional amendment, EDA turned its criticisms towards the Centre Union party, led by G. Papandreou who won the elections of 1963. It has to be noted though, that EDA’s criticisms towards the Centre Union were milder, while at the same time they continued accusing ERE of the betrayal of the Cyprus cause.

After November 1963, the general social, political and cultural change allowed EDA to increase the number of its members and to create a lot of organizations that lend the party a mass character. While, at the same time it was argued that the electoral win of the Centre

36 ibid, p. 19; emphasis in the original
37 Avgi, 13 February 1959
38 I. Iliou, “To the Zurichists the Anti-Zurichists”, Avgi, 15 February 1959
39 I. Pasalidis, 22 March 1960, CIGP, p. 159
Union of G. Papandreou, managed to free people, in a way, and express their beliefs more freely than before.40

George Papandreou and his party continued ERE’s policy and belief that a solution will be found within NATO. However, EDA consistent with its beliefs did not share the same views: they believed that the sooner the Greek government understood that, the better for the national interests of Greece. By stopping believing in NATO it would stop the “insolence of the imperialist Turkey”. In addition, deputy Merkouris, addressing to the Greek government and to all the parties of the Parliament stated that “it is time for the myth of the Greek-Turkish friendship to stop”. The Greek-Turkish friendship is a myth because of the “extermination of the Greeks in Constantinople and they [the Turks] conspire against the integrity of Greece”, and because of the 1957 Turkish threats of capturing the islands in the Aegean.41 Therefore, the only party that actually believes and shows reluctance and good faith in order for this friendship to work is Greece. The Turkish politics and diplomacy is driven by the Allies, and therefore, potential negotiations concerning the Greek-Turkish relations and the Cyprus Issue are impossible.42

In 1964, during the period of renegotiating the fate of Cyprus, EDA criticized Papandreou, but at the same time urged him to “talk outright”. Moreover, EDA through its Executive Committee suggested a “national contract” of all the political forces, “full utilization of the support provided by the independent and socialist countries”, and the Greek recourse to the UN.43 The extensive anti-American feelings, now common not only in the Left but in the Right and Centre circles also, made the whole society turn to a more neutral, and perhaps to a Soviet friendly approach. EDA warned and suggested Papandreou not to confuse “a nationalist vision with the aspirations of the imperialist powers”.44 Besides, what the U.S. really wishes through its NATO alliance is to transform the island into a base for nuclear testing.45

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41 Sp. Merkouris, 31 March 1964, CIGP, p. 171
42 I. Iliou, 24 April 1964, CIGP, p. 200
43 As quoted in Evanthis Hatzivasiliou, “The Cyprus Issue, Summer 1964: Internal Options of the National Issues”, p. 316 in Alkis Rigos, ibid
44 Ioannis Stefanidis, “Irredentism in the 1960s”, p. 293 in ibid; see also for fuller account on irredentism and Greek political culture ibidem (2007), Stirring the Greek Nation, Ashgate, London
45 I. Iliou, 25 November 1964, CIGP, p. 258
Conclusion

The post civil war period transformed Greek society and its requirements in such a way that there was yet another chasm between external demands and domestic needs. In this framework the Left, through EDA, looks “condemned” to continuously negotiate this contradiction.

The Greek nation (as it has been pointed out) is not identified with the Greek people because of reverberations of the “ethnikofrosyni” (loyal to the nation/national way of thinking). The hegemony of “ethnikofrosyni” was a result of the Greek civil war reality, clearly influenced by other countries’ experience, especially the USA, which was going through a “red scare” period. Moreover, “ethnikofrosyni” dictated a commitment to “national ideals” and continuous alert against the internal enemy, communism. Besides, its formation took place in order to counter the EAM coalition during the civil-war. However, during the Cold war, the hegemonic ideology continued uninterruptedly and became more intense. Additionally, we must note that it was institutionalized as well, by discriminating the citizens between the “ethnikofrones” and “non-ethnikofrones” (loyal and non-loyal ones).

Nevertheless, the Left did not manage to distance itself from this framework and disengage from the “ethnikofrosyni’s” consequences, which in a way feed semantically and practically the Left approach towards the Right, without eliminating the opposite.

Thus, we can detect in the speeches of EDA members of the Parliament, elements that could be argued to be of non-Left ideology. However the framework in which EDA was created justifies, or rather, explains the adoption of such a national stance first and foremost, and not an internationalist one, especially in relation to the Cyprus issue. One notable difference is that as far as the Cyprus issue is concerned its rhetoric is influenced by the island’s self-determination, which has a double character. On the one hand, EDA remains persistent and consistent with its left character and its initial programmatic principles and may actually be the only party that managed to do that, it denounces the London-Zurich agreements, as well as any kind of dependence from external factors, whether these are a country or an organization, which rightly are considered as an imperialism tool. On the other hand, anti-national, non-patriotic compromise politics are attacked. Moreover, EDA uses politically and takes advantage of the non-consistent politics of any government, placing itself as the only party that acts patriotically, and not anti-nationally as it had been accused during

the Civil War. Consequently this attack creates a unique opportunity for the legalization of EDA and the Left, legal or illegal. References to the glorious Greek civilization, and the geostrategic importance of Cyprus as well as the “insolence of Turkish Governments”, the reproduction of the “terrible Turk” imagery, from the Left and the Right alike, shows the struggle of all parties to appropriate ideologically the unification of the “Great National Whole”. In other words the Cyprus issue is a battlefield for popular dominance.
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