

## **Three Lefts (EDA, KKE, AKEL) and the Cyprus Issue [Τρεις Αριστερές (ΕΔΑ, ΚΚΕ, ΑΚΕΛ) και το Κυπριακό Ζήτημα]**

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The book *Three Lefts (EDA, KKE, AKEL) and the Cyprus Issue* by Kyriakos Iakovidis explores the historical and political roles of the three leftist parties -EDA, KKE, and AKEL- in relation to the Cyprus problem. The book provides an in-depth analysis of the ideological and strategic positions these parties adopted during critical periods of the Cyprus issue, particularly in relation to colonial rule, the armed struggle for union with Greece (Enosis), and the subsequent independence movement.

The publication is structured into several sections, each delving into different aspects of the left-wing movements' interactions with Cypriot affairs. The first section contextualises the leftist approach within the broader historical framework of the Cold War, discussing how global ideological struggles influenced the positions of EDA, KKE, and AKEL. It also examines their relationships with international communist movements and how these affiliations shaped their policies on Cyprus.

A substantial portion of the book is dedicated to the role of AKEL, the dominant left-wing party in Cyprus, in navigating the challenges posed by both British colonial authorities and the nationalist armed struggle led by EOKA. The author analyses the complex dynamics between AKEL and EOKA, highlighting the ideological rift between communist-led political activism and armed nationalist resistance. Furthermore, the book discusses accusations against AKEL of being passive or even collaborating with the colonial regime, while also presenting AKEL's counterarguments that armed conflict would ultimately serve the interests of the British by fostering internal divisions among Greek Cypriots.

Another section explores the impact of leftist policies on intercommunal relations between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Iakovidis assesses how leftist parties approached the question of Turkish Cypriot political participation and whether their

strategies contributed to mitigating or exacerbating ethnic tensions. Additionally, the book provides insights into the ways in which the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the United Democratic Left (EDA) in Greece influenced Cyprus' leftist movements and how their positions evolved over time, describing the course of relationships between AKEL and KKE mainly, and less in relation to EDA.

The role of EDA receives particular attention in the book, as Iakovidis examines its influence on Greek politics and its stance on Cyprus. EDA, as a significant yet often overlooked political force in Greece, played a crucial role in shaping leftist discourse on the Cyprus issue. The book highlights EDA's advocacy for a peaceful resolution and its opposition to military interventions, arguing that its position often contrasted with the more radical elements of the Greek and Cypriot left. Moreover, the author explores how EDA's parliamentary efforts and international lobbying contributed to shaping the broader political debate on Cyprus within Greece and beyond. Notably, the book suggests that EDA, with its ambivalent attitude, may have attempted to leverage the Cyprus issue to strengthen its political legitimacy within Greece, where its existence had and was still being challenged by the prevailing political system. By aligning itself with a significant national concern, EDA sought to gain broader recognition and legitimacy in the Greek political landscape.

One may say that the writer appears to take for granted an opportunistic standpoint of EDA, portraying its engagement with the Cyprus issue as primarily self-serving rather than principled. The author's perspective implies, on numeral instances, that EDA sought to exploit the political turmoil surrounding Cyprus, to establish a stronger foothold in Greek politics. This interpretation doesn't overlook, but also doesn't seem to take due account of the profound impact of the Greek Civil War, which had taken place merely some years earlier and had left deep scars on Greek political life.

Given that EDA emerged in a highly repressive political climate, its cautious and strategic manoeuvring might be seen as a necessary adaptation rather than mere opportunism. Iakovidis' analysis, however, does not fully account for these constraints, potentially resulting in a somewhat biased portrayal of EDA's motives and actions.

Furthermore, the book refers to how AKEL, despite its ideological commitments, strategically leaned on Archbishop Makarios, recognising his central role in Cypriot politics. Makarios, as both a religious and political figure, was instrumental in shaping the broader political environment in which left-wing parties operated. His leadership influenced how AKEL positioned itself on the Cyprus issue, as the party often sought to align with his policies while maintaining its distinct ideological identity.

The book also discusses how Makarios' political manoeuvring played a decisive role in defining the left's broader strategy and stance in Greece and in Cyprus on key issues related to Cyprus' future.

In its concluding chapters, the book evaluates the legacy of left-wing involvement in the Cyprus issue, questioning whether their strategies were effective in advancing their political goals. The author also engages with contemporary debates on the left's historical role, examining whether the positions taken by these parties helped or hindered a viable resolution to the Cyprus problem.

The book is well-documented, incorporating references from archival materials, party documents, and historical testimonies. However, some sections may be seen as leaning towards a sympathetic portrayal of AKEL's role, which could invite criticism from those who argue that the left's stance was overly cautious or ineffective in shaping Cyprus' political trajectory. Additionally, Iakovidis' treatment of EDA's role may be seen as overly critical, as he does take into account but possibly does not give due importance to the broader historical and political pressures that shaped its actions. Nonetheless, *Three Lefts (EDA, KKE, AKEL) and the Cyprus Issue* is a valuable contribution to the historiography of Cyprus, offering a comprehensive analysis of how leftist movements engaged with one of the island's most enduring political conflicts.

**Theodoros Kontakos**