

Communism in Cyprus

By T. W. Adams and Alvin J. Cottrell

In August 1965 the strife-torn Republic of Cyprus was scheduled to hold its second island-wide elections, but because of the conflict and confusion raging across the island at the time, the elections were cancelled. Given the present political environment in Cyprus, there is some doubt that they will be held before August of this year, when President Makarios' extended term of office ends. Regardless of when they occur, however, two serious questions will arise: First, in what form and manner will the voting take place? And second, how much success will

the island's Communist Party have at the polls?

Although there is considerable difference of opinion regarding the size and effectiveness of AKEL,¹ the Communist Party of Cyprus, it is generally conceded to be the only well-organized political force that could rival the dominant, though amorphous, grouping of church-backed right-wing factions known as the Patriotic Front—the “personal party” of Makarios. (It is perhaps worth noting that the only other legal Communist Party in the Middle East is in Israel; the Syrian Communist Party enjoys only “quasi-legal” status.) AKEL maintains a cohesive “grass roots” base and is cleverly managed by a shrewd and fervent long-time Marxist, Ezekias Papaioannou, trained in Moscow. As far as is known, AKEL is entirely Greek Cypriot in composition, the Greek Cypriot community accounting for about 80 percent of the 600,000 population of the island. At the present time, its strength is estimated to

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¹AKEL is the acronym for Anorthotikow Komma Ergazomenou Laou (Progressive Party of the Working People).

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approach 10,000 active members. It derives its support from a leftist labor federation numbering about 40,000 members, and from a series of front organizations for farmers, women, and youth. Whether or not the party could control a third of the electorate in an election, as has been claimed by AKEL leaders, would depend on the issues involved. Nevertheless it is clear that, on a percentage-of-population basis, the Communist Party of Cyprus is numerically one of the strongest in the non-Communist world, second only to that of Italy.

The Rise of the Party

Communism first came to Cyprus after World War I. But AKEL's predecessor, the KKK (Kommonistikon Komma Kyprou,—the Communist Party of Cyprus), did not have enough appeal to combat the power of the Orthodox Church over the predominantly agrarian and religiously oriented society of that time. The party was officially banned by the British colonial government in 1933, after island-wide riots in which the KKK was involved. AKEL itself was formally founded in 1941 by a group of hard-core Communists. It grew out of a left-wing debating society which initially attracted many liberal intellectuals. Toward the end of World War II, the reorganized party gained considerable ground through its tactical support of *enosis* (union) with Greece and through the efforts of a number of Greek Cypriot high school teachers—this despite losing the support of the liberal intellectuals, who withdrew from the movement. With no effective opposition, AKEL had become the strongest political organization in Cyprus by 1946, when it won the local elections in five major cities.

The Church soon recognized AKEL's growing power and the danger it implied. After the present Archbishop's predecessor, Makarios II, was elected Archbishop in 1947, he encouraged the formation of another political party catering to the right-wing middle class. (From the beginning of the Ethnarchy idea under the Ottomans, the backing of the Church had usually been the key to success in Cypriot politics.) This new Church-backed party, the Nationalist Party, quite naturally made *enosis* its main political platform, but otherwise was a rather loosely organized moral front. In the municipal

elections of 1949, the right-wing *enosis*ists captured 60 percent of the popular vote, winning back the capital, Nicosia, and 11 of 15 municipalities, while AKEL maintained its control of the large port cities of Limassol, Famagusta and Larnaca. By the time the so-called "Emergency Period" was proclaimed six years later, the charismatic Makarios III—later to become President of the Republic—was thought to have cut down AKEL's following from nearly 40 percent of the population to only half that figure.

During the Emergency Period (1955-59), while it was proscribed by the British for subversive activities, AKEL continued to conduct an active undercover campaign for unconditional self-determination for Cyprus. However, by this time the party had dropped its overt support for *enosis*, causing it to lose favor with the Greek Cypriot followers of General George Grivas (Dighenis) and his EOKA guerrilla organization, then engaged in struggle against the British.² Although Grivas made it clear that he would not accept AKEL's support even if offered, the party has never been able to live down the memory of its opposition to the EOKA campaign. In the words of Grivas:

In opposing us, the Cypriot Communists were simply taking orders from behind the Iron Curtain; this was clearly shown in the first month of our campaign, when in a broadcast from Moscow, the leader of the Greek Communist Party, Zachariades, denounced EOKA and treacherously revealed the identity of Dighenis, which he had learned from one of his Athenian spies.³

Party Secretary-General Papaioannou was arrested by the Colonial Government in 1955

² EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kyrion Agoniston—National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) was a secret terrorist network formed by Grivas in 1953 with the stated purpose of fighting "for the liberation of Cyprus from the British yoke." The sanguinary conflict waged by EOKA lasted four years before an armistice was declared upon the promise of independence for Cyprus in 1959. The British were never able to subdue EOKA completely despite the use of an estimated 20,000 troops. Survivors of the EOKA underground emerged as heroes, and many now hold important posts in the government of Cyprus. Grivas, who has never softened his hatred for the Communists, is now in command of the Greek Cypriot National Guard, composed mainly of "volunteers" from the regular army of mainland Greece.

³ C. Foley (ed.), *The Memoirs of General Grivas*, New York, Praeger, 1965, p. 35.

but escaped the following year and paradoxically turned up in Britain in 1957. He returned to Nicosia a year later and took over the party before the ban was lifted on its activities in 1959, just before independence.

There is evidence that AKEL worked closely with Moscow in the period immediately before and following independence. Cypriot Communists made frequent trips to the USSR, Soviet propaganda was broadcast in Greek to Cyprus daily from Radio Budapest, and the Cypriot Communists began to identify themselves with the Castro revolution in Cuba. In October 1960 Papaioannou attended the 43rd anniversary of the Soviet Revolution in Moscow and stayed over for the Conference of 81 Communist parties the following month. An editorial in the Cypriot Communist organ *Haravghi* (Dawn) in December praised the Moscow conference declaration, hailing the CPSU as the "vanguard of the Communist movement." The declaration, said the paper, "constitutes a sermon and a motive of brotherly struggle for peace all over the world."⁴

Since independence, AKEL has denounced the London-Zurich agreements of 1959 (which produced the Republic of Cyprus) as a complete renunciation of the principles of self-determination. In particular, it complained that the British Sovereign Base Areas guaranteed by the agreements constituted neo-colonialism. AKEL's Central Committee defined its position as follows:

*Under the regime imposed by the Zurich-London agreements, and since we are far from having gained true independence, the basic goal of the Cyprian people continues to be real independence for Cyprus, demilitarization of Cyprus, and democratization of the constitution.*⁵

In domestic affairs, AKEL has tried over the past six years to give the party a "patriotic image" in order to allay the memory of its failure to support General Grivas against the British and its equivocal position on *enosis*. Party

leaders have concentrated on improving internal efficiency and on extending their influence among workers and young people. AKEL's present economic platform is believed to follow the party's basic program, which was drafted in 1959 and revised in 1962, and which called for intensive agricultural development and extensive land reform through "confiscation and distribution of large private, church, and government lands among the impoverished peasants."⁶

Sources of Power

The principal source of AKEL's power is the Pan-Cyprian Federation of Labor (Pankypria Ergatikí Omopondia—PEO), whose leaders were reported to be in Moscow when the most recent crisis began in December 1963. The PEO is affiliated with the Communist-led World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), whose headquarters are in Prague. Its Secretary-General, Andreas Ziartides, is a devout Communist, a member of the WFTU Executive Committee, and a member of the Central Committee of AKEL. Ziartides says he is a "self-taught" Marxist.

With an estimated dues-paying membership (as of November 1963) of 37,400 workers, the PEO embraces about 60 percent of organized labor on the island. Its nearest rival, the right-wing Confederation of Cypriot Workers (Synomospondia Ergaton Kyprousek—SEK), has only about 17,830 members⁷ and is less effectively run. It is probable that many workers belong to the PEO simply because it is the most effective labor union in Cyprus and has the ability to win superior benefits, rather than because of its Communist affiliations.

The PEO supports AKEL's main propaganda lines, such as the demand for a neutral and "completely independent" Cyprus, opposition to NATO, and the adoption of a nuclear-free zone in the Mediterranean. Before the outbreak of communal violence in December 1963, the PEO declared its support of Presi-

⁶ The revised AKEL program was set forth at the party's Tenth Congress in March 1962, and was published by Printko, Ltd., Nicosia (Kaimakli), 1962.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, *Directory of Labor Organizations* (Europe), Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, May 15, 1965, Vol. I, pp. 5.1 and 5.10.

⁴ *Haravghi* (Nicosia), Dec. 8, 1960.

⁵ Quoted by AKEL Deputy Secretary-General Andreas Fantis in *Neos Dimokratis* (Nicosia), June 1960.

dent Makarios on the issue of an appeal to the United Nations to resist foreign intervention in Cypriot affairs. In mid-1965 it repeated its pledge of "unqualified support" for the President's bid to revise the London-Zurich agreements and the Constitution.

Breaking the Communists' grip on the labor movement has proved to be a difficult task. The PEO is firmly entrenched, having become well developed before Cyprus gained independence. Its leadership is vastly better trained and more effective than that of the non-Communist SEK. Furthermore, the wives and children of PEO members constitute the majority of the memberships of AKEL's women's group and youth movement.

Strategy and Tactics

AKEL's slogans have not changed over the past six years. The scene at the party's 11th Congress held at Nicosia in March 1966 was described in these terms:

The big hall in which the Congress is meeting is bedecked with slogans and posters calling upon the people of Cyprus to rally in a united anti-imperialist front to struggle for the complete national independence of Cyprus, for the ending of foreign military bases on the island, and for the vital and democratic rights of the people.⁸

Since the establishment of the Republic, the party's propaganda line has consistently credited "the existence of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp" with providing "all the possibilities for building a truly independent economic and political life in Cyprus, free of any economic and political bondage imposed on us by the imperialists-colonialists."⁹ In terms of current Soviet theory and practice regarding the achievement of "national democracy" as the precursor of socialist "people's democracy", AKEL is still in the first stage of Communist revolutionary campaigning—that of "national democratic," anti-imperialist," and "national-liberation" struggle.

AKEL has used its political power to insist that Cyprus accept offers of barter agreements, economic aid, and technical assistance from the Communist-bloc countries. The island's Communist newspaper, *Haravghi*, has also supported the Soviet tactical line of attacking the presence of British bases and American communications facilities on the island, claiming that it is the West's intention to turn Cyprus into a nuclear base. At the same time, editorial statements in *Haravghi* depict the Soviet Union as the sole leader in the cause of world peace:

It is enough for the peoples to be mobilized in time and not to allow the warmongering imperialists to trap the popular masses in their nets. The general and complete destruction of all nuclear weapons of massive destruction, for which the people are fighting under the leadership of the Soviet Union, constitutes the only real guarantee for peace.¹⁰

It should be noted here that the Cypriot Communists have explicitly aligned themselves with the Soviet Union in the Sino-Soviet split. On September 29, 1963, following a plenary session, the party Central Committee issued a 5,000-word statement which included a passage denouncing the Chinese Communists and their "civil war methodology." The statement declared that AKEL's aim was to bring about a Communist Cyprus, but that the "proper" way to achieve this was through "absolutely democratic and peaceful methods."¹¹ Secretary-General Papaioannou reconfirmed the party's position this year in stating that "our party condemns all splitting activities and fully supports the striving of the CPSU and other fraternal parties for the firm unity of the international Communist and workers' movement."¹²

While AKEL publicly espouses the cause of "self-determination and demilitarization," it has not made its position unequivocally clear on *enosis*, and it is on this issue that the greatest strain has developed between the party and the Greek Cypriot community. (The party also differs with Moscow on this question.) AKEL

¹⁰ *Haravghi*, June 5, 1960.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 29, 1963.

¹² Speech delivered by Secretary-General Papaioannou at the AKEL 11th Congress, March 3, 1966, carried by TASS International Service from Moscow, March 3, 1966.

⁸ *Pravda* (Moscow) March 3, 1966.

⁹ Andreas Fantis, "The Rise of Socialism," *Neos Dimokratias*, April 1961.

leaders realize that publicly they must pay lip service to *enosis* lest the party lose much of its popular support. Thus, PEO and AKEL leader Andreas Ziartides told one of the writers: "What we want is national liberation, and in Cyprus this means *enosis*—but we want genuine *enosis*, not the kind proposed by the imperialists as in the recommendations of Dean Acheson."¹³ On the other hand, the AKEL leadership is clearly aware that, should *enosis* come about, the party would surely lose its legal status under a mainland Greek government. (Communism has been banned in Greece since 1949.) Apparently, however, AKEL feels safe in straddling the fence on this issue, optimistically sensing that the possibility of union with Greece is becoming more and more remote.

Meanwhile, the party has come out in favor of the government view that, so long as "genuine and untrammelled" *enosis* is not obtainable, the only right course is to proceed toward unrestricted independence through recommendations made in the March 1965 report of former United Nations mediator Galo Plaza of Ecuador, which ruled out both the Greek and the Turkish extreme positions and proposed continued independence with all inhabitants sharing equal rights. *The Cyprus Mail* was quick to point out, however, that "*Haravghi*, while siding with the rest of the newspapers in welcoming the policy of support for the Plaza report, toes the Communist line by demanding that the government go beyond that and call for the abolition of bases."¹⁴

AKEL and the Archbishop

If it is true that the Makarios government has purposely been seeking excuses to kill or bypass *enosis*, as has been alleged by the island's right-wing press, then AKEL's indifference to the issue conveniently and logically fits in with its present conditional support of the Archbishop. To most Greek Cypriots, however, self-determination, which the Communists preach with ostensible enthusiasm, and *enosis*, which

they privately dislike, are one and the same thing. AKEL, of course, does not bother to explain its distinct conception of the two ideas.

Although AKEL opposed Makarios in the 1959 presidential elections, the party in 1960 concluded a mutually expedient truce with the forces of the Archbishop-President in return for five seats in parliament. Since then, its political strategy has been to avoid open conflict with the President. The party's official line toward him was officially stated soon after independence:

*We support the Archbishop and President of the Republic of Cyprus on every particular issue against the colonialists and on behalf of the defense of the people's interest. We criticize him on every particular issue where his position clashes with the popular national interests.*¹⁵

The Communists have supported the President on such major issues as constitutional revision and a non-aligned foreign policy. They also have encouraged his cordial relations with Tito and Nasser and have successfully urged him to support the Communist-dominated Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), whose 1963 Executive Committee meeting took place in Nicosia. It was at this meeting that Makarios reaffirmed his intention to reject all military alliances.

Meanwhile, however, AKEL is conducting an intense campaign for new election laws establishing proportional representation, asserting that they polled a much higher percentage of votes in the 1960 elections to the House of Representatives than is indicated by their present representation (they received only the five seats agreed upon before the single-list balloting took place). The party also continues to deplore expenditures for a national army but insists that once "genuine democratic parliamentary institutions are realized, they must be defended against foreign intervention."¹⁶ Their

¹³ Personal interview with Ziartides, August 1965. The Acheson Plan of September 1964 proposed a complicated territorial exchange and population resettlement as a preliminary condition for *enosis*.

¹⁴ *The Cyprus Mail* (Nicosia), Aug. 29, 1965.

¹⁵ *Haravghi*, June 5, 1960. Interestingly enough, the possession of five seats in the 50-member House does not, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, make AKEL a recognized political party in that body. Article 73, par. 12 of the Constitution reads: "Any political party which is represented at least by 12 percent of the total number of Representatives in the House of Representatives can form and shall be entitled to be recognized as a political party group."

¹⁶ *The Program of AKEL*, 1962, *op. cit.*

paradoxical position on this issue reflects their hostility to General Grivas, who has followed a policy of distributing Communist-indoctrinated youths among different units in the Greek Cypriot National Guard and keeping them under scrutiny by security elements.

On his side, Makarios has allowed AKEL to operate openly. While he has occasionally come out against the party in public pronouncements, he has to all appearances taken few effective steps to structure his own Patriotic Front as a political counterforce. He also has his own personal differences with the fiercely anti-Communist General Grivas—a fact which AKEL can only view with satisfaction.¹⁷ The Archbishop evidently assumes that he can keep the Communists within his flock through the Church. It is also possible that he needs AKEL to play off against any opposition which might arise within his own political following. Moreover, the Communists are all Greeks, and in Makarios' eyes the enemy is still the Turk.

With AKEL's strength remaining intact, if not actually growing, the price the Archbishop may have to pay for Communist cooperation in any future election could be much higher than it was in 1960. If he should seek another pact with AKEL regarding the second national elections, it might suit the party's long-range plans to bide its time and continue building up its organization with a view to making a possible bid for power, or at least putting up a major contest in the 1970 elections.

AKEL and Moscow

Soviet interest in Cyprus lies essentially in exploiting the current crisis to embitter relations between Greece and Turkey and thus weaken the southern flank of the NATO alliance; in forcing British withdrawal from Cyprus and eliminating the island as a military base for any NATO nation; and in ultimately replacing the island's pro-Western orientation with a pro-Soviet one.

¹⁷ *The New York Times* (March 27, 1966) reported from Nicosia that disagreement between President Makarios and General Grivas over control of the Greek Cypriot National Guard was rapidly nearing a climax. According to the dispatch, President Makarios seeks to curb Grivas' influence and authority.

Evidence of this interest was the speedy dispatch to the fledgling republic in 1960 of Ambassador Pavel K. Yemoshin, a man skilled in dealing with NATO conflicts. (He had served in Iceland at the time of the fisheries dispute between Iceland and Great Britain.) Since that time, Moscow has used its Embassy along with AKEL to transmit its propaganda to Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Israel.

Soviet tactics in pursuing the objectives outlined above were illustrated in February 1964 by the reaction of former Premier Khrushchev to the NATO proposal to assemble an international peace-keeping force on Cyprus, after it had become clear that the British alone could not put an end to violence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. At that time the Soviet Premier addressed almost identical letters to the government heads of the United States, Great Britain, France, Greece, and Turkey, warning that such a move would be "the source of international complications fraught with grave consequences." He denounced the proposed dispatch of NATO troops to Cyprus as tantamount to "an actual occupation" designed to bring a "neutral state under the control of NATO."¹⁸

Although the USSR initially sent massive arms shipments to Makarios in support of Greek Cypriot aspirations, Moscow has found that not all elements in the complex Cyprus situation are subject to its control. The very intensity of the inter-communal bitterness and fighting on the island, along with new developments in Soviet relations with Ankara, caused Moscow to make certain tactical adjustments which have embarrassed AKEL and compromised the party's popularity among the Greek Cypriots.

Thus, for example, after AKEL had belatedly and reluctantly swung over to a position, however vague, in support of Greek Cypriot nationalist aims and *enosis*, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko declared in a radio interview in January 1965 that the "internal organization of the Cypriot state is a matter for the Cypriots themselves" to determine, and he went on to suggest that, among other alternatives, "they may choose the federal form."¹⁹

¹⁸ Text of letter from Chairman Khrushchev to President Johnson, Feb. 7, 1964; *New York Times*, Feb. 8.

¹⁹ *Izvestia* (Moscow), Jan. 21, 1965.

This suggestion of a federation as a possible solution of the Cyprus problem was acutely distressing to AKEL. In order to satisfy the Greek Cypriots, the party had to say something critical of the Soviet suggestion, but at the same time it could not afford to alienate the Soviet leaders.

Accordingly, its response was a conscious attempt to meet both conflicting pressures on the party. On January 26—immediately after Secretary-General Papaioannou and two other AKEL officials returned from an “enlightenment mission” to the Soviet-bloc countries—the party’s Central Committee met and issued a statement declaring that it rejected the federal system for Cyprus “for reasons of principle and because it is an erroneous and impractical idea [which would help] the divide-and-rule policies of the imperialists.” The AKEL statement, however, was careful to welcome other parts of the Gromyko interview—such as his expression of Soviet opposition to foreign intervention and his call for the removal of foreign bases and the maintenance of the island’s independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity—as a “most positive and immense contribution.” In conclusion, the statement insisted—somewhat optimistically—that “the Soviet Union continues to stand by Cyprus and will defend the Cyprus case along with Greece in the United Nations.”²⁰

A short while later, on February 7, 1965, Secretary-General Papaioannou again referred to the Gromyko interview in noticeably cautious terms. Addressing an extraordinary party meeting, he stated that “our Party disagrees with Mr. Gromyko’s reference to federation,” but he noted that the Soviet Foreign Minister had also said that “it was up to the people of Cyprus to decide this question.” Papaioannou went on to reject charges of a Soviet “betrayal” of Cyprus and asserted that the Russians were and always had been friendly to the Greek Cypriot cause.²¹

Timid and circumspect as were these expressions of opposition to Gromyko’s suggestion of federation for Cyprus, they represented highly unusual behavior on the part of AKEL. So consistent had the party been in its loyalty to Soviet leadership, however, that Moscow evi-

dently felt that it need not take the reactions of the AKEL leadership too seriously. This inference seems to be supported by the fact that the Soviet position regarding Cyprus subsequently moved in a direction still more favorable to the Turks. For example, Moscow has, since August 1965, officially adopted the now controversial term, “two communities,” in referring to a possible settlement of the ethnic problem of Cyprus.

Soviet Diplomatic Maneuvers

The rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Turkey, confirmed last August by the first state visit to Moscow of a Turkish leader in 30 years, has placed AKEL in a situation similar to that of the Greek Communist Party during the Greek civil war, when it had to adapt itself to a painful Soviet decision on the delicate issue of Macedonian independence. In the Cyprus situation, while recent Soviet policy may be said to have helped avert a Turkish invasion of the island, it certainly has not satisfied anyone involved, and it has made the Greek Cypriot community aware of Soviet duplicity. As former AKEL Secretary-General Ploutis Servas caustically remarked, “When it comes to making Russian policy on Cyprus, AKEL is not part of Moscow’s planning process.”²²

Moscow’s friendly gestures towards Turkey in January and August of 1965 were obviously designed to capitalize on whatever ill feelings the American “honest broker” policy for Cyprus had caused in Ankara. The policy-makers in Moscow apparently saw more value in developing cordial relations with Turkey and urging Turkish moderation than they did in trying to appease the Cypriot Communists leaders; yet, the Soviet line on Cyprus was still cautious. In the UN Security Council debate on Cyprus in August of last year, for example, the Soviet delegate avoided mention of either *enosis* or “federation” and instead directed the bulk of his remarks to the need for withdrawing all foreign troops and bases from the island. Apparently, the Soviets have come to realize, as has the United States, that it is most difficult to please both sides simultaneously in the Cyprus issue.

²⁰ *The Cyprus Mail*, Jan. 27, 1965.

²¹ *Nei Keri* (Nicosia), Feb. 8, 1965.

²² Personal interview with Servas, Nicosia, Aug. 1965.

Whatever the misgivings of the AKEL leaders over the Soviet-Turkish rapprochement, they did not voice them until later in the year—specifically on December 18, 1965. A day earlier, the UN General Assembly's Political and Security Committee had debated a pro-Greek Cypriot resolution calling on all member-nations to "respect the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus and to refrain from any foreign intervention or interference." On the final vote in the Committee, the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries (with the exception of Cuba and Yugoslavia) abstained, even though the Political Committee had before it a Soviet-sponsored draft resolution condemning any interference in the internal affairs of other states. This Communist action triggered an immediate and unprecedentedly sharp reaction from the AKEL leadership. The following statement appeared on the front page of *Haravghi* the morning after the vote:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of AKEL observes regretfully that during yesterday's vote in the Political Committee of the United Nations, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries (excluding Yugoslavia and Cuba, which voted for the pro-Cypriot resolution) abstained with respect to the resolution of 32 non-committed countries.

This position of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries is wholly disappointing to the Politburo of the Central Committee of AKEL and to the Cypriot people, is in opposition to their previous announcements concerning the unfettered and complete independence of Cyprus . . . , and calls forth justifiable uneasiness among the Cypriot people.

The Politburo of the Central Committee of AKEL maintains its belief that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, which in the past gave significant and fruitful spiritual and material aid to the struggle of Cyprus, a fact which is esteemed by the Cypriot people, will finally vote for the resolution of the 32 non-committed countries in the General Assembly of the United Nations, thereby furnishing the additional strength to secure the necessary two-thirds majority for a pro-Cyprus resolution.²³

²³ *Haravghi*, Dec. 18, 1965.

Despite this plea, however, the Soviet bloc again abstained the next day when the resolution was put to a vote in the General Assembly. It cannot be said with certainty what the Soviets hoped to gain by this maneuver, but it was one that provided no satisfaction to the Turks, the Greeks, or the Communist Party of Cyprus. All that AKEL could do was try to forget the matter and hope that the USSR would see fit to modify its position in the future along lines more palatable to the Greek Cypriots.

Presumably with that end in mind, AKEL Secretary-General Papaioannou and his deputy, Andreas Fantis, flew to Moscow in January 1966 for talks with CPSU Central Committee members Suslov and Ponomarev. After lengthy discussions, a joint communique was issued affirming *inter alia* the Soviet belief "that the Cyprus problem can be solved through peaceful means, and that this necessitates the safeguarding of the rights and interests of the two ethnic communities."²⁴ This part of the communique was apparently calculated to please the Turks rather than the Greek Cypriots, but the AKEL leaders did not leave Moscow entirely empty-handed: they could at least find some satisfaction in the communique's further statement that the Soviet Union "supports the abrogation of the restrictive ties imposed on the Cypriot people under the Zurich and London agreements." Still, they must surely have gone home with the feeling that the USSR was not firmly behind Archbishop Makarios' position on the future of Cyprus. In fact, Makarios himself, in a subsequent interview with a Greek correspondent, indicated that he shared this impression:

With regard to the Soviet Union, I believe that it does not favor a solution leading to union with Greece.²⁵

The Outlook

How long AKEL will be able to shoulder this burden of Soviet neutrality between the Greeks and Turks is indeed a crucial question. With Moscow in no apparent rush to sacrifice

²⁴ *Pravda*, Jan. 25, 1966.

²⁵ *Kathimerini* (Athens) March 9, 1966.

its relations with Turkey to the desires of the Greek Cypriots, and with the possibility of *enosis* presenting more of a menace than a blessing to the party, AKEL must work hard to maintain its influence in the domestic affairs of the island. For the time being, the Communists under Papaioannou's leadership are still the "loyal opposition of His Beatitude."²⁶ If present economic conditions in Cyprus continue to improve, the party may be unable to exploit the issues of unemployment and unequal distribution of personal income as successfully as it has in the past. At the same time, the Communists' program of land reform seems unlikely to bring any remarkable results since the Orthodox Church is the largest landholder on Cyprus. Unless AKEL chooses to meet Makarios head-on in the next elections, therefore, it appears probable that domestic issues such as land reform will play a less important role in the party's tactics in the immediate future.

Nevertheless, should new national elections take place before or soon after President Makarios' extended term officially ends in August, of this year,* a crucial period in Cypriot internal politics can be expected. In July 1965, the Greek Cypriot-controlled House of Representatives passed a law providing that all Cypriots—Greeks and Turks and minorities—vote for candidates on a single electoral list, rather than on separate lists for the Greek and Turkish communities as the Republic's constitution originally specified. The possible effect of this might be to enable AKEL, by appealing to Greek Cypriot nationalism, to make significant gains in its share of seats in the House of Representatives. With its strong labor and front-group support, the party also could have a good chance of winning local control of the five major urban areas if municipal as well as national elections were to be held in the near future.

If, on the other hand, the party should fail to gain its objectives through democratic means, or be outlawed as a result of pressure from the

Grivas faction, it still will have the option of going underground and attempting to launch a coup d'etat at some opportune moment in the future. The party possesses three vital prerequisites for such an eventual course; *i.e.*, a tightly-knit conspiratorial organization, the support of a considerable segment of the population, and aid from the Soviet bloc.

Events to date would seem to indicate that most Greek Cypriots do not regard communism as a major threat. It was the Turks who initially drew attention to the Communist danger in Cyprus, and since AKEL is composed mainly of Greek Cypriots, even the mainland Greeks have hitherto tended to belittle the threat. Now, however, Athens, too, is becoming worried about the growth of Cypriot communism. One reason for this is that, although the Communist Party of Greece (Kommonistikon Komma Ellas—KKE) is outlawed, the present crypto-Communist Union of the Democratic Left, (Enosis Dimokratias Aristeras—EDA) might find it possible to exploit AKEL's success in an attempt to regain the respectability and support which the Communists lost in Greece following the 1947-49 civil war. There is no doubt that AKEL has mutually useful ties with both the illegal KKE and the EDA.

It is obvious, however, that the momentum of the Cypriot Communists' cause has suffered from the change in the Soviet position on Cyprus. AKEL clearly compromised itself by faithfully echoing the Soviet line in the past, and it cannot now afford to deny history or admit that it made a mistake. Although a crisis of confidence has developed in AKEL's relations with Moscow, it is unlikely that the Cypriot party could risk an open break with the CPSU—or, indeed, that it wants to do so. The Soviets continue to maintain a large embassy in Nicosia; AKEL leaders continue to make frequent trips to the Soviet Union; and thus far, the Chinese Communists have apparently not been able to exploit the differences between AKEL and Moscow to their own advantage.

Under the circumstances, the future course of Cypriot communism is not clearly discernible. The party leaders have shown themselves to be patient men, and they have lived through adversities and reverses more serious than the crisis they now face. They certainly can ill afford to allow the diplomatic tactics of the Soviet Union to defeat them now when they have so much at stake.

²⁶ Papaioannou was reelected Secretary-General of AKEL at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee, held in conjunction with the 11th Party Congress, March 1966.

* Postscript: In view of continued political unrest on Cyprus, President Makarios announced on April 2, 1966, that the present parliament and his own presidency would be extended for another year, *i.e.*, until August 1967. *Washington Post*, April 3, 1966.