

AKEL and the Turkish Cypriots (1941–1955)

SOTOS KTORIS

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the political relations between AKEL and the Turkish Cypriot community during the period 1941–1955. AKEL's post-1974 policies towards the Turkish Cypriots had led to a political misconception concerning its political relations with the Turkish Cypriot community for the period that preceded 1955. Undeniably, AKEL's attitude to the Turkish Cypriots had diachronically been much more liberal and tolerant than the approach expressed by many nationalist – Right-wing politicians. However, AKEL's attempt to employ 'class rhetoric' in order to allure the minority into the 'Greek Cypriot national liberation struggle' had little effect upon the Turkish Cypriot masses. Contrary to the ideological and social divisions that cut across the Greek Cypriot community, the fear of enosis within the Turkish Cypriot community dominated political and ideological discussions. The political elite of the Turkish Cypriot community perceived AKEL not only as a 'national' threat but as an ideological menace as well.

Keywords: AKEL, PEO, KTMBP, KTIBK, communism, enosis, contempt, Turkish Cypriots, nationalism, anti-communism

Introduction

The exploration of the relations between the Greek Cypriot Left and the Turkish Cypriot community is essential in order to elucidate the political and ideological framework within which the Turkish Cypriot political demands were developed and articulated. Over the years, AKEL's 'influence' on the Turkish Cypriot masses has become a popular fallacy in the Greek Cypriot community. This belief, mainly received its 'legitimacy' from the mass participation of Turkish Cypriots in the Left-wing trade unions of PSE [Pagkypria Syntonistiki Epitropi] and its successor PEO [Pagkypria Ergatiki Omospondia], especially during the 1940s. It is a perception that became predominant among Greek Cypriots after 1974, when AKEL ['Progressive Party of the Working People'], contrary to other political parties, made a systematic effort to promote rapprochement between the two communities, whilst also advocating a federal solution to the Cyprus problem. This belief was further embedded among Greek Cypriots when the Left-wing party established a close political co-operation with its Turkish Cypriot ideological counterpart, the Republican Turkish Party CTP [Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi]. Inevitably, AKEL's post-1974 policy, towards the Turkish Cypriots, created a political misconception among the Greek Cypriot community in regard to its political relations with the 'minority' in the pre-1960 period.

In reality, the relations between the Turkish Cypriot political elite and the Cypriot communist movement were characterised earlier on by political and ideological cleavages. As early as 1931 the newspaper *Söz*, commenting on news that some Turkish Cypriots became members of the Cyprus Communist Party, reported that:

‘We regret to learn that some unknown Turks have been enlisted as communists. We blame their action, as they have done something which is contrary to the public opinion of the Turks of Cyprus and may put the community in a difficult position. We have professors and teachers none of whom is a communist, whom they ought to have consulted before hand. The proverb says: The stray lambs are seized by the wolves.’¹

By the end of the 1930s, nationalism in ‘motherland’ Turkey had embodied anti-communism as its principal ideological banner. It had been rightly pointed out that for the Turks, ‘communism was identified with imperialist Russia the greatest enemy of Turkey since the time of Peter the Great.’² Therefore, the internalisation of the official ideology of the Turkish state by the Turks of Cyprus meant that the latter had embodied the nationalist, anti-communism principles of Kemalism.³ By the mid-1940s the Turkish Cypriot community was already characterised by political homogeneity, as the vast majority of the Turkish Cypriot organisations had a nationalist and anti-*enosis* orientation.⁴ The emergence of an ecumenical reaction against *enosis*, among the Turkish Cypriot community, was described vividly by *Vatan* newspaper, which stated that: ‘from the farmer of the most remote village to the government doctor, the lawyer and the journalist [...] they all fight for one purpose and one idea’, and that is to prevent *enosis*.⁵ Having become the principal exponent of the *enosis* movement by the mid-1940s, AKEL was perceived by the political elite of the Turkish Cypriot community, not only as a ‘national’ threat but as an ideological menace as well.

Local Government: The Political Terrain

Contrary to this perception however, it has been argued that AKEL succeeded in establishing

1 *Söz* 13 August 1931, in SA 1/517/26.

2 CO 926/183. Cited in S. Ktoris (2013) *Τουρκοκύπριοι: Από το περιθώριο στο συνεταιρισμό (1923–1960)* [Turkish Cypriots: From Marginalisation to Partnership 1923–1960], Athens: Παπαζήση, p. 212.

3 S. Anagnostopoulou (2004) *Τουρκικός εκσυγχρονισμός: Ισλάμ και Τουρκοκύπριοι στη δαιδαλώδη διαδρομή του κεφαλισμού* [Turkish Modernity: Islam and Turkish Cypriots on the Tortuous Path of Kemalism], Athens, Βιβλιόραμα, p. 180. For a comprehensive overview of Kemalism see N. Kızılyürek (2006) *Κεφαλισμός: Η γένεση και η εξέλιξη της επίσημης ιδεολογίας της σύγχρονης Τουρκίας* [Kemalism: The Birth and Evolution of the Official Ideology of Modern Turkey], Athens: Μεσόγειος, Altay Nevzat has exhaustively presented in his doctoral thesis, how, by the end of the 1930s, nationalism has been extensively embodied by the Turkish Cypriots. A. Nevzat (2005) *Nationalism amongst the Turks of Cyprus: The First Wave*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Oulu, published by Oulu University Press, Finland.

4 D.S. Wosgian (1963) ‘Turks and British Rule in Cyprus’, unpublished PhD Thesis, Columbia University, p. 135.

5 An article by *Vatan*, newspaper as republished in *Éfimeris*, 15 January 1949.

close co-operation with the Turkish Cypriot notables at least at the local government level.⁶ Nevertheless, such an alliance was not feasible since the electorate was split into Greek Cypriot ('non-Mohamedans') and Turkish Cypriot ('Mohamedans'). As a result, politicians and organised political groups from both communities addressed issues along strict ethnic lines, and were thus 'accountable' only to their own community. The separateness of the electoral basis made it impossible to establish electoral co-operation between politicians or parties of either community, on the basis of a common political or ideological platform. Even at the Municipal level it was almost unthinkable, particularly after 1946, for the Turkish Cypriots to support a Greek Cypriot candidate for the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The political stance of the Greek Cypriot political elite was even more rigid, as it systematically excluded Turkish Cypriots from the mayoral posts. For example, none of the Greek Cypriot politicians would even consider that the Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Nicosia, who in the early 1900s represented almost 40%⁷ of the town's population, were entitled to voice legitimate complaints regarding their *de facto* exclusion from the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Unsurprisingly, in 1911, the Greek Cypriot Archbishop became involved in the opponent Greek Cypriot political parties with the explicit purpose of deterring the possibility of any Turkish Cypriot assuming the Mayoral office, as happened in 1908 due to a dispute between Greek Cypriot politicians.⁸

The Secretary General of AKEL, Ploutis Servas, regularly attempted to utilise the 'sympathy' directed at his candidature by Turkish Cypriot councillors in the Municipality of Limassol, in order to propagate a theoretical but politically unsubstantiated influence exerted by the party over the Turkish Cypriots.⁹ In spite of claims by Servas, the Turkish Cypriots have not displayed any preferential sympathy towards the Left. As the Turkish Cypriot councillors were the minority and inevitably had to 'choose' either Right- or Left-wing (Greek) candidates, it was not uncommon for them to vote for those they assessed as being closer to their communal or personal interests. This attitude only changed dramatically after World War Two when the Turkish Cypriot leadership, terrified by the radicalisation of Greek Cypriot nationalism, declared the negation of *enosis* to be its supreme national task and thereby refrained from 'supporting' any Greek Cypriot candidates. Nonetheless, the behaviour of Turkish Cypriot councillors during electoral procedures in the early 1940s demonstrates that there was no exclusive preference towards Left-wing candidates. After the 1943 elections the Turkish Cypriot councillors supported the Right-wing candidates, Demetrios Demetriou and Christodoulos Galatopoulos, in Larnaca and Paphos respectively. In the

6 R. Katsiaounis (1997) *Η Διασκεπτική: 1946–1948 (Με Ανασκόπηση της Περιόδου 1878–1945)* [The Consultative Assembly: 1946–1948 (With a review of the period 1878–1945)], Nicosia: Κέντρο Επιστημονικών Ερευνών, p. 141.

7 SA 1/384/1908, 18 March 1908.

8 *Foni tis Kiprou*, 26 March 1911.

9 P. Servas (1997) *Κοινή πατρίδα* [Common Homeland], Athens: Πρόοδος, pp. 141–144. Also see, Katsiaounis, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

Municipalities of Limassol and Famagusta they voted in favour of the Leftists, Ploutis Servas and Adam Adamantos.¹⁰ In Nicosia, where discussions within the Municipality's Council have always been more politicised, the Turkish Cypriot councillors supported the candidature of a Turkish Cypriot politician, Fazıl Küçük.¹¹ In the 1946 elections the Turkish Cypriot party of KTMBP ['Kıbrıs Türk Milli Birlik Partisi'] – arguing on the grounds that the Greek Cypriot majority was using the Municipalities as stepping stones to promote enosis – decided to boycott the electoral procedure. The decision, however, was only implemented in Nicosia because in other cities the independent candidates and members of the Association of the Turkish Minority of the Island of Cyprus, known as KATAK ['Kıbrıs Adası Türk Azınlık Kurumu'], took part in the electoral procedures.¹² In those municipalities the elected Turkish Cypriots voted for Servas in Limassol, Galatopoulos in Paphos, Adamantos in Famagusta and Santamas, also a Leftist candidate, in Larnaca.¹³

In 1947, AKEL's rhetoric for self-government – *enosis* – failed to widen the party's influence among Turkish Cypriots. The demand for self-government was equally abhorrent to Turkish Cypriots as was the call of the Greek Cypriot Right for 'immediate *enosis*'. The Turkish Cypriot negative stance towards AKEL's national policy was foreseeable, as *enosis* remained the ultimate goal of the party's national claims and because self-government and autonomy were diachronically incorporated in the Turkish Cypriot collective consciousness as the precursors of *enosis*.¹⁴ When, in the summer of 1946, the issue of a more liberal constitution was brought to the fore by the British government, the Turkish Cypriot political parties of KATAK and KTMBP hastily reacted by adopting a rigid stance against self-government.¹⁵ Numerous reports in the Greek and Turkish Cypriot press confirmed the strong Turkish Cypriot response against any solutions based on autonomy or self-government. Küçük, in September 1946, stated that 'either with *enosis* or with autonomy [our] death is inevitable'.¹⁶ In December 1946, *Halkın Sesi* reaffirmed the Turkish Cypriot stance against any processes that might lead either to *enosis* or to self-government.¹⁷ In a memorandum submitted to the Governor in April 1947 from the major Turkish Cypriot organisations (the political parties of KATAK and KTMBP, the Trade Unions and the Farmers

10 Municipality Council Minutes, 1 June 1953, Minutes Book (18 December 1946–22 September 1953), Municipality of Larnaca. Also, Municipality Council Minutes, 1 June 1949, Minutes Book (25 October 1946–11 August 1949), Municipality of Limassol, and Municipality Council Minutes, 1 June 1949, Minutes Book (April 1943–April 1950), Municipality of Nicosia, and Municipality Council Minutes, 1 June 1949, Minutes Book (1 June 1949–29 March 1956), Municipality of Paphos.

11 Municipality Council Minutes, 1 April 1943, Minutes Book (April 1943–April 1950), Municipality of Nicosia.

12 *Cyprus Mail*, 21 May 1946.

13 *Eleftheria*, 2 June 1946.

14 *Eleftheria*, (Athens), 21 January 1948.

15 *Cyprus Mail*, 24 November 1946.

16 *Halkın Sesi*, 5 September 1946.

17 *Neos Kypriakos Fylax*, 19 December 1946.

Union), it was stressed that Turkish Cypriots were against ‘any form of self-government’ because such a development might have led to abandoning to fate the vital interests and rights of the Turkish community, leaving them entirely at the mercy of the Greek Cypriot majority.¹⁸ It was, further, claimed that in such a case, there would be painful consequences for the minorities as self-government could be used as a stepping stone towards *enosis*.¹⁹

With the collapse, in 1948, of the Consultative Assembly and the subsequent deterioration of bi-communal relations, the Turkish Cypriots abstained from procedures to formulate the councils’ bodies in the 1949 elections.²⁰ The same policy was applied after the 1953 elections with the exception of Paphos, where Turkish Cypriots under the leadership of Dr İhsan Ali supported the Right-wing candidate, Iakovides.²¹

Regardless of any political sympathies among members of AKEL and Turkish Cypriots at the local level, it cannot be asserted that these constituted an ‘unprecedented phenomenon in the history of intercommunal relations’²² or that the electoral victory of AKEL in Limassol, in 1943, led to any common celebrations of Greek and Turkish Cypriots.²³ And indeed, the Left-wing newspaper *Anexartitos* [Ἀνεξάρτητος], when referring to the aftermath of Servas’ election in Limassol, on 25 March 1943, made a laconic reference to the two Turkish Cypriot councillors who attended the party’s celebrations.²⁴ The facts could not have been more different. Immediately after the elections, AKEL’s persistence on *enosis* was once again reiterated by Servas, who emphasised that the most significant aspiration of the newly elected municipal council was the ‘vindication of the national aspirations’ of the people – meaning *enosis*. That said, the Leftist leader suggested that together with the Greek flag at the Town Hall, a Turkish flag should also be raised and he called upon the colonial government to respect the national identity of not only the Greek inhabitants of the island but of the Turks as well.²⁵ Undeniably, AKEL’s attitude towards the Turkish Cypriots had been more liberal and tolerant than the approach expressed by many nationalist Right-wing politicians.²⁶ The latter had employed a far more contemptuous rhetoric; one that considered Turkish Cypriots to be the remnants of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus, and who had no right to raise legitimate demands in relation to the island’s future. The Turkish Cypriots were given no acknowledgement as a constituent element of Cyprus but were merely looked on as either a

18 *Cyprus Mail*, 21 April 1947.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Council Minutes, Municipalities of Larnaka, Limassol Paphos and Nicosia, *op. cit.*

21 *Ibid.*

22 Katsiaounis, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

23 P. Servas (1975) *Πως τα καταφέραμε και φτάσαμε στο μηδέν* [How Did We Manage to Reach Point Zero], Athens: Διάλογος, p. 26.

24 *Anexartitos*, 25 March 1943.

25 *Anexartitos*, 2 April 1943.

26 Ktoris, *op. cit.*, pp. 191–211.

'foreign minority' or as 'non-native inhabitants of Cyprus' who were 'obliged' to respect the national aspirations of the Greek majority.²⁷ Yet AKEL still failed to capitalise on any influence between the Turkish Cypriot masses, let alone any sympathies among their political elite.²⁸ The leading Turkish Cypriot newspaper, *Halkın Sesi*, systematically criticised AKEL's attempt to infiltrate the community and called upon the Turkish Cypriots to marginalise any 'left germs' among them.²⁹

The Participation of Turkish Cypriots in PSE–PEO

Confidence in AKEL's influence on the Turkish Cypriots surfaced fundamentally through the latter's significant presence within the Left-wing trade unions of PSE and its successor PEO.³⁰ It was even suggested that this development might gradually lead to the de-Turkification of the community and thus curtail the guiding power exercised by the Turkish Cypriot leadership on the Turkish masses and especially on Turkish workers.³¹ It was also argued that the rationale behind Fazıl Küçük's opposition to the presence of Turkish Cypriots in PEO was his concern that such co-operation might lead to the acceptance of Greek authority by his fellow countrymen.³² Such views, however, cannot be substantiated given the historical context within which Turkish Cypriot nationalism was institutionalised. The reaction of the Turkish Cypriot political elite towards the Greek Cypriot Left reflected the anti-communist sentiment of Turkish nationalism, rather than giving credence to an imaginary influence that PEO and AKEL enjoyed among the Turkish Cypriots. The possibility of AKEL gaining mass appeal in the Turkish Cypriot community was actually doomed to fail because in order to exert influence over the broad masses of the Greek Cypriots, it had to endorse the political demand of enosis. In the 1940s the party's approach in relation to the Turkish Cypriots was:

'The happiness of our fellow Turks is safeguarded not by becoming involuntary instruments in the hands of imperialism that is the master of *divide and conquer*. Happiness is found in the unconditional recognition of the majority's rights and the support of the national liberation struggle of the Cypriot people.'³³

27 *Eleftheria*, 21 August 1944.

28 ΑΣΚΙ: Archive of the Communist Party of Greece, KKE, Box. 371 F. 20/21/21, «Εκθεση δράσεως της Κ.Ε. ΑΚΕΛ» [Action report by the Central Committee of AKEL], September, 1947–May 1949 (N. Savvides).

29 *Halkın Sesi*, 4 June 1943.

30 PEO was established in March 1946 after PSE was proscribed by the colonial government. . *Ιστορία ΠΣΕ–ΠΕΟ*, [History of PSE–PEO] (1991) Nicosia: PEO, p. 102.

31 Anagnostopoulou, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

32 Katsiaounis, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

33 *Theoritikos Dimokratis*, 20 April 1947.

Besides, in the early 1940s the political control exercised by AKEL upon the ‘national’ policy of the Leftist trade unions (PSE–PEO) was the principal reason which led to the establishment of separate Turkish trade unions. Initially, 12 carpenters headed by Niyazi Dağlı formed the first Turkish Cypriot union³⁴ at the end of December 1942. As stated in the monthly report of the colonial government in November 1942:

[...] the subservience of the trade unions to the political doctrines and policy of AKEL has developed a secessionist movement among Turkish Cypriot workers in Nicosia who would also like to have separate Turkish trade unions or to form Turkish branches of existing unions which would be housed in separate premises. This movement may be expected to receive some support from Turkish nationalistic sources.³⁵

The newly established Turkish Unions expanded their authority over the Turks of Cyprus, particularly after 1943 due to the inflexible nationalist rhetoric of AKEL and PSE which steered a further defection of Turkish Cypriot workers away from PSE. More specifically, in August of 1944, when Greek Cypriot workers staged pro-*enosis* demonstrations during a visit to Cyprus by the British Colonial Secretary, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 120 Turkish Cypriots, under the leadership of Hassan Şaşmaz, defected from PSE. Şaşmaz, in an address to the Turkish Cypriots workers, declared:

‘Friends! As of today, our roads part. We will establish an independent and free Union of Turkish Cypriot Workers Associations that is ours alone and separate from the Greeks. We are now obliged to do this. We ourselves are not the ones who have imposed this obligation on ourselves. It is the Turkish Cypriot people who wish for this. We are obliged to respond to their voice.’³⁷

In 1944 PSE argued that the ‘leak’ of the politically ‘ignorant and uneducated’ Turkish Cypriot workers was due to the propagation of the reactionary leadership of the minority.³⁸ The Leftist union highlighted the necessity for the Turkish Cypriot workers to be ‘enlightened’ on the advantages they would enjoy ‘under a Greek People’s Republic’, once *enosis* was utilised.³⁹ Despite PSE’s concerted efforts to prevent the division of the labour movement, the various Turkish guilds merged in 1945, under an umbrella organisation known as the ‘Association of Turkish Cypriot Workers Unions’ [‘Kıbrıs Türk İşçi Birlikleri Kurumu’ (KTIBK)], which was politically

34 An, A. (2002) ‘An Overview of the Past and Present of the Turkish Cypriot Left’. Available as pdf on p. 2 at [http://www.kibrisim.org/dosya/Ahmet], accessed on 3 December 2013.

35 CO 67/314/12, ‘Political report on the situation in Cyprus in November 1942’.

36 An, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

37 Cited in N. Kızılyürek (2002) *Milliyetçilik Kıskaçında Kıbrıs* [Cyprus in the Grip of Nationalism], İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 259.

38 Minutes of the 3rd Pancyprian Trade Union Conference of PSE, 24 and 25 September 1944, Nicosia: Library of Archbishopric of Cyprus.

39 *Ibid.*

controlled by the Turkish Cypriot National Union Party, KTMBP.⁴⁰ During the 4th Conference of PEO in late March 1946, when a handful of Turkish Cypriot delegates raised their concerns as regards the federation's 'national' policy, they received a staunch response as follows:

'the majority of the population of Cyprus is Greek, and in accordance with the principle of democracy and declarations of war our own people should join the nation in which it belongs'.⁴¹

The policy of PEO even caused reactions among the most progressive Turkish Cypriots. Such was the case of Derviş Ali Kavazoğlu who, in the early 1940s, was very critical towards the *enosist* policy of the Left. In an article published in *Halkın Sesi* on 13 June 1944, Kavazoğlu analysed in detail the reasons behind the 'imposed' establishment of separate Turkish Cypriot unions. Kavazoğlu accused PEO of advocating *enosist* and at the same time ignoring the national feelings and sentiments of the Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, he claimed that PEO's recently established 'Turkish branch' was nothing but a tool employed to prevent a Turkish Cypriot reaction to the organisation's *enosist* designs.⁴² Such beliefs were gradually consolidated between the Turkish Cypriot masses, when AKEL's 'Turkish branch' launched a campaign which urged Turkish Cypriot 'labourers who live, work, and suffer together with the Greek Cypriot labourers to enter the struggle at the same front with other people of the island' in order to support 'the just demand of people of Cyprus for self-determination'.⁴³

In December 1954 AKEL admitted that the defection of the Turkish Cypriots from PEO and the establishment of separate Turkish Cypriot trade unions occurred when 'the few Turkish workers' left the party 'during the rise of our national struggle'.⁴⁴ Pantelis Varnava, the veteran trade unionist of PEO, confirms that the joint union efforts of Greek and Turkish Cypriots 'have been affected to a large degree [during] the period of 1944–1945 by the intensity of the struggle of the Greek Cypriots for *enosist*'.⁴⁵ Similar views were expressed by the historical leader of PEO, Andreas Ziartidis, who recognised that the rise of the *enosist* movement increased 'the distrust among the Turkish Cypriots'.⁴⁶ Ziartidis noted that the division of the trade union movement was inevitable, once AKEL had adopted the policy of *enosist*.⁴⁷ Identical views were voiced by the Greek Consul

40 *Ιστορία ΠΣΕ–ΠΕΟ* [History of PSE–PEO] (1991) Nicosia: PEO, p. 253.

41 Minutes of the 4th Pancyprian Trade Union Conference of PEO, 30 and 31 March 1946, Nicosia: Library of Archbishopric of Cyprus.

42 *Halkın Sesi*, 13 June 1944.

43 *Halkın Sesi*, 20 October 1954. Cited in An, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–3.

44 *Theoritikos Dimokratias*, December 1954.

45 P. Varnava (2004) *Κοινοί εργατικοί αγώνες Ελληνοκυπρίων και Τουρκοκυπρίων (γεγονότα μέσα από την Ιστορία)* [The Common Labour Struggles of Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Events through History)], Nicosia: ΠΕΟ, p. 16.

46 P. Paionides (1995) *Ανδρέας Ζιαρτίδης: Χωρίς φόβο και πάθος* [Andreas Ziartides: Without Fear and Passion], Nicosia: Privately printed, p. 51.

47 *Ibid.*

in Cyprus, who attributed the 'separatist' tendencies in the trade union movement to the *enosis* policy of AKEL.⁴⁸

Even the 'legendary' joint strike of Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers in the Mining Industry at Mavrovouni in 1948, which is often employed to exemplify the 'grand manifestation of national unity of the two components of workers in Cyprus';⁴⁹ and the transcending of 'religion and nationalism' barriers,⁵⁰ became possible when PEO adopted a cautious rhetoric on the issue of *enosis*.⁵¹ Moreover, the leader of the Turkish strikers, Hassan Şaşmaz, was a prominent nationalist and a close associate of Fazıl Küçük.⁵² When the Mayor of Limassol and representative of the Left, Ploutis Servas, supported the annexation of Cyprus by Greece during the discussions held within the Consultative Assembly [*Diaskeptiki Sineleusi*], Hassan Şaşmaz swiftly clarified that:

[...] it should be borne in mind that his fatherland is not our fatherland. If there is a Greece he [Servas] longs for there is a Turkey we long for. He is Greek and we are Turks [...] if the British Government agrees to hand over the administration of the island to their hands then we demand it be returned to its old owner, Turkey which is our national homeland.⁵³

Inevitably, when PEO adopted *enosis* as its national goal in the dawn of 1940s, it turned a significant number of Turkish Cypriots away from the Leftist labour movement. The majority that chose to remain, did so only because PEO as the largest federation, could secure better terms and conditions of employment⁵⁴ for its members. Moreover, it was unavoidable for the majority of Turkish Cypriots to remain within PEO because industries such as artisanship, business and commerce were almost exclusively in the hands of Greek Cypriots.⁵⁵ The Turkish Cypriot political elite systematically claimed that the reason for the weighty presence of Turkish Cypriots in PEO was the latter's policy of excluding the participation of the Turkish Cypriot guilds in many Greek Cypriot owned firms [closed shop agreements]; a policy they considered as 'persecution based on

48 ΔΙΑΥΕ [Diplomatic and Historic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 1945, 38.6, Kountouriotis, Consul of Greece to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 September 1944.

49 N. Psirouki (1965) *To Κυπριακό. Το οξύτερο εθνικό μας πρόβλημα* [The Cyprus Issue: Our Most Politically Acute Problem], Athens, «Εργασία», p. 85.

50 M. Michaelides (2010) 'The Turkish Cypriot Working Class and the Cyprus Labour Movement 1920–1963', in E. Solomou and H. Faustmann (eds), *Colonial Cyprus 1878–1960, Selective Readings from The Cyprus Review*, Nicosia: University of Nicosia Press, pp. 124–125.

51 Varnava, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

52 Ktoris, *op. cit.*, pp. 271–273.

53 CO 537/4036, Meeting of the Consultative Assembly, 21 May 1948.

54 By 1945 the trade union of the Left had 12,984 members, organised in 91 guilds. L. Kakkoulis (1990) *Η αριστερά και οι Τουρκοκύπριοι: Το κυπριακό από μια άλλη σκοπιά* [The Left and the Turkish Cypriots: The Cyprus Problem from another Point of View], Nicosia: Τυπογραφεία Κασουλίδου, p. 36.

55 Ktoris, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

racial criteria.’⁵⁶ By 1947, the rivalry between AKEL and the KTMBP escalated and as a result a growing number of Turkish Cypriots defected from PEO and joined KTIBK.⁵⁷ The KTMBP intensified its efforts to establish distinct, ethnic-based, institutions and, with the purpose of boosting the recruitment process of KTIBK, it adopted an intimidation campaign based on the notion that Turkish Cypriots, who participated in PEO, were ‘strengthening’ the Greek nationalist movement. A leading member of the Left, Andreas Fantis, concerned by the anti-communist campaign of KTMBP and KTIBK accused their leadership that they:

[...] shoot against their Turkish colleagues who are members in our unions. They even reached the point of committing to paper that the Turkish members have become Rum, lost their ethnic identity and are not carriers of Turkish blood. [...] The leaders of the Turkish guilds inflame racial passions by exploiting our differences on the national question.’⁵⁸

The confrontation between the two sides did not prevent attempts at rapprochement and co-operation as regards labour issues, especially as the fulfilment of Turkish workers’ demands could not be realised if they were not included in a wider trade union forum. In 1945 the colonial administration ‘encouraged’ the Turkish Cypriot leadership to seek co-operation in this direction with the respective Greek Cypriot trade unions, on the single condition that the latter would explicitly abandon *enosis*.⁵⁹ Pantelis Varnava vividly describes how he was almost lynched during this period by Turkish Cypriot nationalists in the village of Lefka, which was predominantly inhabited by Turks, when he refused to renounce *enosis*.⁶⁰ Additionally, the Turkish Cypriot unionists demanded that in order to participate in common labour events with PEO, the latter should also renounce the right to register Turkish Cypriots as its members, whether they ‘belonged to the Turkish trade unions or were unorganized’.⁶¹ PEO rejected this ‘request’ since its political aspiration was to expand its influence among the ‘minority’. Nonetheless, the ‘concern’ of the Turkish Cypriot political elite that the association of many of their national compatriots with PEO might have led to the gradual de-Turkification of the community, was clearly unsubstantiated. Although the number of Turkish Cypriots who enrolled with KTIBK was reduced by the end of the 1940s,⁶² the Turkish Cypriot leadership still succeeded in mobilising the whole community against the *enosis* agitation over the course of this period.⁶³ The inability of KTIBK unionists to enlist the majority of Turkish Cypriots as members was basically linked with PEO’s admirable efficacy of securing labour rights for all Cypriot workers, in a time when the latter

56 SA I/658/1943/1, 11 September 1945.

57 *Ιστορία ΠΣΕ–ΠΕΟ* [History of PSE–PEO], *op. cit.*, p. 253.

58 *Theoritikos Dimokratias*, 10 January 1947.

59 SA I/658/1943/1, 11 September 1945.

60 An interview conducted by Xenofon Kallis and Makarios Drousiotis with Pantelis Varnava.

61 *Theoritikos Dimokratias*, 10 January 1947.

62 Republic of Cyprus, Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance for the Year 1968, Nicosia, 1969, p. 108.

faced gruelling economic conditions. It is worth noting that, in 1948, the Leftist federation launched its medical scheme to provide an opportunity for its Greek and Turkish members to benefit from free treatment in various medical units established throughout the island.⁶⁴ Eventually, an agreement was signed between PEO and KTIBK, on 8 January 1948.⁶⁵ However, only one year later, the Leftist Union was acknowledging its disappointment because typical unity with the Turkish Cypriot unionists did not imply an essential unity with the thousands of Turkish Cypriot workers.⁶⁶

AKEL and the Turkish Cypriots – A Conflicting Relationship

AKEL was formed in 1941 by leading members of the proscribed Communist Party of Cyprus along with personalities of the Greek Cypriot middle class.⁶⁷ None of the founding members⁶⁸ of the party were Turkish Cypriot; nor did any Turkish Cypriot become a member of the partisan institutional structure and its decision-making apparatus during the period under consideration (1941–1955).⁶⁹ Even so, the establishment of AKEL constituted a radical political development. For the first time a political formation became accessible, at least theoretically, to all Cypriots regardless of their ethnic or religious origin. The party's initial constitution explicitly stated that any resident of Cyprus could become a member of AKEL 'irrespective of race, religion and sex as long as he accepts the program and the constitution of the party'.⁷⁰

Despite the above, and irrespective of the large number of Turkish Cypriot workers who were enrolled as members of PEO, the political party of the Left (AKEL) had little influence over the 'minority'. This view is confirmed by AKEL's leadership who acknowledged the marginal hold which the party had with the Turkish Cypriot masses. In its correspondence with the Greek Communist Party ['Kommunistiko Komma Elladas' (KKE)], the leader of AKEL, Fifis Ioannou disclosed:

63 *Hür Söz*, 6 December 1949, *Ares*, 12 December 1949, *Halkın Sesi* 13 December 1949 and *Dimokratias* 13 December 1949.

64 Michaelides, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

65 *Ιστορία ΠΣΕ-ΠΕΟ* [History of PSE-PEO], *op. cit.*, p. 251.

66 *Πρακτικά Στ' Παγκύπριας Συντεχνιακής Συνδιάσκεψης της ΠΕΟ* [Minutes of the 6th Pancyprian Trade Union Conference of PEO], 1 and 2 May 1949, Nicosia: Archbishopric of Cyprus Library.

67 V. Protopapas (2012) *Εκλογική Ιστορία της Κύπρου: πολίτευτες, κόμματα και εκλογές στην Αγγλοκρατία (1878–1960)* [The Electoral History of Cyprus: Politicians, Parties and Elections during the British Colonial Period (1878–1960)], Athens: Θεμέλιο, pp. 353–361.

68 *Ιστορία του ΚΚΚ–ΑΚΕΛ, Από τις αρχές του 20ου αιώνα μέχρι το 1981* [History of the Communist Party of Cyprus–AKEL], unpublished document of the Central Committee of AKEL, Vol. II, p. 3.

69 *Ibid.*, Vols. II and III.

70 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 21.

'In fact our work within the minorities is seriously delayed. The Turkish leadership, which prefers either the British to protect their interests, or a union with Turkey, is still brainwashing the masses of the minority and thus keeping them away from the Greek (Cypriot) popular movement.'⁷¹

Analogous to the above was the assessment expressed by another party official, Nicos Savvides, whose report to the 'national' communist party was also quite revealing:

'Minorities: no appreciable effort. The Turkish element is still under the influence of the Turkish reaction. The effort to establish a Democratic Political Organization of the Turks sank because we failed to find any respected Turks who would lead to its establishment.'⁷²

The situation could not have been different given AKEL's determination to promote as a 'strategic necessity' the understanding by Turkish Cypriots that:

'[...] The union with Greece not only solves the national problem of the Greeks of Cyprus, but also the problem of the Turkish minority from a national interest point of view. The Turkish workers and employees need to understand this. They can understand it and they should understand it. This is also one of the major tasks of our party.'⁷³

As anticipated, the reaction of the Turkish Cypriot elite against AKEL was even harsher in comparison to its stance *vis-à-vis* the Greek Cypriot Right. Unlike the latter that blatantly ignored the existence of the Turkish Cypriot community, the leadership of AKEL attempted to propagate its *enosis* policy amongst the Turkish Cypriots. Principally, under the leadership of Ezekias Papaioannou, the party made a systematic effort to persuade the Turkish Cypriots to 'understand' its policy for *enosis*. The policy of embracing the Turkish Cypriots was further materialised after the VI Congress of AKEL, in August 1949, when the party readopted '*enosis* and only *enosis*' as its national goal. The congress acknowledged the minimal effect that AKEL had upon the Turkish Cypriots and decided on a course of action to address the specific 'deficiency'. Amid others, it was recommended that the party should proceed with the formation of local organisations ['*Topikes Organosis*'] exclusively comprised of Turkish Cypriots, to explore closer co-operation with KITBK, and to proceed with the issuance of brochures and bulletins in the Turkish language with a view to elucidate its political programme to the Turks of Cyprus.⁷⁴ But, AKEL's endeavour to sway the 'minority' did not result in any substantial change. For the Turkish Cypriot masses,

71 ΑΣΚΙ [Archive of Contemporary Social History – ASKI] Archive KKE, Box. 371 F. 20/21/14, «Μια συνοπτική έκθεση πάνω στην κυπριακή κατάσταση και το ΑΚΕΛ» [A brief report on the situation in Cyprus and AKEL], F. Ioannou, Free Greece, November 1948.

72 ΑΣΚΙ [Archive of Contemporary Social History – ASKI] Archive KKE, Box. 371 F. 20/21/21, «Έκθεση δράσης της Κ.Ε. ΑΚΕΛ» [Action report by the Central Committee of AKEL], September, 1947–May 1949 (N. Savvides).

73 *Theoritikos Dimokratis*, 10 January 1947.

74 *Theoritikos Dimokratis*, August 1949.

beyond the abhorrent, nature of the party's chief political aim [*enosis*], the circumstances it triggered were deeply affected by political and ethnic cleavages. The collapse of the Consultative Assembly in 1948 and the aggressive competition between the Left and the Right for the domination of the Greek Cypriot national movement led to a nationalistic hysteria among the Greeks of Cyprus. The developments excited the Turkish Cypriots, and contributed further to the climax of a nationalist frenzy within their community. Under such conditions, Turkish Cypriots elevated their activity and aimed at their political unification under the 'Federation of Turkish Cypriot Associations' on 8 September 1949.⁷⁵ Fazıl Küçük, the leader of KTMBP and leading proponent of anti-communism, stated in January 1949 that 'Cyprus is Turkish and will remain Turkish. Communism is the greatest enemy of Turkey and a struggle needs to be done against communism'.⁷⁶ Given the anti-communist sentiments of Turkish Cypriots, the relations between AKEL and KTMBP led to an enduring political confrontation. In parallel the *enosis* agitation of the 'communist' Greeks of Cyprus contributed to the further escalation of anti-communist hysteria in Turkey. At a time when the Cold War representations determined the principal ideological elements of Turkish foreign policy, the annexation of a 'communist' Cyprus by Greece was conceived in panturkist circles as a step towards the Sovietisation of Greece itself.⁷⁷ The British embassy in Ankara confirmed the existence of anti-communist hysteria in the Turkish press. Nonetheless, it also stated that the attitude of the Turkish government had remained unaltered in view of the British reassurances regarding the preservation of the *status quo*.⁷⁸ Contrary to the Americans, the British were more concerned in tackling the *enosis* agitation rather than dealing with the communist 'threat'. The importance attached by the British to a *divide and rule* policy is reflected in their decision to reject the recommendation by the US Consul, in which the latter encouraged the co-operation between the Greek Cypriot Right and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, with the aim to marginalise the communist influence on the island. According to the Greek Consul in Nicosia, the Ethnarchy, dazzled by the anti-communist climate of the Greek Civil War, appeared to have been positive towards the idea, but the British Colonial Office rejected the recommendation since it anticipated that an American involvement in Cyprus, could gap the bridge between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.⁷⁹ The decision of the British government to use the Turkish Cypriots as a distraction to negate *enosis*, did not allow such political manoeuvres: particularly, after 1948, when the colonial administration encouraged the communal and political institutionalisation of the Turkish Cypriots as a political entity and, heading in this direction, it

75 *Halkın Sesi*, 10 September 1949.

76 *Hür Söz*, 7 January 1949.

77 Ktoris, *op. cit.*, pp. 352–358.

78 CO 67/342/2, British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office, 1 December 1948.

79 ΔΙΑΥΕ, [Diplomatic and Historic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 1949, File 69, Subfile 2, Consul Liapris to Ministry to Foreign Affairs, Secret, 20 April 1949.

proceeded with the formation of the 'Turkish Affairs Committee',⁸⁰ AKEL, having always shown interest in Turkish Cypriot affairs, commented on the growing British interest in the Turkish Cypriot community by noting that:

The Cyprus Government shows lately a particular interest in Turkish affairs and has established a "Turkish Affairs Committee" which advises government on all affairs affecting Cyprus Turkish community [...] This Government interest in Turkish affairs, far from improving the position of the Cypriot Turks, aims at using them as tools for the British imperialist plans in Cyprus and the Middle East.⁸¹

At variance with AKEL's analysis, the Turkish Cypriot opposition to *enosis* was not engineered by the British but it was the reaction of a minority that felt genuinely threatened by the Greek Cypriots' political aspirations. The Turkish Cypriots viewed with apprehension the political support by the Left to *enosis*, which gave a new impetus to the majority's national demand. AKEL's party newspaper *Dimokratis* had rightly claimed that *enosis* became the undisputed political objective of the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots.⁸² The Turkish Cypriots, concerned by the developments in the Greek Cypriot community, decided to demonstrate their objection to *enosis* by organising open multitudinous meetings.⁸³ In 'response' to a large rally organised by AKEL in favour of 'Self-Government-Enosis', and a voluminous rally by the Ethnarchy in favour of 'immediate' *enosis*, the Turkish Cypriots organised a rally against *enosis* and self-government in Nicosia on 28 November 1948. The enormity of the demonstration reaffirmed that the vast majority of the Turkish Cypriots had embraced the anti-*enosis* and anti-communist perceptions of their political leadership.⁸⁴ AKEL underestimated the developments within the 'minority', particularly the political messages disclosed by the rallies of 28 November 1948 and 12 December 1949, together with the nationalist anti-communist demonstrations of the 'Turkish Student Unions' in Istanbul and Ankara. Turkish Cypriot mobilisation aimed at bringing to the fore the reaction of the Turkish Cypriots against any solution that could lead to *enosis* or self-government, as well as to condemn the 'repulsive' ideology of communism. The prominent speakers at the rallies anathematised the national aspirations of the Greek Cypriots and verbally assaulted those Turkish Cypriots who, as a consequence of their participation in PEO and AKEL, were supporting communism.⁸⁵ Fazıl Küçük and Rauf Denktaş's speeches were infused with anti-Greek and anti-communist references. AKEL's leadership attributed the demonstrations to the

80 CO 537/4041, 'Political Report on the Situation in Cyprus in June 1948'.

81 CO 537/6235, 'AKEL Information Leaflet, August 1950'.

82 *Dimokratis*, 13 December 1949.

83 *Ethnos*, 2 December 1948 and *Cyprus Mail*, 15 December 1949.

84 *Ethnos*, 30 November 1948, and *Cyprus Mail*, 30 November 1948.

85 CO 67/342/1, Acting Governor to the Minister of Colonies, 30 November 1948. The speakers referred to specific Turkish Cypriot members of PEO such as Mehmed Alkan, Hassan Hassan, and Ahmed Djahid.

‘Turkish ağas and the British incitement’⁸⁶ and claimed that the feeling of anxiety among the Turks of Cyprus ‘about their fate in the event of *enosis*’ was largely encouraged by Britain whose aim was to provoke ill feeling between the two communities on the island.⁸⁷ Again the Greek Cypriot political elite, including AKEL had miserably failed to adequately evaluate the messages disclosed by the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot reactions and thus, their stance remained unaltered and inflexible.

The Greek Cypriots, having decided in December 1949 to proceed with the materialisation of a plebiscite in support of *enosis*, totally neglected the Turkish reactions. The Greek plebiscite of January 1950 was of decisive political importance. It led to the radicalisation of Turkish nationalism in Cyprus and alarmed the Turkish government. Hereafter, Turkey would gradually publicise its objections toward the possible alteration of the island’s *status quo*.⁸⁸ The Greek Cypriot political elite critically missed the mark by neglecting to acknowledge that a message of political exclusion of non-Greek Cypriots was a consequence of such *enosis* activities. By itself the organisation of the plebiscite inside the churches ‘delegitimised’ the political presence of Turkish Cypriots, and thereby signalled that the political future of the island lay exclusively within the political will of the Greek and Christian Orthodox majority.⁸⁹ In the Greek press of that time, an unsuccessful attempt was made to propagate the *enosis* plebiscite as reflecting the interests of all Cypriots. There were widespread reports that several hundreds of Turkish Cypriots had ‘signed’ in

86 *Dimokratis*, 13 December 1949.

87 The Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), News Bulletin, Vol. I. No. 4/49, August 1949.

88 FO 371/87716, British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office, 25 January 1950 and FO 371/95133, British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office, 25 April 1951.

89 The element of contempt towards the Turkish Cypriots had always infiltrated the Greek Cypriot analysis. A newspaper of the Right, *Eleftheria* [‘Ελευθερία’], ‘amazed’ by the growing demands of the Turkish Cypriots criticised the latter’s anti-*enosis* demonstrations of 1944 by indicating that ‘The Turkish minority is in Cyprus only because of an imperialistic war of Turkey. Thereby the Turks are not native inhabitants of Cyprus’ (*Eleftheria*, 21 August 1944). Another local newspaper of the Right *I Foni tis Kyprou* [‘Η Φωνή της Κύπρου’], having adopted an even more contemptuous rhetoric characterised the Turkish Cypriots as ‘guests’ in Cyprus who had to ‘show the obliged respect to their hosts’, and demanded a ‘more lucid political spirit, a deeper knowledge of history, a greater respect to the sacred and just national demands of Greek Cyprus’ (*Foni tis Kyprou*, 17 December 1949 and 4 December 1948).

A prominent member of AKEL in the 1940s and chief editor of *Dimokratis* newspaper [‘Δημοκρατία’] Minos Perdios noted with discontent that, among the main reasons for the reduced influence of the Leftist movement among the Turkish Cypriots, was ‘the regular contempt of the Turkish Cypriots and the negligence of their municipal and communal issues’. M. Perdios, ‘Δοκίμιο Ιστορίας ΚΚΚ’ [Essay of the History of KKK], Volumes I–III, unpublished document, p. 118.

A mainstream perception among the Greek Cypriot community described the Turkish Cypriots as lazy persons ‘rohatlides’ who could only be ‘Butchers, mahalepitzides, xalouvatzides, kattimeritzides and shiamisiarides, koupatzides, paplomatades, Kebabtzides’. *Neos Kipriakos Fylax* [‘Νέος Κυπριακός Φύλαξ’], 26 March 1936.

favour of *enosis*.⁹⁰ However, historical data reveals that only 42 Turkish Cypriots might have voted in support of *enosis*.⁹¹ Within the entire community of Cypriot Turks this number is too insignificant to be taken as a persuasive and credible claim that the dominant nationalist orientation of Turkish Cypriots was ever seriously challenged.

In view of the plebiscite for *enosis*, AKEL issued, on 12 January 1950, a declaration in Turkish with the intention of communicating its position to the 'minority'. AKEL urged the Turkish Cypriots not to obstruct the national aspirations of the Greek Cypriots. The declaration which was mainly addressed to 'the Turkish workers, Turkish peasants and poor working Turkish people', is of particular interest, as it disclosed AKEL's main political stance *vis-à-vis* the political and social dynamics within the Turkish Cypriot community:

'[...] The Greek Cypriots have decided to hold a peaceful referendum in order to shake off the British yoke and live freely. [...] We Greeks agree to respect the national rights and interests of minorities and especially the Turkish minority. For you the Turks it is a duty to respect the claims of your Greek countrymen who in the long term will defend your national rights.'⁹²

AKEL determined that the political initiative towards the decolonisation of the island lay exclusively with the Greek Cypriots. According to the declaration, Turkish Cypriots must discard their objections and concerns and respect the political 'demands' of the majority. AKEL contended that the British and the Turkish Cypriot plutocracy were the main culprits for the animosity created between the two communities:

'[...] The British came to Cyprus against the will of our people, who oppress both the Greeks and the Turks on an ethnic and political basis, are trying through some rich Turks to insert among you fear and to pander rivalry with the Greeks of Cyprus. [...] Even if some

90 *Eleftheria*, 19 January 1950, *Efimerida ton Hiton*, 19 December 1949, *Eleftheria*, (Athens), 18 January 1950, *Empros*, 17 January 1950.

91 It should be acknowledged that the possibility of some names to have fraudulently been added to the lists by Greek Cypriots cannot be excluded. It is also possible that a few more Turkish Cypriots might have voted in favour of *enosis* but their names could not have been retrieved among several hundred unintelligible names. The Turkish Cypriots who signed in favour of *enosis* were, Moustafa Emir Osman (Lempa); Kasim Salih, Seker Ali (Akoursos); Liazie Emir, Aziz Ahmet, Emine Aziz, Arif Mehmet (Ktima); Tervis Houseyin Ali, Hasan Huseyin Kondo Mustafa, Abel Emib (Larnaca); Irfan Moustafa, Bayram Suleyman, Zouftou Mehmet Emir Ali, Suleyman Suleyman Ballo, Ali Salih, Bahit Camil, Ahmet R. Ali Subru, Moustafa Halil Kazim, Ahmet Ali (Limassol Agia Napa District); Unidentified, Cemal Arif (Dali); Rasit Souleyman, Osman Emizade, Huseyin Osman, Rifat Yarafus (Morfou); Moustafa Suleyman, Serif Hasan, Fezile Osman (Famagusta); Moustafa Huseyin, Houseyin Ahmet, Salih Mohammad, Ervan Houseyin, Unidentified (Limassol Agia Triada District); Ahmet Filaverti (Ayia Eirini); Arif Salih, Hasan (Pano Lefkara); Naci Houseyin (Limassol Agia Zoni District); Osman Yurup (Colossi); Ali Amdah Alaz (Bogazi); Mohammad Ibrahim (Zakaki). *National Museum for EOKA Struggle*. Nicosia.

92 FO 371/87716, 'Message of the Central Committee of AKEL to the Turkish Cypriots', 12 January 1950.

Turks, especially the rich class, work with the British against the demands of the Greeks of the island this is not a reason to be resentful and annihilate each other.⁹³

The Left-wing party overestimated the impact of ‘class rhetoric’ upon the ‘liberation’ of the Turkish Cypriot masses. AKEL’s tendency was to believe that the latter were simply ‘prey’ in the hands of their community’s political and economic elite and, therefore, politically guided. However, compelling evidence demonstrates that contrary to the ideological and social divisions that cut across the Greek Cypriot community, the fear of enosis within the Turkish Cypriot community has created widespread political insecurity among them and has consequently dominated political and ideological discussions.⁹⁴ According to Wosgian the vast majority of the community’s organisations – political, cultural and athletic – expressed a unified nationalist political discourse.⁹⁵ For that reason, AKEL’s ‘class rhetoric’ was ineffective and did not have any political affinity among the Turkish Cypriots. It ignored the influence exerted by Turkish nationalism and underestimated the anxieties heaped on the Turkish Cypriot masses by the possibility of the annexation of Cyprus by Greece. Paradoxically, only a few months earlier, the extensive influence of Turkish nationalism was acknowledged by AKEL itself which noted that ‘the Turkish population is in the vast majority under the influence of personified chauvinist parties.’⁹⁶ AKEL intensified its organisational efforts in order to embrace the Turkish Cypriot community, even though the element of political naiveté characterised most of the party’s policies on this matter. AKEL seemed to believe that the propagation of *enosis* – being of benefit to all Cypriots – would at least convince Turkish Cypriot workers to follow a common path. In June 1951, in its correspondence with the Greek Communist Party, AKEL explained that:

‘In the struggle for bread, our Party must convince the Turkish poor farmers and workers that only the national liberation is the fundamental solution of their problems, for a prosperous and free life, in a free and independent from imperialism Greece.’⁹⁷

93 *Ibid.*

94 *Halkın Sesi*, 5 September 1946.

95 Wosgian, *op. cit.*, p. 135. See also C. Francois (2011) *Η Κυπριακή Διένεξη 1946–1959, Τόμος Α΄* [The Cyprus Conflict 1946–1959, Vol. A’]. Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τράπεζας, p. 159.

It is quite revealing, for example, that during 1948–1953, none of the Turkish Cypriot football teams participated in the AKEL controlled football association of KEPO [Κυπριακή Ερασιτεχνική Ομοσπονδία Ποδοσφαίρου]. Contrariwise they chose to remain in the ranks of KOP, the federation which had adopted anti-communism as its main political banner. The division of Cypriot football occurred in the spring of 1948 due to the escalation of the ideological cleavages between AKEL and the Greek Cypriot Right. As a result the footballers with leftist political beliefs defected from KOP, and proceeded to establish a separate football association, (KEPO). Sotos Ktoris, October 2013, ‘Το τουρκοκυπριακό ποδόσφαιρο στην αποικιακή περίοδο (1910–1960)’ [Turkish Cypriot Football in the Colonial Period, 1910–1960], a document presented in the conference ‘Όψεις και πτυχές της ιστορίας του ποδοσφαίρου στην Ελλάδα και στην Κύπρο’ [The Facets and Parameters of the History of Football in Greece and Cyprus], Nicosia, unpublished document.

96 *Theoritikos Dimokratias*, August 1949.

97 ΑΣΚΙ [Archive of Contemporary Social History], Archive ΚΚΕ, Box. 371 F. 20/21/22, «Θέσεις πάνω στο εθνικό ζήτημα» [Position on the national issue], 7 June 1951.

It is most striking for a party such as AKEL, which upheld its political predominance on the rational and pragmatic assessment of both social and political realities, to persistently degrade the developments within the Turkish Cypriot community. This raises questions about the party's belief that it could allure, with a literally utopian approach, the Turkish Cypriots. This political illusion might, to some extent, have been the result of the inconsistent 'guidance' from the 'glorious' Communist Party of Greece, which, even in 1954, reminded its Cypriot comrades that:

'Our position on the issue of enosis did not change [...] when the Communist Party of Greece says "a free Cyprus in a free Greece" it takes a positive position on the issue of *enosis* in the current circumstances. Besides on this issue we have talked many times with you and you know our line [...] as we have previously discussed, one of your most serious duties is your work among the Turkish community. Make a mass organization among the Turkish minority and you have nothing to fear.'⁹⁸

AKEL, having illustrated at length its position through an article by its organisational secretary, Pavlakis Georgiou, urged its members to 'digest' 'the article by the Communist Party comrades', and in a simplified way expose to 'the Turkish party members and the Turkish people in general' the benefits they would enjoy from the party's *enosis* policy. The party's new leadership, under Ezekias Papaioannou, declared that, naturally, thousands of Turkish Cypriots should have supported the party's policies through their participation in the Leftist organisations. Furthermore, the leadership of AKEL went on to claim that the main reasons which alienated the party from the Turkish Cypriots, were framed in the wrong policies of the Communist Party of Cyprus 'which spoke of an independent republic in a Soviet Cyprus' and in the confusion created by AKEL's policies during the Consultative Assembly era.⁹⁹ AKEL called on every 'Greek, Turk and Armenian who loves Cyprus, its family and children and who wants to live free' to support the party's programme for 'enosis unconditionally and without [any] consideration' adding that the 'prize for the liberation of Cyprus for [our] brothers the Turks and the other minorities would be to pave a life without oppression or racial discrimination'.¹⁰⁰

As erratic as it might sound, AKEL evoked as reasons for its reduced influence among the Turkish Cypriot community the brief adoption of self-government during the 1947–1948 period, together with the opposition of the Communist Party of Cyprus to *enosis* in the 1920s. In its findings with regard to the influence it exerted upon the Turkish Cypriots, the party showed greater pragmatism acknowledging that in general:

98 ΑΣΚΙ [Archive of Contemporary Social History], Archive ΚΚΕ, Box. 372 F. 20/21/6, ΚΚΕ to Κ.Ε. ΑΚΕΛ, [Greek Communist Party to Central Committee of AKEL], 27 May 1954.

99 *Theoritikos Dimokratias*, December 1954.

100 ΑΚΕΛ, Μίνιμουμ Πρόγραμμα, «Η Ένωση της Κύπρου με την Ελλάδα. Χωρίς όρους χωρίς ανταλλάγματα» [Minimum Programme, The Union of Cyprus with Greece. Unconditional], Nicosia, 28 June 1952, p. 61.

[...] The Turkish minority was still under the chauvinistic influence. [...] we have done very few things to distract the Turks from that influence. So the Turkish minority is now used as a stumbling block in our national liberation struggle.¹⁰¹

AKEL's minimal influence over the Turkish Cypriots was an indisputable reality. The colonial government, in 1954, reported the failed attempt of the 'Turkish and Progressive Patriotic Front' – a satellite organisation of AKEL – to collect funds for the circulation of a newspaper in Turkish. The author of the report, clearly influenced by the realities of the time, wondered how 'an organization of AKEL can have any support among the Turks of Cyprus'.¹⁰²

In the post-1950 period, the Turkish Cypriots employed the existence of a strong communist party in Cyprus as their most persuasive argument in order to upset the *enosis* aspirations of their Greek compatriots. Soon after the implementation of the plebiscite for *enosis* the Greek Cypriots launched a campaign to acquaint the international community with their political claims.¹⁰³ The Turkish Cypriots, excited by the developments, submitted a petition to the United Nations against the majority's desire for union with Greece. In their petition which was signed by the community's most prominent members it was stated, among others, that:

[...] we further contend that Union with Greece would most likely bring to the island financial ruin, racial and social disorders, and even an ideological civil war as in the case of Greece. The ground is well prepared for such probabilities because one half of the Greeks of Cyprus are Communists [...] the Greek politicians of Cyprus are not sincere in their desire for union with Greece. The real object of the Communists is to have a union with a Communist State. Their appeal for union with the present democratic Greece is surely based upon their aim to strengthen Communism in Greece. Indeed, no one can rely upon the sincerity of such people who keep in places of honour the photographs of the personalities of communism and not those of Greece.¹⁰⁴

In 1954 the Papagos government brought the issue of *enosis* before the United Nations demanding self-determination for the people of Cyprus. Thereafter, with the encouragement and abundant support of the British, the Turkish Cypriots who were feeling increasingly threatened by Greek Cypriot political aspirations, engaged in an international campaign in order to frustrate the latter's *enosis* ambitions.¹⁰⁵ In meetings held in London and New York in the autumn of 1954, a Turkish Cypriot delegation comprising of Faiz Kaymak, Midhat Berberoğlu and Ahmet Zaim highlighted the fact that the *enosis* movement had gained a new momentum and become more

101 *Theoritikos Dimokratis*, December 1954.

102 CO 926/209, 'Political report on the Situation in Cyprus in September 1954'.

103 *Ethnos*, 7 March 1950 and *Neos Dimokratis*, 16 March 1950.

104 'Turks of Cyprus Protest against the Desire of Union with Greece'. A Counter Appeal to the United Nations (1950) Nicosia: Bozkurt Press.

105 CO 926/309, The Activities of the Cypriot Turkish Delegation as from the 23 September, 8 October 1954.

violent since AKEL 'complied' with the 'enosis and only enosis' policy.¹⁰⁶ In their view this development was inevitable as communists in Cyprus constituted 60% of the Greek population.¹⁰⁷ The intention of the delegation to utilise anti-communism in order to propagate opinion contrary to *enosis* was evident. The adoption of an unbending and rigid anti-communist rhetoric is gleaned from the realisation that this constituted an effective argument for mobilising western governments against Greek Cypriot national aims. In their contacts in New York they re-emphasised their positions that, unlike Greek Cypriots, Turks 'have not been affected by communism'.¹⁰⁸ In their memorandum presented in September 1954 they stated:

[...] Today it can safely be said that about 60% of the Cypriot Greeks have fallen under the influence of the Communists. This fact was proved at the Municipal and Co-operative and other village committee elections recently held, where the Communist defeated the Greek National Party with an overwhelming majority [...] The party whose policy was to oppose *enosis* and to secure self-government in Cyprus (the anti-*enosis* movement of the communists was so strong that in 1945 in some villages the communist supporters tore down the Greek flag and hoisted the red flag instead), in 1952 all of a sudden started to support the *enosis* movement and recently formed a common front with the National Party. It is not difficult to see that there are hidden aims behind this change of policy which no doubt was dictated from Moscow.¹⁰⁹

The British Embassy in Ankara, commenting on the results of the delegation's visit to New York, noted with satisfaction that the Turkish Cypriots 'had a successful press conference in which their statement that 60% of Greeks in Cyprus are Communists provoked enough interest'.¹¹⁰ At a time when anti-communism hysteria among Turkish Cypriots culminated, AKEL continued its effort to 'pull the masses of the minorities in the national liberation struggle'.¹¹¹ The Turkish Cypriot leader, Fazıl Küçük, annoyed by the fact that the majority of Turkish Cypriot workers remained within PEO, determined, as a priority, the need to strengthen the national trade unions in order 'to limit the spread of communism among the Turkish Cypriots'.¹¹² Hence, a mission from Turkey

106 CO 926/309, Representations to the UK and UN by a Turkish Delegation on a new Constitution for Cyprus, 28 September 1954. Also see FO 371/112868, 5 October 1954.

107 FO 371/112865, From the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Officer administering the Government of Cyprus, 20 September 1954.

The reference to AKEL's political influence within the Greek Cypriot community was completely fallacious. The influence of the Left was further reduced during the period 1949–1953, as shown by the municipal election results of 1953. Protopoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 605–612

108 CO 926/309, Representations to the UK and UN by a Turkish Delegation on a new Constitution for Cyprus, 28 September 1954.

109 CO 926/309, The Cypriot Turks Point of View on the Cyprus Question, 28 September 1954.

110 FO 371/112868, British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office, 4 October 1954.

111 *Theoritikos Dimokratias*, August 1949.

112 CO 926/209, 'Political Report on the Situation in Cyprus in December 1954'.

under unionist leader, Nuri Beser, arrived in Cyprus to lend assistance in this direction.¹¹³ The interference of the Turkish Cypriot political elite had an immediate and noticeable effect, since the number of Turkish Cypriot members of KTIBK rose from 470 in 1953 to 740 in 1954.¹¹⁴ Soon after the outbreak of EOKA's revolt more than 1,500 Turkish Cypriots joined KTIBK which raised the total membership of the latter to 2,214.¹¹⁵ EOKA's revolt was conceived by the Turkish Cypriots as irrefutable 'proof' of the irredentist nature of the Greek Cypriot nationalist movement. Unsurprisingly, over the next four years, nationalist and anti-communist frenzy among the Turkish Cypriots reached its zenith and the political leadership of the community systematically declared that if *enosis* were to happen, the Communists (AKEL) would deliver Cyprus to Russia.¹¹⁶

In conclusion, the Leftist movement in Cyprus inadequately comprehended the inter-communal dynamics on the island. Contrariwise, the methodical pursuit of AKEL to attract the Turkish Cypriots into the 'Greek Cypriot national liberation struggle' provoked a strong reaction on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot political elite. The latter, having perceived both the communist 'menace' and the *enosis* agitation as paramount threats for the existence of the Turkish Cypriot community, regarded AKEL as an ideological and national opponent. As a result, AKEL's weak support from the Turkish Cypriot masses was the inevitable political outcome of its *enosis* policy and concurrently an anticipated consequence of the anti-communist dimension of Turkish Cypriot nationalism. Both of these aspects prevented any serious interaction between the Left and the Turkish Cypriot community and thus AKEL failed to acknowledge the Turkish Cypriot arguments and concerns in the formation of its 'national policy'. AKEL, despite its concerted yet unrealistic attempts to 'pull' the masses of the 'minority' under its political guidance, had no success in gaining influence within the Turkish Cypriot community. In essence, AKEL has given primacy to its systemic political preservation among the Greek Cypriots, rather than be reviewed as a hegemonic Cypriot political force that transcended pecuniary interests in both communities. In that matter AKEL was developed as a national popular Greek Cypriot party and not a party of the working people of Cyprus as a whole.

References

Archival Sources

National Archives at Kew Gardens, London

CO: 67/314/12; 67/342/1; 67/342/2; 926/183; 926/184; 926/209; 926/309;

113 FO 371/112846, British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office, 7 December 1954.

114 Republic of Cyprus, Annual Report, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

115 *Ibid.*

116 CO 926/184, 'A Memorandum by "Cyprus is Turkish" Organization', September 1955.

537/4041; 537/4036; 537/6235.

FO: 371/87716; 371/95133; 371/112846; 371/112865; 371/112868.

State Archive, Cyprus

SA 1/517/26; SA 1/658/1943/1.

ΔΙΑΥΕ: Diplomatic and Historic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens

ΔΙΑΥΕ: 1945, 38.6, Kountouriotis, Consul of Greece to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 September 1944.

ΔΙΑΥΕ: 1949, File 69, Subfile 2, Consul Liapis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secret, 20 April 1949.

ΑΣΚΙ: Archive of Contemporary Social History, Athens

ΑΣΚΙ: [Archive of Contemporary Social History – ASKI] Archive ΚΚΕ, Box. 371 F. 20/21/14, «Μια συνοπτική έκθεση πάνω στην κυπριακή κατάσταση και το ΑΚΕΛ» [A brief report on the situation in Cyprus and AKEL], F. Ioannou, Free Greece, November 1948.

ΑΣΚΙ: Archive of the Communist Party of Greece, ΚΚΕ, Box. 371 F. 20/21/21, «Έκθεση δράσης της Κ.Ε. ΑΚΕΛ» [Action report by the Central Committee of AKEL], September 1947–May 1949» (N. Savvides).

ΑΣΚΙ: Archive of the Communist Party of Greece, ΚΚΕ, Box. 371 F. 20/21/22, «Θέσεις πάνω στο εθνικό ζήτημα» [Position on the national issue], 7 June 1951.

ΑΣΚΙ: Archive of the Communist Party of Greece, ΚΚΕ, Box. 372 F. 20/21/6, ΚΚΕ to Κ.Ε. ΑΚΕΛ, [Greek Communist Party to Central Committee of AKEL], 27 May 1954.

Newspapers

Anexartitos, 25 March 1943; 2 April 1943.

Αρε, 12 December 1949.

Cyprus Mail, 21 April 1947; 21 May 1946; 24 November 1946; 30 November 1948; 15 December 1949.

Dimokratis, 13 December 1949.

Efimerida ton Hiton, 19 December 1949.

Efimeris, 15 January 1949.

Eleftheria, 21 August 1944; 2 June 1946; 19 January 1950.

Eleftheria (Athens), 18 January 1950; 21 January 1948.

Empros, 17 January 1950.

Ethnos, 30 November 1948; 2 December 1948; 7 March 1950.

Foni tis Kiprou, 26 March 1911; 4 December 1948; 17 December 1949.

Halkin Sesi, 4 June 1943; 14 June 1944; 5 September 1946; 10 September 1949; 13 December 1949; 20 October 1954.

Hür Söz, 5 September 1946; 7 January 1949; 6 December 1949.

Neos Dimokratis, 16 March 1950.

Neos Kypriakos Fylax, 26 March 1936; 19 December 1946.

Söz, 13 August 1931.

Theoritikos Dimokratis, August 1949; 10 January 1947; 20 April 1947; December 1954.

Municipality Council's Minutes

Municipality Council Minutes, Nicosia: 1943–1962.

Municipality Council Minutes, Larnaca: 1943–1953.

Municipality Council Minutes, Limassol: 1943–1953.

Municipality Council Minutes, Paphos: 1943–1956.

Pancyprian Trade Union Conferences of PEO

Minutes of the 3rd Pancyprian Trade Union Conference, 24 and 25 September 1944. Nicosia: Library of Archbishopric of Cyprus.

Minutes of the 4th Pancyprian Trade Union Conference, 30 and 31 March 1946. Nicosia: Library of Archbishopric of Cyprus.

Minutes of the 6th Pancyprian Trade Union Conference, 1 and 2 May 1949. Nicosia: Library of Archbishopric of Cyprus.

Secondary SourcesBooks – Monographs

An, A. (2002) 'An Overview of the Past and Present of the Turkish Cypriot Left'. Available at [<http://www.kibrisim.org/dosya/Ahmet>], accessed on 3 December 2013.

Anagnostopoulou, S. (2004) *Τουρκικός εκσυγχρονισμός: Ισλάμ και Τουρκοκύπριοι στη δαιδαλώδη διαδρομή του κεφαλισμού* [Turkish Modernity: Islam and Turkish Cypriots on the Tortuous Path of Kemalism]. Athens: Βιβλιόραμα.

Crawshaw, N. (1978) *The Cyprus Revolt*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Francois, C. (2011) *Η Κυπριακή Διένεξη 1946–1959, Τόμος Α΄* [The Cyprus Conflict 1946–1959, Vol. A']. Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τράπεζας.

Kakkoulis, L. (1990) *Η αριστερά και οι Τουρκοκύπριοι: Το κυπριακό από μια άλλη σκοπιά* [The Left and the Turkish Cypriots: The Cyprus Problem from another Point of View]. Nicosia: Τυπογραφεία Καουσουλίδη.

Katsiaounis, R. (1997) *Η Διασκεπτική: 1946–1948 (Με Ανασκόπηση της Περιόδου 1878–1945)* [The Consultative Assembly: 1946–1948 (With a Review of the Period 1878–1945)]. Nicosia: Κέντρο Επιστημονικών Ερευνών.

Kızılyürek, N. (2002) *Milliyetçilik Kıskaçında Kıbrıs* [Cyprus in the Grip of Nationalism]. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

——— (2006) *Κεφαλισμός: Η γένεση και η εξέλιξη της επίσημης ιδεολογίας της σύγχρονης Τουρκίας* [Kemalism: The Birth and Evolution of the Official Ideology of Modern Turkey]. Athens: Μεσόγειος.

——— (2010) 'Rauf Denktaş: Fear and Nationalism in the Turkish Cypriot Community', in Aktar, A., Kızılyürek, N. and Ozkirimli, U. (eds), *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 175–193.

Ktoris, S. (2013) *Τουρκοκύπριοι: Από το περιθώριο στο συνεταιρισμό (1923–1960)* [Turkish Cypriots: From Marginalisation to Partnership 1923–1960]. Athens: Παπαζώνη.

Michaelides, M. (2010) 'The Turkish Cypriot Working Class and the Cyprus Labour Movement 1920–1963', in Solomou, E. and Faustmann, H. (eds), *Colonial Cyprus 1878–1960, Selective Readings*

- from *The Cyprus Review*. Nicosia: University of Nicosia Press, pp. 111–135.
- Nevzat, A. (2005) *Nationalism amongst the Turks of Cyprus: The First Wave*. Finland: Oulu University Press.
- Paionides, P. (1995) *Ανδρέας Ζιαρτίδης: Χωρίς φόβο και πάθος* [Andreas Ziartides: Without Fear and Passion]. Nicosia: Privately printed.
- Perdios, M. 'Δοκίμιο Ιστορίας ΚΚΚ' [Essay of the History of ΚΚΚ], Volumes I–III. Unpublished Document.
- Protorapas, V. (2012) *Εκλογική Ιστορία της Κύπρου: πολιτευτές, κόμματα και εκλογές στην Αγγλοκρατία (1878–1960)* [The Electoral History of Cyprus: Politicians, Parties and Elections during the British Colonial Period (1878–1960)]. Athens: Θεμέλιο.
- Psirouki, N. (1965) *Το Κυπριακό. Το οξύτερο εθνικό μας πρόβλημα* [The Cyprus Issue: Our Most Politically Acute Problem]. Athens: Εκδόσεις «Εργασία».
- Servas, P. (1975) *Πως τα καταφέραμε και φτάσαμε στο μηδέν;* [How Did We Manage to Reach Point Zero?]. Athens: Διάλογος.
- (1997) *Κοινή πατρίδα* [Common Homeland]. Athens: Πρόοδος.
- Varnava, P. (2004) *Κοινός εργατικός αγώνας Ελληνοκυπρίων και Τουρκοκυπρίων (γεγονότα μέσα από την Ιστορία)* [The Common Labour Struggles of Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Events through History)]. Nicosia: Εκδόσεις ΠΕΟ.
- Wosgian, D.S. (1963) 'Turks and British Rule in Cyprus'. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Columbia University.
- Special Editions
- ΑΚΕΛ, Μίνιμου Πρόγραμμα, 'Η Ένωση της Κύπρου με την Ελλάδα. Χωρίς όρους χωρίς ανταλλάγματα' [Minimum Programme, The Union of Cyprus with Greece. Unconditional], Nicosia, 28 June 1952.
- The Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), News Bulletin, Vol. I. No. 4/49, August 1949.
- Republic of Cyprus, Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance for the Year 1968, Nicosia, 1969.
- Ιστορία ΠΣΕ–ΠΕΟ [History of PSE–PEO] (1991) Nicosia: ΠΕΟ.
- 'Turks of Cyprus Protest Against the Desire of Union with Greece' (1950) A Counter Appeal to the United Nations. Nicosia: Bozkurt Press.
- Ιστορία του ΚΚΕ–ΑΚΕΛ, Από τις αρχές του 20ου αιώνα μέχρι το 1981 [History of the Communist Party of Cyprus–AKEL]. Unpublished document of the Central Committee of AKEL, Volumes I–V. Nicosia.