



AKEL *bulletin*

EDITED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BUREAU

No. 21 P.O. Box 21827 tel. +357 22761121 e-mail: InterBureau@akel.org.cy
FEB 2006 CY-1513 NICOSIA fax. +357 22761574 <http://www.akel.org.cy>

Announcement of AKEL

On the statements of the British Foreign Minister Jack Straw

The provocative and unacceptable statements of Jack Straw from the floor of the British parliament derive from the arrogance of the powerful in the framework of the so-called new world order.

From the positions of the British Foreign Minister the conclusion is clearly drawn that the objective was not the solution of the Cyprus Problem but the unhindered accession process of Turkey. That it why they are not interested in satisfying the basic Greek-Cypriot worries, so that we could result in a mutually acceptable solution.

Mr. Straw ruminates about the isolation of Turkish-Cypriots, overlooking the fact that this is not due to stance of the government but to the invasion, the occupation and the declaration of the pseudo-state. Under such circumstances the government owed to protect our state entity and not to consent in actions that would upgrade the seceding construction. This policy is in full accordance with the Security Council resolutions 541 and 550.

The Government of Cyprus has proved in practice the multisided economic support to the Turkish-Cypriots offering to our compatriots work, free medical care, trade with the free areas through the green line regulation and many others.

It is not the government that is responsible for the fact that the Turkish-Cypriots were deprived of the important funds that they were going to get from the European Union, but Britain and others who insisted in linking the financial regulation with the regulation on direct trade, overlooking our compromise proposal for opening of Varosia and the functioning of the port for trading. The unprecedented for the diplomatic customs statements of the British Foreign Minister show how right and timely in the position of AKEL on the involvement of all the members of the Security

**50 years
since the
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Bolkestein directive is a
infringes workers gains

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Parliamentary
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Council in the efforts for solution of the Cyprus Problem .
[09/02/2006]

NO to the Bolkestein directive!

Statement of the Press Office of the C.C. of AKEL

The Bolkestein directive proposal for the liberalisation of the services of the internal market is due to be discussed this Thursday at the session of the European Parliament. The consequent of neo-liberalism which is prevalent in Europe and which have been won through many years of struggle full of sacrifices.

In the midst of reactions by the European Left and workers trade unions throughout Europe, the European Parliament is called upon to vote on the resurrected pie that has been prepared after the compromise deal between the Group of the European Right and the Socialist Group in the European Parliament.

However the directive remains in essence anti-labour. It makes the competition between wage-earners the rule and the [p.2] safeguarding of gains the exception. The final draft unfortunately maintains the "country of origin" principle and also includes public services of general interest. The text as a whole refers to the liberalisation of the market and public services and to the capability of companies to provide services to another member-state by implementing the anti-labour legislation of the country where the companies are stationed. That is to say that the directive includes vital sectors of public and national interest and negatively influences millions of working people in Europe and Cyprus.

The Committee of the European Parliament that approved the relative parliamentary report accepted a version of the contentious "principle of the country of destination", which has now been named "free provision of services". Accordingly a company providing services that has obtained permission in a member-state will be able to carry out its business without any additional formalities in any other member-state. If however it intends to post working people, they will be paid and receive social insurance on the basis of the standing regulations of the host country. Also, the labour issues that will arise will be subject to the judgement of the Committee on a case-to-case basis separately and in the final analysis they will be subject to the judgement of the European Court.

It is imperative that the proposal must be rejected because it destroys the social model and threatens social cohesion since it excludes and marginalises, exercises pressure on wages, work conditions, security and the environment. The proposed directive will lead to conditions of unfair competition between companies but also among working people with negative socio-economic results.

The whole of the Group of the European United Left in the European Parliament, of which AKEL is a member, remains firm in its position of rejection in view of the effort to bring back the Bolkestein directive. The changes which have been made do not change its purpose and philosophy.

In the last few days mass mobilisations are being organised throughout the countries of the European Union against the Bolkestein directive. Tomorrow Tuesday in Strasbourg an all-European mobilisation is taking place. The Cypriot trade union movement is participating in this all-European mobilisation with a half-hour national stoppage of work from 11.30 a.m. to 12 midday. The work stoppage has been jointly called by PEO (the largest trade union of Cyprus and a part of the Left Popular Movement), SEK (the trade union of the Right), DEOK (the socialist trade union), PASYDY (the national civil servants union), OELMEK (the national teachers union), OLTEK (the national technical teachers union), POED (the national primary school teachers union), ETYK (the national bank workers union), the Union of Journalists and POAS (an independent trade union).

AKEL greets and expresses its unreserved solidarity with the mobilisations of European and Cypriot working people. We greet especially the united stand taken by the Cypriot trade union movement regarding the anti-labour Bolkestein directive and support tomorrow's work stoppage. As AKEL we will continue the struggle for the withdrawal of this Directive which undermines the vision of a Social Europe. What we are demanding also today is a social Europe, a Europe for the working people and its citizens. No more a Europe of the jungle/chaos of the market, no more a Europe that violates workers rights. Only through organised, mass, common struggles can we put a stop to the neo-liberal storm which is ravaging the countries of the E.U.

13/2/2006

Speech of the General Secretary of the C.C. of AKEL and President of the House of Representatives Demetris Christofias at the meeting to mark the

50 years since the banning of AKEL

In the first midnight hours towards dawn of 14th of December 1955 British soldiers backed by police forces burst into the family homes of cadres and members of AKEL and of the broader Popular Movement. They smashed down doors with rifles, terrorised women and small children, arrested and put the members of AKEL in chains. On that cold winter night they arrested around 135 cadres of the Left and led them at the first light of day to the makeshift prison camps which they had set up in Dhekelia. It was the first time Cyprus had witnessed such a massive round up within a few hours.

During the same night the colonialists raided the offices of "New Democrat", the Party newspaper, which they consequently looted. The offices of the Party throughout Cyprus were also attacked. The issues of "New Democrat" were confiscated, all the removable property of the Party and the newspaper were either confiscated or destroyed. All of these actions were carried out according to the decree issued by the British colonial governor Harding. The decree itself envisaged the banning of AKEL, the Union of Cypriot Peasants, the Pancyriot Organisation of Democratic Women and the Progressive Youth Organisation. The colonialists arrested a large number of cadres of the Pancyrian Federation of Labour PEO but avoided the prohibition of the workers organisation itself. As an expression of colonial hypocrisy they invoked the so-called respect of trade union freedoms.

The colonialists closed down the "New Democrat", banned the circulation of all the publications of the Left, they also closed down the Turkish Cypriot newspapers "Emektci" and "Inkilapsi" which were published by the Left.

The events of 14th of December shocked Cyprus. The newspapers at that period of time came out with the front page full of news concerning the banning of AKEL. There were however some bigoted people from the Right such as Themistoklis Dervis and Socratis Loizidis who stated that by banning AKEL the English wanted to defame the struggle of the Cypriot people as communist!

Comrades,

With the attack and arrests of 14th of December a difficult period of illegality of AKEL began, which lasted four whole years. Our Party during these years was severely tested. However through this hardship our Party and its cadres became even more steeled in struggle. It strengthened its ties with the people and at the end of this hardship it came out even stronger, even more tightly - knit and battle - worthy.

When the armed struggle of EOKA began a tense and unsettled situation was created in Cyprus. AKEL as it is well known disagreed with the form of the armed struggle, coming to the conclusion that in the concrete conditions prevailing in Cyprus this not only would not vindicate the aspirations of our people but on the contrary it would lead to deadlocks and adventures. The estimations and predictions of AKEL were vindicated totally by developments themselves. The Party ofcourse did not remain idle because it took a critical position regarding the use of the armed form of struggle. AKEL's position that the mass political form of struggle was the most suited to the conditions of Cyprus took a practical form, a fact which put the colonialists in a very difficult position.

The English considered that the unsettled situation gave them the excuse that they were searching for since the end of the Second World War to attack and destroy AKEL and the Popular Movement. The reasons that drove the colonialists to attack AKEL are clearly evident in the decree of the Governor which we referred to above. If one reads that decree one can note the two main reasons for the banning of AKEL. The reason stems from the fact that AKEL was always in the front line of the anti-colonial struggle, the inspiration and guiding force of the mass political struggle of our people for freedom. This struggle did not start in 1955 but was being waged many years before. AKEL was the most consistent anti-colonial force of the country guided by the demand for the right of self-determination to be granted to Cypriots, since the end of the Second World War and afterwards it mobilised the people in a continuous struggle for freedom. The initiatives which AKEL undertook internally as well as abroad by internationalising the Cyprus problem, its determined but at the same time wise and patriotic position made things extremely difficult for the British colonialists and threatened their rule over the island. We should not even forget that the policy of AKEL for a united front of struggle of the Left and the Right, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, spoiled the plans of the British, who through the promotion of the policy of divide and rule aimed to keep the forces of our people divided so that they could weaken the struggle for freedom.

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AKEL gave not only an anti-colonial but also an anti-imperialist content to this struggle and this especially annoyed the British. In those years when humanity trod very carefully, through the fault of the imperialists, between the cold and nuclear war, the colonialists wanted to transform Cyprus into an advanced military outpost, into an unsinkable aircraft carrier, into a NATO base which would be used against the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community. They wanted Cyprus to be used against the peoples of the Middle East who were also fighting for their own national independence. The struggle of AKEL against the transformation of Cyprus into a NATO base was an obstacle to the plans of the colonialists.

Therefore the colonialists considered that the consistent anti-colonial and anti-imperialist force - which AKEL was - should not stand in the way of their plans. Hence the British attempted to use this pretext beginning with the raids and arrests of the 14th of December 1955.

However things did not work out as they had planned, as our great poet, also another fighter of AKEL, Theodosios Pieridis stated. There was no way they could destroy AKEL and tear its roots from the hearts and minds of Cypriots. The British must have realised this from the very first day. They must have realised this from the proud way with which the cadres of the Left faced the rifle stocks and the midnight barbarity of soldiers and policemen. They should even have realised this when thousands of working people on the morning of 14th of December, as soon as the news spread, spontaneously carried out protest demonstrations throughout the whole of Cyprus. Indeed in Nicosia the army was forced to intervene with batons and tear gas to break up the demonstrators.

Comrades,

The blow of 14th of December was heavy. The Party however quickly reorganised its forces. It adapted to the conditions of illegal underground work and activity and continued the anti-colonial struggle. Its first concern was the re-establishment of communication between the leading cadres who were arrested and those leading cadres who avoided arrest and were wanted men and women. The escape from the prisons of Dhekelia of the leading cadres Pavlakis Georgiou and Kyriakos Christou was organised and successfully carried out. A similar attempt to organise the escape of Chambis Michaelides did not manage to succeed.

In April 1956 the General Secretary of AKEL and historical leader of our Party Ezekias Papaïouannou escaped from the Central Prison, to where in the mean time the political prisoners of the Left had been transferred to. With the escape of Papaïouannou the setting up of the leadership group was completed which guided the Party in those difficult years. Apart from Papaïouannou the members of this leadership group were Giannis Katsourides and Andreas Fantis who managed to avoid arrest, as well as Pavlakis Georgiou and Kyriakos Christou after their escape.

Meanwhile the illegal underground mechanism of the Party was set up. Hiding places for the wanted leaders of the Left were formed. Greek Cypriots as well as Turkish Cypriots had such hiding places. Typewriters and duplicators were found for the publication of leaflets. Many teams were organised throughout towns and villages to distribute these leaflets. The first leaflets with the voice of the Party circulated in their thousands throughout the whole of Cyprus only a few days after the prohibition of AKEL. Houses were designated where meetings of leading cadres and at a later stage also meetings of the Central Committee were held. An underground mechanism for the transportation of secret correspondence between Nicosia and the districts was set up. As the great poet Giannis Ritsos said, with the secret message stitched on the inside collar of the coat. Party cells used to meet in secret under bridges, in isolated places, in cars as they were driving along.

In those difficult years when the status of a member of AKEL and the struggle within the ranks of the Party meant terrible prosecutions even death from the colonialists, the members of AKEL gave everything they had to offer. They were brave, determined, disciplined, methodological, dedicated to the Party and to the cause of the Cyprus and the working people, faithful to their duties, unselfish in their service. I feel the need to point out especially the role played by the party vigilance at that time. All of the members of AKEL were party vigilantes. They protected their Party and made it capable of responding successfully to the challenges of illegality and underground work.

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The political prisoners of the Left went through difficult times in the prisons and concentration camps. Freedom was denied to them. They lived with the agony as to whether their families would manage to survive. They lived with the worry as to whether the Party would manage to pull through unscathed from this hardship. They took courage from the vision of a free Cyprus. Their spirits were lifted by the news regarding the escapes of leading cadres, the reorganisation of the Party in underground illegal conditions. With gratitude they used to hear that the comrades outside the prisons took care of their children and wives. They showed moral strength, resilience, courage, endurance. At first they set about organising their lives in the Dhekelia camps, afterwards in the Central Prison and from the summer of 1958 at the concentration camps of Pyla. A group of the political prisoners of the Left also spent some time in the camps of Kokkinotrimithia. They therefore fought for better living conditions; they took care to pay attention to their ideological, political and cultural education. They even got to grips with handicraft. Together with the whole of the Party and the Popular Movement they fought for their release. They followed developments on the Cyprus problem and made their own organised interventions by sending political messages of unity, struggle and battle from the prisons and concentration camps. They fought to stop the hangings of cadres of EOKA. They waged hunger, protest and condemnation strikes when the colonialists cold-heartedly and callously carried out the executions. And when they were set free they immediately contacted the underground illegal mechanism in order to continue the struggle.

The Party used every means to achieve the liberation of the political prisoners: popular demonstrations, mass dispatch of protest documents and telegrams to the authorities, the mobilisation of the Cypriot community in Britain and abroad in general, the use of every possible legal procedure were all utilised.

The comrades who were not imprisoned had to tackle unprecedented situations. They showed admirable ingenuity. They faced the dangers with courage and self-sacrifice.

A special mention should be made to the women comrades of that time. And especially to the wives, mothers and sisters of the prisoners and wanted men, who shared the main burden not only in keeping their families strong and united under the most adverse conditions, but also in taking a big part of the struggle for the release of the political prisoners. Under the guidance of the Party they organised marches and pickets calling for the abolition of the extraordinary measures and the liberation of their beloved ones. Many times they faced the violence of the colonialists and their puppets. They were dragged to courts, tried and sentenced but never did they lower the flag of struggle. With courage and determination they did not only support their husbands, sons and brothers through difficult times. They did not fight solely for their liberation, but they also undertook difficult missions at all the levels of underground illegal activity and struggle.

Comrade veterans of the anti-colonial struggle who are with us here today,

We thank you and we are grateful for all that you have done for the homeland, our people and our Party. We thank you and we are grateful because you have written an honourable and glorious page in the history of our Party and Cyprus, which will remain indelible and which makes every Left-wing person but also every patriot of this country feel proud of you and your comrades of that era.

Comrades,

In the difficult and adverse conditions of illegality AKEL continued to mobilise the people and the young generation by organising demonstrations, strikes, general strikes and other forms of political struggle. The main demand of these mobilisations was the recognition of the right of self-determination to the Cypriot people. However, the mobilisations did not confine themselves to these demands only. They also had to do with the extraordinary measures and the barbarities perpetrated by the colonialists. They demanded the release of the political prisoners of all political factions. They demanded an end to the executions and condemned the hanging of EOKA fighters. They demanded the release and return of Makarios. They supported the various recourses to the United Nations. It should also be emphatically emphasised that in those years AKEL attached a special importance and fought to stop the conflicts between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which were provoked by chauvinism and the policy of divide and rule of the colonialists.

In talking about all of these mobilisations I feel the need to stress certain things which are usually hushed up or even ignored on purpose by those who want to monopolise the anti-colonial struggle.

The first thing I would like to say is that the Left, faithful to the position concerning the unity of all the people, undertook initiatives but also participated energetically in the initiatives of the Ethnarcy and others. This participation of the Left gave a more mass character to the mobilisations, a greater political weight and transmitted to the colonialists and the outside world the correct message that the whole of the people were fighting for the liberation from the colonial yoke. Especially important was the contribution of the Left in the strikes and general strikes that took place. Without the decisive contribution of the Left the success which these forms of struggles clearly had would have been impossible.

The second point I would like to make is that our Party and the broader Popular Movement never behaved with petty party criteria. Under popular pressure and due to the international outcry the

colonialists began in the middle of 1957 to lessen some measures which they had taken beforehand. They released for example many political prisoners, also including some of the political prisoners of the Left. AKEL however, despite the fact that from the middle of 1957 there were not any Left political prisoners behind bars, continued to fight with earnest and determination for the release of all the political prisoners.

The mobilisations during the period 1955-1959 often ended up in confrontations with the police and army, who did not hesitate to shoot at demonstrators. Many members of AKEL were injured in such confrontations. Andreas Georgiou from Dierona, Argiros Nikola from Afania and Gavril Likouris from Acheritou, all of them members of AKEL lost their lives participating in demonstrations against the English. The tree of Cypriot freedom is also watered by their blood.

I also want to note that cadres of AKEL gave shelter and offered protection to people of EOKA, who in coordination with their Party and aware of the consequences did not hesitate to help their endangered compatriots, even though these compatriots belonged to another political group.

Theoris Kyriacou Paplomatas from Monagroulli, a member of AKEL since 1948, who is now an immigrant living in Melbourne Australia, gives the following narrative account:

"It was February 1957. The uncle of Petrakis Kyprianou a wanted EOKA man did not have any trust in his own people, asked me for help. I told my brother who in turn notified the Party in Limassol and asked for permission to offer them supplies as they had asked. We also discussed the matter in our Party cell which decided that only one person should undertake this task and that was me. They gave me the mission because I was an ex-serviceman of the Second World War; well - trained and could in the event that it was necessary give the English the slip. I went previously to the cave and lit a fire so that the cave could be cleared from the snakes. Around the cave I put pepper in four circles so that if there was any betrayal and the English came with their dogs, their dogs would not be able to proceed. Petrakis Kyprianou and two others of EOKA stayed in the cave for four days. I was the one who brought supplies to them. Afterwards EOKA people took charge of them and took them elsewhere. After fifteen days they were betrayed and Petrakis Kyprianou was killed. The wanted men knew they were being supplied by people from AKEL. I even proposed that I hand them Party membership cards so that in case they were arrested they could deceive the English and end up only going to prison. After this incident they invited me to the house of Evripidis, a relative of Petrakis Kyprianou. In the house there were only people from EOKA from Limassol, who proposed to pay me because I had helped their own people. They offered me a bunch of five pound notes - too much to pick up in one hand. I told them: "As you are patriots so too are we patriots. My Party AKEL gave me this mission to accomplish and this matter is well known to the Party. We do not need to get paid. For us it is simply a case of simply fulfilling our duty, nothing more, nothing less".

Comrades,

Three days from now it will be 47 years since the day of that blood - stained January of 1958 when our comrades Michalis Petrou and Ilias Toffaris were murdered. Unfortunately in the period 1955-1959 AKEL and its cadres found themselves the target not only of the colonialists but also of Grivas. The Party and its leadership were slandered continuously and taunted. Acts of terror against the people of the Left were organised with the climax being the murders of many of our comrades. The murders were politically - motivated and had as their goal to provoke a civil war so that the fanatical anti-communist extreme right - wing could find the way to eliminate AKEL and the Popular Movement. Our Party did not fall into the trap of replying to the murders by the same way. It replied by holding of mass mobilisations denouncing the terrorism and murders. Through its consistent and patriotic stand it prevented a civil war confrontation, which would have been a great present for the colonialists and would have led Cyprus to the precipice.

No anti-communist report, no anti-communist memorandum, no anti-communist hysteria can distort history and even more do away with ideas and visions, especially those ideas and visions which reality itself has confirmed as being timely as never before.

The anti-communist hysteria of Grivas and his inner circle was built on the accusation of treachery and betrayal levelled against our Party. The account given by Theoris Paplomatas represents a confounding answer to every slander directed at AKEL.

For us and I believe for every well - intentioned citizen of this country who has not become blinded by fanaticism, the people of the Left who were murdered in those troubled times were heroes and martyrs of Cypriot freedom. It is in this way that we will always pay homage to them and we will always fight for the vindication of their sacrifices. We call on also from this podium the state and society and more concretely on the President of the Republic to move forward to the vindication of our comrades, irrespective of the deliberate negative position of the Association of EOKA Fighters. The vindication of the unjust murdered people of the Left is a debt of the state and society which can be done by a bold and audacious President of the Republic, who indeed comes from the ranks of EOKA, who if he carries this deed out will remain in history as the President that restored the unity in spirit of our people.

Comrades,

Whilst in February 1959 the Zurich - London Agreements were signed, from March the same year the fighters of EOKA had come down from the mountains and the political prisoners were set free, AKEL continued to be kept in a state of illegality up until the eve of the first Presidential elections. It is obvious that those forces who aimed at the destruction of the Party also remained adamant in the continuation of its prohibition, hoping in some way that it's banning would become permanent. On the 28th of June 1959, a huge popular mass rally demanding the legalisation of AKEL showed that no power could keep such a popular party such as AKEL illegal. On the 1st of December 1959 the prohibition of AKEL was lifted and our Party entered a new period of its activity and service to Cyprus and our people.

Comrades,

It seems that in today's world those nostalgic of the fascist methods, which led to the prohibition of AKEL and to so many other repressions against communists throughout the whole world, have not ceased to exist. The Political Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is due to discuss again on the 24th of January, and if it is adopted, a despicable anti-communist report that will be promoted for approval at the Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe the very next day. This anti-communist memorandum attempts to push Europe back into the Nazi years and the world into the McCarthy era. It is attempting through lies and the distortion of history to eliminate from the consciousness of people the ideals of social justice and socialism which the communist movement adhere. It attempts to criminalise communist ideology and the communist and workers movement itself. Finally, it attempts to equate communism with fascism - Nazism. The latter constitutes an insult to humanity. It represents an insult to the memory of millions of people who gave their lives fighting the scourge of Hitlerfascism, many of whom were communists. It constitutes an insult to the dead of the Soviet Union who with the sacrifice of over 20 million lives managed to crush Hitlerfascism.

The communist movement changed the world. Irrespective of the mistakes which were made it gave invaluable services to humanity and civilisation. It became the back-bone of the struggle for national and social liberation. Even today it represents the alternative solution to the barbarity of

neo-liberalism and so-called new world order. That is why it takes the brunt of the hatred of the conservative forces of Europe and the world. That is why its ideals and ideas touch the hearts and minds of all the more people in the world that connect their aspirations and visions with these ideals.

No anti-communist report, no anti-communist memorandum, no anti-communist hysteria can distort history and even more do away with ideas and visions, especially those ideas and visions which reality itself has confirmed as being timely as never before.

In honouring all those who fought during the two periods of illegality of our Party 1931-1941 and 1955-59 we are called upon to resist the new era of reactionary obscurity which is presented with a European look. I am saying that it is being presented with a European look because none of the values which the world has inherited from Europe, the Europe of the great social revolutions and movements, have anything in common to do with the letter and the spirit of the anti-communist report.

We as a Party and as a component part of the European Left will fulfil our duty so that the anti-communist hysteria will not pass. With satisfaction we note that the rest of the political forces of the country will also do the same. We would like to remind that Nazism began by promoting anti-communism and by attacking communists. Afterwards it was the turn of the social democrats, centrists; even right-wing people who did not totally conform were targeted.

Comrades,

It is through deeds and actions that anniversaries and history are honoured in the end. We are also called upon here today through actions to honour the history and contribution of our Party. There is no better way to honour the fighters of the anti-colonial struggle than continuing today the struggle for the vindication and reunification of our Cyprus. There is no better and greater honour for those who in the most adverse conditions of illegality protected the Party and made it more powerful, more tightly-knit and more effective than to offer them a proud victory in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. By following the example of the members and cadres of AKEL of the anti-colonial struggle we can achieve our goals for the good of our Cyprus, our people, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, for the benefit of the working people of this country.

International Conference Centre, 18th of January 2006