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MESSAGE



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By _____ U. S. INFORMATION SERVICE

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FROM: USIS NICOSIA

TO: USIA WASHINGTON

MESSAGE NO.

REF: October 4, 1963

SUBJECT: Trend of Communist Media Activity DATE

AGENCY USE

ACTION

INFO.

SUMMARY: IN RETROSPECT USIS NICOSIA TAKES A LOOK AT THE TREND OF COMMUNIST MEDIA ACTIVITY IN CYPRUS. IN SUMMATION THE MOVING TREND AND ITS PARTIAL EFFECT IS ESTIMATED. NO STRONG CONCLUSIONS ARE REACHED BUT BELIEF IS USIS JOB WILL BECOME MORE COMPLEX IN OFFSETTING HOSTILE MOVES AS TIME PASSES.

During the past dozen weeks and seemingly ever increasing but running in short cycles, the Communists in Cyprus have mounted a campaign against U. S. institutions, actions, policy and personnel, both on the island and internationally.

Prominent examples are the attack on American missions on Cyprus (FM 3 of July 15, 1963), the playing up of statements by Attorney General KENNEDY on the racial issue, stories on racial shootings in the South, statements of Senator Wayne MORSE and former Ambassador BRIGGS and, incidentally, quotes from Justice DOUGLAS' writings.

As reported earlier, for a time the Cypriot Communists were smarting as a result of a long series of well publicized, creditable American events and actions in Cyprus, the suppression by media of the importance of more creditable communist events (like the launching of the Russian woman astronaut), the stand taken in the press by the Minister of the Interior and others, the preliminary exposure of the aims of the then upcoming Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization conference, and other items like the quiet anti-communist posture now followed by the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation.

What open anti-communist attitudes exist in government officials, other leaders, and media can be traced to spade work by Embassy and USIS officers in keeping with psychological objectives.

When confronted with the inaccuracies and distortions of their own propaganda preachings, the communists, through HARAVGHI, take refuge in an old ploy. State Dept. review completed

Frederick A. Longjaeg

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FROM USIS NICOSIA

As examples: (a) Haravghi did not criticize the Minister of Interior for making his statements against the communists but took to task the Cyprus News Agency "for asking such questions, forcing the Minister to reply, and, thus, doing a disservice to the unity of the Cypriot people." (b) When the Embassy (through USIS) replied to the attack printed in Haravghi, the paper became very hurt that it should be criticized and insisted that the "Embassy spokesman should have delivered his reply to the source (former Ambassador Briggs) and not the paper which was only doing its reporting job."

It would appear that the communists are stepping up their activities both to offset American accomplishments and to build their own image, looking toward future events.

The experience with the recent AAPSO conference (as reported earlier) is another example of coordinated, effective communist operation in influencing media.

During the conference the word went out from the Palace that only objective reporting of activity was to be carried and no critical comment. The press, radio and television followed the dictum. That this was a coordinated move by Dr. Vassos LYSSARIDES, Chairman of the meeting, acting in concert with the AAPSO General Secretary (Egypt), AKEL and the Russian Embassy through AKEL, with the concurrence of the Archbishop cannot now be doubted (nor proven). That the word did go out is known by USIS from good sources within the press.

For example: (1) It was so stated to this reporter by such widely divergent sources as Nicos SAMPSON, owner of Machi and Herman GAULT, editor of Cyprus Mail. (2) A reporter for Phileftheros, Alecos CONSTANTINIDES, told USIS he had two exclusive interviews with members of the Chinese delegation which his paper refused to print under pressure from AKEL and the Russian Communists. (3) During the AAPSO conference the CBC was "ordered" by Dr. Lyssarides (with presidential authority, he said) to appear for coverage of specified events. CBC-TV one evening on such orders changed its program schedule in order to accommodate news films made in the afternoon.

It is known that during and after the conference AKEL has brought pressure in a number of ways to particularly influence the press not to carry items critical of communist activities or counter to communist aims. As a result, almost nothing critical of the AAPSO conference (except for two editorials in Eleftheria) has appeared in the Greek press. Since the conference little critical of the communists has appeared. Of course, this does not apply to the Turkish press.

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We can expect more anti-American, anti-West, pro-Soviet expressions and actions by AKEL (guided by the Russian Embassy) throughout the months to come.

Direct Russian Embassy activity in propaganda and agitation is not readily apparent in Cyprus. Such activities are funneled through AKEL. However, with the new Tass man's arrival in Cyprus activity has become heavier.

One example is the issuance of a comprehensive bulletin in the Greek language similar to bulletins produced by many USIS posts from the wireless file. Three samples are attached. Presently distribution is unknown but the print order is believed to be sizeable. It is thought to be a daily release. Indicative of the size of the effort is the information that in one village of 1,000 population, Gypsou in the Banagusta District, 100 copies were received through the mail--about 90 addressed to individuals and 10 to the town's three clubs.

If the percentage were to follow, as applied only to communist organizations in Cyprus, the print run and mailing could easily be 7,000 or more.

Another coordinated communist effort is the use by Radio Moscow in its Greek language broadcasts to Cyprus of Haravghi stories the day of publication. Stories like the July 12th article on the American mission are played heavily.

This post would urge IBS to closely follow the FBIS daily reports and use constructive stories in its Greek and English language broadcasts, especially on medium wave from Rhodes, to counter such Moscow-Cypriot moves. The post solicits IBS advice on how it can best support the VOA in such activity.

In view of the above, with a presently deteriorating internal political situation, and looking toward the future elections, it would seem clear that ideological competition is likely to take a harder path. Though by no means certain, it is possible in the opinion of this reporter that as conditions develop the American presence in Cyprus may become the whipping boy, at least partially, replacing the habitual British target.

The ideological leadership of the communists is strong, clever, organized, and not to be underrated. Strong Cypriot voices cannot be relied upon to support our views.

It is believed that USIS activity will become more complex as time passes.

Frederick A. Long
Public Affairs Officer

Attachment: 3 copies Soviet Information

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