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# Egypt's Forgotten Communists: The Postwar Greek Left

*Anthony P. Gorman*

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## Abstract

*In the decade and a half after the Second World War, Egyptian Greeks were active in two communist organizations in Egypt: the wholly Greek Αντιφασιστική Πρωτοπορία (Antifascist Vanguard), and the Greek section of the Egyptian movement. Each pursued its own program of political priorities and enjoyed a different relationship with the Egyptian communist movement. While their activities were heavily circumscribed by the practical difficulties and ideological contradictions arising from the position of Greeks as a relatively privileged cultural minority, they both represent important expressions of an oppositional discourse within the complex dynamics of the Greek presence in Egypt. Though ultimately failing in the face of rising Egyptian and Arab nationalism and the decline of the Greek community in the late 1950s, the record of the Greek Left testifies to the attempts and accompanying difficulties of political engagement with the wider Egyptian community.*

The emergence of the Greek presence in modern Egypt originates from the active immigration policy pursued by the ruler of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Over the course of the next century the Greek population grew to more than a hundred thousand and came to occupy a prominent position in many aspects of economic, cultural, and professional life. Generally maintaining a distinct cultural-religious identity, Greeks nevertheless represented considerable diversity in social class, economic status, and geographical distribution and became a familiar element of Egyptian society. Despite this, under the impact of the decolonization process and the rise of a muscular Arab nationalism, the community came under considerable pressure in the postwar period and by the early 1960s was in steep decline.

Scholarship on the Egyptian Greek presence might be placed in three broad categories.<sup>1</sup> The first has catalogued, in celebratory and often nostalgic tone, the economic achievements of its wealthy upper class, personified in such figures as Mihail Tositsas, Emmanuel Benahis,

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and Georgios Averoff, emphasizing the great services they rendered to both their local communities and to the Greek state. To these material deeds are added the intellectual accomplishments and contribution of Egyptian Hellenism to Greek culture, exemplified in the poetry of Cavafy, the writings of Delta and Tsirkas, and the political thought of Skliros (Yialourakis 1967; Hatzifotis 1999). A second, and generally more scholarly, trend has emphasized the power and influence of Greek community institutions in Egypt and the central role they played in maintaining social cohesion, language, and identity (Kitroeff 1989; Souloyiannis 1999; Karanasou 1999). Finally, Marxist analyses have focused on the economic role played by the Greeks in Egypt (and elsewhere) in the development of the global capitalist system (e.g., Psiroukis 1975).

While these studies have offered significant insights into Egyptian Greek life, they have been firmly anchored to a Hellenocentric frame of reference. Employing ethnicity and nationality as fundamental markers of identity, they have stressed ties of commonality among Greeks and downplayed any internal differences.<sup>2</sup> A regular feature of these analyses has been the association, if not outright complicity, of the Greek presence with the occupying British authorities and the insularity of Egyptian Greeks from mainstream Egyptian society and even, in some sense, Egypt. To quote Vatikiotis, Greeks “were resident in Egypt but they were not of Egypt” (1991:324). Where the pattern of relations between Greeks and Egyptians has been considered, this scholarship has either stressed the civilizing mission of the Greeks (Politis 1928–30) or has taken a legal perspective, emphasizing the privileges enjoyed by foreign nationals under the Capitulatory regime, the system of Mixed Courts, and the negative consequences of Egyptianization (Karanasou 1992).<sup>3</sup> The impact of these themes of cultural superiority and legal separation effectively disengaging Egyptian Greeks from their immediate context presents an incomplete and static construction of their social and political milieu, which leaves the wider pattern of association between Greeks and Egyptians unassessed and the often expressed attachment of Egyptian Greeks to Egypt unexplained.<sup>4</sup>

In addressing this lacuna, this article discusses the role of Egyptian Greeks in the communist movement in the post-1945 period, examining its complex character, institutional culture, response to changing political circumstances, and relationship to the Egyptian movement.<sup>5</sup> It draws on the work of historians of Egypt, largely neglected by Greek scholars, and makes extensive use of interviews with Greek and Egyptian communist activists, in part, to make up for the unavailability of official documentation, but more importantly to inform the narrative with the voice of the cadres themselves.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of the political dilemma of the

Greek Left, as it sought to resolve its Egyptian and Greek elements and the tension between class politics and ethnic affiliation, captures a significant feature of the Egyptian Greek experience. Neither a mere reflection of developments in Greece nor a field confined to the formal structures of the community, this article argues that this experience should be understood as an organic constituent, not an indifferent or insulated component of the Egyptian environment. Accordingly, it calls for a reassessment and qualification of many of the assumptions in the standard ethnic and national categories prevalent in much historiography of modern Egypt and its Greek community.<sup>7</sup>

The Greek presence in Egypt was set within a matrix of different, sometimes conflicting, reference points that included inter alia the Greek state, Greek cultural and religious traditions, class consciousness, the dynamics of the Greek community, British colonial power, and the wider Egyptian society itself. Different elements within the Greek community (*παροικία*) oriented themselves in ways that varied according to their particular perspective and interests. The case of the Egyptian Greek Left, a group whose activities and ideology sought to challenge the logic of colonialism and mainstream nationalist discourse, shows that there was engagement in Egypt, even if it was circumscribed by practical and political obstacles.

### *The Αντιφασιστική Πρωτοπορία*

The core of the organized Greek communist movement in Egypt after the Second World War was the *Αντιφασιστική Πρωτοπορία* (Antifascist Vanguard, henceforth AP). From the time of its establishment in 1943 until the early 1960s, AP sought to play a role in mainland Greek politics, within the Greek community in Egypt, and in Egyptian national politics.<sup>8</sup> As the successor to the Greek communist circles active in Egypt in the 1930s, it brought together older communists as well as some of the younger generation of Greeks who had been politicized during the war. The link of continuity with the prewar generation was manifest in the election of Thodosia Pieridis, a communist active in Egypt since the late 1920s, as AP's first secretary. In some sense AP was a companion organization to the *Ελληνικός Απελευθερωτικός Σύνδεσμος* (Greek Liberation League, henceforth EAS), established by Egyptian Greeks in January 1943 to support the aims of EAM (National Liberation Front), the communist-dominated resistance organization in Greece.<sup>9</sup> AP and EAS shared many members, and Pieridis himself served as editor of *Έλληνα*, the EAS bulletin that was circulated among Greek military forces throughout the Mediterranean during the war and which AP subsequently took over as its own organ (henceforth *Ellin*). The decision to establish

AP recognized the importance of a separate political organization within the Egyptian Greek community that could play an active role in the local anti-imperialist, nationalist struggle and act as a supporter and resource in the communist and republican causes on the Greek mainland.

Consistent with communist practice, AP served as the underground nucleus for a number of legal fronts that attracted many sympathizers enthused by the progressive atmosphere prevalent at the end of the war. One such organization was the Ελληνικός Σύλλογος Ερασιτεχνών (Greek Club of Amateurs, henceforth ESE), a cultural club in Cairo that had been founded prior to the Second World War. After lapsing into inactivity, it was revived in 1945 and infused with the spirit of postwar optimism. Through social and cultural events, such as theater, musical evenings, and dances, ESE attracted a great number of young people, principally from a working-class background (Anastasiadis 1993:148).<sup>10</sup> It thus became a natural forum for the discussion of political ideas in a milieu that was “far from the establishment, far from the consulate, far from the Church” (Gazis 1994). Other organizations, including graduate associations, women’s and veterans’ associations, labor unions, and sporting clubs, attracted many from across Egyptian Greek society and played a similar role in fostering a progressive spirit.<sup>11</sup> As the nucleus of this broad movement, AP comprised a membership of more than two hundred during the 1950s, about a third of whom were women, drawn from workers, employees, and professional classes.<sup>12</sup> Its stronghold was in Alexandria, where the Greek population was most numerous, but it also maintained branches in Cairo, Port Said, Suez, and Ismailia, as well as having some active elements in Kafr al-Zayyat. With the legal umbrella organizations, the Greek Left probably numbered about eight hundred members, although its influence extended considerably beyond its membership.<sup>13</sup>

The political activities of AP were focused on three separate but related areas. First and foremost was its support for the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the republican cause in Greek national politics. This was particularly evident during the final stages of the Second World War and the subsequent Civil War. From 1946 until 1949, AP was active in sending material support to the KKE, as well as providing a source of volunteers from within its ranks for the Democratic Army. It also assisted by ferrying volunteers from Greece who could more easily join communist forces in the mountains by traveling via Egypt than within Greece itself (Anastasiadis 1993:98). Despite the defeat of the communists in 1949 and the subsequent exile of KKE members from Greece, AP continued to maintain an active role in a number of international progressive causes. During the 1950s it organized support for the Stockholm appeal for world peace, collecting petitions, covering rel-

evant issues in its press, and making representations against the build-up of nuclear weapons. It was also vocal in calling for independence for Cyprus, a position fully consistent with that of the Egyptian government itself after the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955.

The second arena of AP's activities was the affairs of the Greek community in Egypt. Here the struggle was with the "historical leadership of the Greek Community," the term used to describe the Greek establishment that controlled the official Community or Κοινότητα (*Koinótita*) set up in many centers of Greek population throughout the country (Chrisostomidis 1994).<sup>14</sup> The oldest and most prosperous of these was established in Alexandria in 1843, but in the decades that followed more than twenty-five other *Koinótites* were founded not only in the main cities of Cairo, Port Said, and Suez, but throughout the country in the Delta and Upper Egypt. Each *Koinótita* provided various social services, administering schools and hospitals, often of high quality, financing community organizations, and maintaining churches and cemeteries. In short, the *Koinótita* served as the focus of much Greek political, social, and cultural life and inevitably came to embody the authoritative voice of the Greek presence in Egypt. Often established through the largesse of wealthy Egyptian Greek families who had made fortunes through a wide variety of commercial and industrial enterprises, they played a very considerable part in molding the social attitudes of the Greek population. Yet they were hardly representative of its diverse character. The official membership of a *Koinótita* often represented only a fraction of the local community: in Cairo *Koinótita* membership was only 400 members out of a total of 26,000 Greeks living in the city (Athanasiadis 1994:227). Thus, while ostensibly motivated by a spirit of serving the Greek community and operating as a democratic institution, the *Koinótites* were heavily influenced by the oligarchic ethos of the plutocracy that sustained their existence.

Accordingly, the leadership of the *Koinótites* represented the conservative heartland in the Egyptian Greek community, being dedicated to the maintenance of its own political and economic position, the discourse of Greek national politics, and close ties with the Greek and British authorities. An obvious adversary of the Left, especially in Alexandria and Cairo, the *Koinótites* were targeted by AP in a number of ways. Firstly, AP sought to gain control of the governing bodies of the *Koinótites* by putting forward its own members in elections. In this it made only limited progress since the conservative forces, using their control of the institutions and the advantage of greater resources, were routinely able to maintain a majority membership (Chrisostomidis 1994). Nevertheless, there were some successes. In the elections of 1954 and 1958 a number of AP members were elected to the committee of the

Alexandria *Koinótita* (Anastasiadis 1993:140). Secondly, AP condemned the unrepresentative character of the *Koinótites* and called for greater democracy. In Cairo, for example, membership of the *Koinótita* was limited by a deliberately high subscription (Souloyiannis 1992:71). Thirdly, the Left criticized the administration of the *Koinótita's* services by advocating alternative policies, such as free hospital services for the poor, or by calling for improvements in the standard of education in community schools (Chrisostomidis 1994). This was done most effectively through AP organs: firstly, by *Ellin* in the 1940s, by *Η Φωνή*, a weekly issued in 1952–1953 (henceforth *Ι Φωνή*), and most effectively by the Cairo daily, *Ο Πάροικος*, which provided the public voice of AP between 1953 and June 1961 (henceforth *Ο Πάροικος*).<sup>15</sup> Of course, such policies were popular with more than the committed Left, but the leftist press presented a recognizable voice of opposition and a watchdog on the actions of the conservative Greek leadership.

The third aspect of AP's political program was its support for the Egyptian national movement. Egypt had been occupied by the British in 1882 as a consequence of the Urabi Revolt. Declared a British protectorate during the First World War, it was granted a measure of self-government following the 1919 Revolution, though Britain continued to exercise considerable power in the country, particularly in matters of defense and the protection of foreign nationals and their interests. The relationship was further modified by the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 that legitimized, even if it also limited, the continued presence of British troops in the Canal Zone. With the outbreak of the Second World War Britain asserted its right to use Egypt as a military base, but peace in 1945 saw the emergence of a revived Egyptian national movement demanding a complete British evacuation. Greek communists fully supported the cause of national independence and on occasion took a public stand on the issue. Soon after the massive nationalist demonstrations of February 1946, an article by Thodosis Pieridis that appeared in the left-wing Egyptian periodical, *al-Fajr al-Jadid*, made the Greek position clear.

. . . we Greeks live scattered amidst the Egyptian people, and move within its popular quarters and villages; our interests are tied to Egypt, our struggle is at the side of its struggle and we share with it good times and bad. We are tens of thousands of Greek workers who settled their stock on this native earth and developed their torsos through inhaling its air until its virtuous dust enveloped them . . . There is no doubt that the great mass of Greeks in Egypt . . . are in strong and firm solidarity with the Egyptian nation in the demand of its freedom which it holds sacred. (Pieridis 1946:10)<sup>16</sup>

The solidarity to which Pieridis referred was not confined to the printed word. The Left and other progressive elements established organizations and participated in public demonstrations in support of the Egyptian national movement. In 1945–46 the *Σύνδεσμος Ελλήνων Δημοκρατικών Αιγύπτου* (Union of Democratic Greeks of Egypt) agitated for the democratic rights of people in both Greece and Egypt until it was closed down in July 1946 (Souloyiannis 1998). The foundation of the *Συμβούλιον Ελληνο-Αιγυπτιακής Φιλίας και Συνεργασίας* (Committee of Greek-Egyptian Friendship and Cooperation) in 1951 brought together prominent progressive Greek and Egyptian figures, such as Dr. Heraklis Maschas, Nikolaos Poitiris, leading feminist Ceza Nabarawi, and Hassan Surur, to act as a platform for promoting closer relations between the Greek community and the Egyptian people (Tsirkas 1951). In November 1951 in the “silent” mass demonstrations in Alexandria and Cairo marking National Struggle Day, several hundred Greeks representing various organizations took part in the call for the evacuation of the British, carrying banners with slogans such as “Our Egyptian Brothers: the Greeks have joined you in your struggle” (Egyptian Gazette 1951; Times 1951a, 1951b). Such demonstrations of pronationalist sentiment, which continued right up until the military coup of July 1952, were not only expressions of solidarity but part of a program of *αναπροσαρμογή* (readjustment) that elements of the Left saw as an important way of responding to the expected realities of a post-colonial Egypt (Anastasiadis 1993:149–168).

Despite these diverse activities, the priority given to Greek national politics by AP has prompted some scholars to assert or assume that the organization was little more than an Egyptian branch office of the KKE.<sup>17</sup> There are some grounds for this view. The KKE could and did at times exercise an important influence on AP. In 1951, concerned at the undue prominence of intellectuals within AP, the KKE leadership dispatched Philippas Pangalos to Egypt to encourage a greater role for workers in the organization.<sup>18</sup> There was also a certain affiliation in spirit: in later years AP members who joined the KKE were given a party age dating from their original AP membership (Chrisostomidis 1994). Without access to AP archives it is difficult to be entirely sure of the exact *modus operandi* between the two organizations, but it is unlikely that the relationship can be viewed in such simplistic terms.<sup>19</sup> Practical difficulties, such as the straitened circumstances of the KKE after 1949 and the heightened Cold War atmosphere, meant regular communication was unrealistic. Further, since the early 1930s when Moscow had broken off relations, the organizational culture of the Left in Egypt had largely been independent. Until material becomes available, one can therefore assume that on the Greek mainland and in other foreign

affairs, AP's line was consistent with that of KKE and international communism, but in matters concerning community and Egyptian affairs, AP enjoyed an autonomy informed by its own intelligence, formulation of tactics, and organizational resources in accord with a membership that was wholly Egyptian Greek.<sup>20</sup>

The three different circles of political activity (Greek national politics, Greek community politics, and Egyptian politics) were expressive of AP's complicated position within Egyptian and Greek society. Its affiliation with the KKE and commitment to the politics of mainland Greece was evidence of its attachment to a Marxist-nationalist ideology. Its engagement with the political struggle in Egypt was both part of the discourse of Egyptian Hellenism, which held that Greeks had a legitimate place and hence a political role to play in Egypt, and the ideological commitment to the anti-imperialist cause. Greek community politics, the political idiom of which was more mainland Greek but whose social and economic basis was grounded in the Egyptian reality, was something of a halfway house in this equation. These different elements coexisted within the political program of AP without the contradictions ever being necessarily resolved. In operational terms, the tensions between them were most manifest in their relationship with the Egyptian communist movement (to be discussed below). The consequence was that the organization maintained an ambiguous political program that reflected the political predicament of a progressive force that was part of a relatively privileged cultural minority.

#### *The Greek Section of the Egyptian Communist Movement*

Although AP was the principal communist organization with Egyptian Greek membership, during the 1940s, another Greek group emerged from within the ranks of the Egyptian communist movement. In time, it formed a Greek section which, unlike AP, was dedicated to working wholly within an Egyptian context. Significantly, it attracted young Greeks who gave primary consideration to the political problems of Egypt and the everyday realities of life as experienced by the majority Egyptian population.

Greek cadres working alongside Egyptians were not a new phenomenon. The Egyptian Communist Party (ECP) of the 1920s had attracted Egyptians, Greeks, and many other foreigners to its ranks before state repression effectively put an end to the organization (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:12-31). Though never entirely extinguished, in the years leading up to the Second World War, the communist movement began to regain vigor. By the early 1940s, a small number of Marxist study groups had emerged as centers of socialist thought in Cairo. One

of these was *al-Sharara* or Iskra, set up in 1942 by Hillel Schwartz.<sup>21</sup> Schwartz had successfully built upon contacts made prior to the war in the antifascist Union Démocratique and at the Lycée Français to create an organization that attracted those interested in the new radical ideas. Unlike the Egyptian Movement for National Liberation (HAMITU) established at about the same time by Henri Curiel, which emphasized Egyptian membership, Iskra concentrated its efforts on establishing a base amongst resident foreign intellectuals before actively recruiting from among their Egyptian counterparts (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:52). Many Iskra members were Jews, but with French as the lingua franca it also attracted Greeks, Italians, and Armenians who mingled freely and exchanged ideas. The Association of the Lycée afforded another place for students to socialize and also served as an important recruiting ground, while another club, Ligue Internationale Scolaire Contre L'Antisémitisme (LISCA), held public meetings and political discussions on a weekly basis and provided another forum for progressive ideas (PT 1994).<sup>22</sup> In 1944 Iskra set up its own study center, the House of Scientific Research (*Dar al-Abhath al-'Ilmiyya*), where it held lectures and discussion groups, circulated printed material, and steadily increased its numbers.

The large number of foreign members in Iskra brought clear advantages to the organization. They possessed language skills used to translate political works for the benefit of Egyptian comrades and maintained outside contacts that served as important conduits for new ideas. In addition, foreign members often held technical qualifications and brought with them valuable expertise in radio, printing, and transport. The material contribution of foreigners substantially expanded its resources and extended the influence of the organization. As Schwartz (1994) noted

To be a member of Sharara you had to pay dues, and these were not the same for all members. Members were supposed to put all they had at the disposal of their organization and since foreigners were usually well-off, this meant that Sharara had the means to start expensive projects such as a widely distributed legal newspaper [*al-Jamahir*] and a so-called People's University which drew a great number of Egyptian workers.

Notwithstanding these benefits, Iskra's multiethnic membership raised questions about how best to structure the organization and coordinate its activities. For reasons of security as well as operational efficiency, it was decided that those foreigners with fluent Arabic should work with the Egyptian members of the organization; other foreign members were enjoined to operate within their own communities. At first this was done on an informal basis, but when the number of foreign members made it viable Iskra reorganized its foreign membership into

official Greek, Jewish, Italian, and Armenian national sections (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:53).<sup>23</sup> Each section enjoyed relative autonomy, recruiting people through different clubs and activities, but all worked according to the general principle that foreigners living in Egypt must learn to live and work with Egyptians (Schwartz 1994).

The Greeks attracted to Iskra were young and unconnected with the older Greek activists of the prewar period or AP circles. Most came into contact with Iskra through association with the Lycée or through personal connections. One was George Dayiantis who, having returned to Egypt from Europe to finish his high school education in 1946, met a Greek member of Iskra and was recruited into the organization. In the course of his last year at the Abetios School, Dayiantis constituted a communist cell with three other students, among them Paul Reggio and Laertes Panousis. Soon after, another cell was set up within the Greek Girls' School of Ahillopoulou (Dayiantis 1994). By the summer of 1947, the number of Greek members in Iskra justified the establishment of an official Greek section. Its members were young men and women in their twenties or late teens. Some came from a cosmopolitan or mixed cultural background: Ilios and Feya Yiannakakis, were the children of a Greek father, Sakellaris Yiannakakis (a prominent figure in the ECP), and a Jewish Russian mother, Tania Kirson. The father of Takis Paparoditis had been a close friend of the older Yiannakakis. Nikolas Gazis was the son of a waiter from Kephallonia and a Lebanese mother; Andreas and Fifi Kanas were Greek Jews. The *ma'sul* (comrade-in-charge) of the section was Yiannis Karavolas (al-Sa'id 1989:319). Their reasons for joining the Egyptian movement (as opposed to AP) no doubt varied but, either through exposure to political ideas or through their personal connections, they shared a world view that was more sensitized to the wider Egyptian environment than that held by Greeks more immersed in Greek community life. It is probably significant that the Greek section emerged in Cairo, an undeniably Egyptian city, where there was greater social interaction between Egyptians and foreigners, than in Alexandria where the size, prosperity, and influence of the Greek community offered in some ways an almost autonomous society. These, however, were not predetermining factors: there were cases where members of the same family belonged to different organizations, and AP had its own regional branch in Cairo (Gazis 1994).

In time, the Greek section came to number approximately 20–25 members and with sympathizers consisted of about 60 people in all. These numbers were unimpressive in absolute terms but are not insignificant given that the section was to operate for less than two years and was of comparable size to the AP organization in Cairo, which consisted of some 50 members (Chrisostomidis 1994). Unable to

exercise any influence within the *Koinótita* because of its very modest size and resources, the Greek section adopted a strategy of promoting progressive ideas among the Greek community at large and thereby aimed over time to break down the barriers between the Greek and the wider Egyptian community. One member stressed, "I don't think that anybody of us wanted to deny that we were Greeks but what we wanted to make clear . . . was that we were Greeks *in* Egypt and not [simply] Greeks (Dayiantis 1994)." The section believed that the future of the Greek community in Egypt lay in adapting itself to this reality rather than in the traditional strategy of the conservatives in the Greek community of enjoying a privileged position by allying themselves with colonial power (Gazis 1994). To this end, its members translated materials provided from within Iskra into Greek, and distributed them among the community (al-Sa'id 1989:319).

As an integral part of the Egyptian communist movement the Greek section supported the call for British withdrawal from Egypt and the full recognition of its national sovereignty. Yet, there existed a certain incongruity between this position and the basis for a separate Greek section, which sought to promote the class struggle within the Greek community. There were many discussions within the section on this point. One member noted, "We felt very uncomfortable because we were taught that we had to promote the class struggle or even the nationalist struggle [but] we, the Greek community, what had we to do in this struggle which was Egyptian?" (Dayiantis 1994). The situation was further strained by the routine accusation made of Egyptian communism that it was too closely associated with foreigners, a charge that found support even among some elements within the Egyptian movement itself. Dayiantis recalls that during one of the workers' demonstrations the Greek section was instructed not to be openly involved. Indeed, the potential for conflict between nationalist and socialist priorities among the membership was to prove a dilemma not only for the Greek section but for the whole of the Egyptian communist movement (Beinin 1987). Certainly the Greek section supported the communist cause in Greece in principle, but they had no contact or role in it, a position that contrasted with AP whose stand was more equivocal in reconciling the different demands of Greek and Egyptian national politics.

When the two main Egyptian communist groups, Iskra and HAMITU, merged to form HADITU (National Democratic Liberation Movement) in mid-1947, the Greek section remained intact. Curiel's national democratic strategy had led him to establish separate sections within HAMITU for students, Sudanese, Nubians, and Azharites as distinct natural social groups (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:53-59). On the

face of it, the foreign sections of Iskra meshed well with the structure of the new amalgamated organization to operate effectively across the broad spectrum of Egyptian society. Before long, however, the diverse composition and vague strategy of HADITU began to cause problems. In spring of 1948 a prolonged crisis developed within the organization, precipitated by personal differences within the leadership and issues such as the role of foreigners and the need for greater democracy. The difficulties were exacerbated by events in Palestine and the subsequent security measures implemented under martial law by the Egyptian government. These internal conflicts were not fought out in the Greek section itself but inevitably it was drawn in. At the end of the spring of 1948, Schwartz addressed a general meeting of the section in order to secure its condemnation of fractionists. The section declined to do so without having the full details of the case and, in fact, during the summer joined the dissenting group, *Sawt al-Mu'aradha* ("Voice of the Opposition"), which opposed the national democratic strategy in favor of emphasizing the recruitment of workers (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:62). *Sawt al-Mu'aradha* subsequently merged with two other factions to form *al-Munazzama al-Shuyu'iyya al-Misriyya* (Mim Shin Mim), which denounced the policies of HADITU as opportunist and called for a much more radical program. During this crisis a cleavage developed between what was seen as the cautious armchair Marxists among the foreign leadership and the younger more radical Egyptian revolutionaries who called for more militant action and greater effort in recruiting the working class (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:64).<sup>24</sup> If the charge against the foreign members had any validity in respect of the leadership it was not borne out by the subsequent fragmentation of the movement: all foreign sections joined Mim Shin Mim.

The decision of the Greek section to join Mim Shin Mim seems curious since its radical strategy at once undermined the *raison d'être* of a foreign section and entailed the adoption of a more risky mode of operation. The increasing prosperity of the Greek community by the 1940s had meant that the Greek working class was represented more among the ranks of employees and skilled manual workers than the unskilled proletariat proper, something which was also true of the members of the Greek section itself. Yet, the logic of Mim Shin Mim's new strategy meant that Greek members, some of them teenage girls, should attempt to promote its ideas and recruit from among Egyptian workers. This immediately raised practical language and security difficulties and brought to the fore some of the doubts concerning the class struggle and the national movement that had been foreshadowed in earlier discussions within the section. Before long, at the beginning of the summer of 1949, section members held a general meeting with its

sympathizers to deliberate on the situation. It was decided that the section should formally dissolve itself since the Greek community in Egypt was not a social context in which to conduct the class struggle. "That's why we decided to finish with this. We had the idea that we made a struggle of classes in the Greek community [but] it was not possible . . . because Greeks were employees or entrepreneurs, and Egyptians were the workers" (Dayiantis 1994). The meeting recommended that those sufficiently integrated with Egyptian society should continue as part of the Egyptian movement; those unable to adopt this course were urged to join the Democratic Army in Greece. Among the former, the minority, was Gazis, Papanoditis, and Andreas Kanas, all of whom spoke Arabic well. From the majority, some had already made their way to Eastern Europe, and others had still not departed when news was received of the end of hostilities in Greece in October 1949 (Gazis 1994).

With the dissolution of the Greek section, Greeks ceased to play a distinct role in the Egyptian communist movement. Most of its former members ceased their activities, were arrested, or left the country at this time. Suffering from an inflexible leadership and many police strikes by mid-1950, Mim Shin Mim may have had as few as ten active members (Botman 1988:99). Gazis, perhaps one of the last of its active operatives, was jailed in February 1952 and sentenced to a ten-year jail term. A separate foreign section continued to operate within a rebuilt HADITU until about 1954 (Papadopoulou 1994). By this time an Egyptian leadership of the movement had emerged, and few foreign members remained, save for those in jail.<sup>25</sup> When Mary Papadopoulou and a friend joined the organization in 1954, they were the only Greeks active in HADITU. Offered the option of working in the foreign section, they preferred to serve as ordinary members (Papadopoulou 1994). Greeks and other foreign nationals continued to assist Egyptian communists in tangible ways by contributing money, obtaining typewriters, and working with the peace movement, but they were not formally members. It had become clear that there was little scope for them to work within an organization that sought to be a mass movement.

### *AP and the Nasser Regime*

In the years immediately following the Second World War, a succession of Egyptian governments faced the political challenge of both satisfying the renewed demands for British withdrawal and keeping the increasing influence of communism and the Muslim Brotherhood at bay, against the backdrop of the 1948 war in Palestine and growing economic instability. The abrogation of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty by a weakened Wafdist government in October 1951 and the disastrous fire

of Cairo in the following January testified to a disintegrating political order. In fact, the toppling of the old order came from the military in July 1952 when the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) presented itself as the savior to Egypt's difficulties. The initial AP reaction to the coup had been positive. On 3 August in an editorial in *I Foní* titled, «Νέα Ζωή Προχωρεί» (“New Life Advances”), Tsirkas came out strongly in favor of the coup. This initial enthusiasm was tempered following the execution of two strikers at Kafr al-Dawwar later that month and the government's increasingly authoritarian style. On 10 March 1953, following its laudatory coverage on the death and legacy of Stalin, *I Foní* was closed down by military decree for dissemination of extremist views, an action no doubt taken with the full support of the Greek embassy.<sup>26</sup> Such actions, in addition to the arrest of many leftists, were to pose a political dilemma for both AP and the Egyptian communist movement as they sought to divine the designs of the new regime. For the next two years, AP maintained a cautious, circumspect view.

The emergence of Nasser as an international leader at the Bandung Conference in April 1955 and the affirmation of his anti-imperialist credentials during the Suez crisis in the following year gave AP an opportunity for reassessment of, and engagement with, Egyptian foreign policy. In the tense period following the announcement of the nationalization of the Canal in July 1956, the Left and progressive elements within the Greek community were vocal in supporting the Egyptian position. The following month, Tsirkas, with painter Menis Angelopoulos and Dr. Heraklis Maschas of the Greek Hospital in Alexandria (both of them AP members), issued a call to English and French intellectuals to raise their voice in protest against the hostile campaign being prepared against Egypt (Prokopaki 1985:21). The stand was not restricted to statements. Many Egyptian Greeks offered their services to join the Civil Guard and were given a week's basic training in case of a military attack (Maloukatos 1994). Greeks participated in a mass rally in Cairo calling for the defense of Egyptian national rights (al-Ahram 1956) and Greek pilots and workers of the Suez Canal Company, numbering about 1500 employees in all, stayed at their posts, an action encouraged by the Greek government (Egyptian Gazette 1956).

The diplomatic triumph that followed Suez afforded a period of relative freedom for the Left in Egypt. Nasser authorized the publication of the daily *al-Masa'*, edited by Khalid Muhyi al-Din, a former member of the RCC, to serve as the legal voice of the Egyptian Left. Through its own mouthpiece, *O Pároikos*, AP adopted the Bandung line in its coverage of international affairs. Over the next two years Muhyi al-Din assisted the Greek paper by supplying photographs, providing articles for republication, and, on occasion, allowing articles to be simulta-

neously published in both papers (Chrisostomidis 1994). Yet despite its general endorsement for Nasser's foreign policy, AP drew a line between this support and its views on domestic Egyptian issues from which it largely refrained to comment. For this reason it attracted criticism from some Egyptian communists—notwithstanding the fact that they themselves were not united in their attitude to Nasser—for being too tolerant of the regime. This view was particularly voiced when Nasser, discomfited by the existence of an autonomous political force and the lack of unwavering support he demanded from the Left, intensified his repression against communists in early 1959.<sup>27</sup>

The cautious AP tactics were prompted not only by possible repercussions from the Egyptian security services but also by the hostile attitude of the Greek authorities. During the late 1940s and 1950s, both governments had maintained anti-communist policies and regularly cooperated in moving against the left wing within the Greek community. This had been particularly so during the years of the Greek Civil War when the Greek government sought ways to silence the progressive press, ultimately securing the closure of two newspapers, *Ellin* and *Kivix*, in 1947, with the connivance of the Egyptian authorities.<sup>28</sup> At the end of 1947, following the declaration of the Provisional Democratic Government in the north of Greece, the Greek authorities had called for a statement of support from sections of the Egyptian Greek community. The leaders of some progressive clubs protested that they did not represent political organizations and that such action was best left to individual members. The Greek government soon squared accounts. With the outbreak of war in Palestine in May 1948, Egyptian authorities imprisoned Jewish (both Zionist and communist) activists and, at the request of the Greek government, the recalcitrant Greek leaders (Maloukatos 1994). Nor was such cooperation restricted to the pre-Nasser period. In 1959, at the instigation of the Greek consular authorities, the election of a number of progressive candidates in the *Koinótita* elections in Alexandria was declared invalid by the Egyptian authorities (Anastasiadis 1993:141). *O Pávoikos* continually walked a fine line between the Egyptian censor and the consistently hostile attitude of the Greek government. The paper was not recognized by the Greek embassy in Cairo, nor were its officers invited to official receptions.<sup>29</sup> According to its editor-in-chief, Sophianos Chrisostomidis,

there were criteria how to be careful, how not to provoke the Greek authorities or the Egyptian security authorities. There was always an exchange of views and opinions about what we could say between the leadership of AP and the journalists running the newspaper in touch with the day to day reality. (1994)

Even if the Greek ambassador was not always unsympathetic, as was the case during the term of Ambassador Dimitrios Lambros (1956–1961), the KIP (Greek intelligence service) maintained an unremitting hostility. On many occasions the Greek government attempted to force the closure of the newspaper, which defended itself before the Egyptian authorities by emphasizing that it was simply following the Bandung line, the policy of Nasser himself (Chrisostomidis 1994). *O Pároikos* finally succumbed to Greek pressure in Cairo and ceased publication in June 1961.

#### *Relations between AP and the Egyptian Movement*

In assessing the significance of AP in Egyptian political life, one important aspect, since it addresses how the organization itself conceived of its operational role in the Egyptian arena, is the character of its relationship with the Egyptian communist movement. The exigencies of wartime had seen cooperation and technical assistance between individual Egyptian communists and elements within EAS or among Greek military forces. Schwartz, Curiel, and other members of the Egyptian movement had afforded refuge to fugitive Greek officers in the weeks following the repression of the Greek uprising by the Allied command in April 1944. After the war, cooperation between AP and the Egyptian communist movement became more restrained. Relations between AP and the Greek section members, perhaps the most likely basis for collaboration, were not close. There was some incidental cooperation, such as during the sanitary campaign visiting poor Greek families following the cholera outbreak in 1947. There were some limited personal contacts: one member of the Greek section was responsible for Greek community affairs and maintained some contact with AP (Dayiantis 1994). Yet, despite the fact that the Greek section and AP were well aware of one another's presence—both recruited from the same constituency and frequented the same clubs—there was no structural cooperation between the two and personal relations between the lower ranks were discouraged.<sup>30</sup>

This state of affairs, generally attributed to AP, has most often been explained by assertions that the Greek Left in Egypt was fundamentally unconcerned with Egyptian politics and focused only on the political affairs of Greece or its microcosm, the local Greek community (Vatikiotis 1991:324; Botman 1988:5). More broadly, it has been regarded as further confirmation of the separate Greek and Egyptian societies that coexisted in Egypt. At best, this is a misrepresentation of the complex dynamics of the Greek presence in Egypt that fails to take into account the character of the Egyptian communist movement, the nature of the

Greek community, and to a lesser extent the dynamics of international communism. In fact, while AP as an organization kept aloof from the Egyptian movement, it maintained contact with Egyptian communists at leadership level and developed a pattern of relations characterized if not by coordination then by cautious cooperation.

The reasons for the circumspect relations between Egyptian and resident Greek communists are complex. There is no doubt that the bitter experience of the ECP during the 1920s had left an enduring legacy (Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990:12–31). The political challenge of communism at this time had galvanized Egyptian governments into strong repressive measures. Particularly under the Wafdist government of Sa'd Zaghlul in 1924, the authorities effectively used a succession of informers from within the very ranks of the party leadership to smash the party, arresting many activists and deporting foreign members. The small circle of activists who continued as an underground organization, many of whom were Greeks, operated but under a strict security regime. Although many resurfaced in the legal pacifist and antifascist organizations of the 1930s, where they worked openly with foreigners and Egyptians, thereafter most Greeks preferred to organize their clandestine activities separately from the Egyptian movement.

AP continued this culture of security, even with other communists, and maintained the integrity of the organization through a strict security regime (Yusuf 1994). Even Greeks attending progressive clubs that served as AP recruiting grounds were not always aware of its presence (Papadopoulou 1994). This attitude contrasted with the perceived practices of their Egyptian comrades and acted as a barrier to closer relations between the two groups.<sup>31</sup> In AP, it was widely believed that HADITU's security was inadequate and that the organization was riven with police informers—a view that had some basis in fact (Botman 1988:70–72, 82–83).<sup>32</sup> Throughout the period of the late 1940s and 1950s the Egyptian communist cause was severely hampered by waves of arrests. AP practice doubtlessly restricted its growth but it effectively withstood the periodic government crackdowns by Isma'il Sidqi in July 1946, and the declaration of martial law in May 1948 with the outbreak of war in Palestine and again in the late 1950s under Nasser. There were occasional strikes by police against the Greek Left, but AP never suffered from the large-scale arrests that afflicted the ranks of the Egyptian movement.

There were also particular reservations within AP about the personal style of Henri Curiel, a central figure within the Egyptian movement in the 1940s. Curiel's strategy of a broad progressive front of national and democratic forces was regarded as reckless, being both a formula for factional splits and lacking ideological rigor (Yusuf 1994).<sup>33</sup>

Concerns over the factional nature of the Egyptian movement were well-grounded. From the time of its reemergence in the early 1940s until it was united in 1958, the Egyptian movement remained highly factionalized, at one time numbering more than thirty different groups. Even the merger between Iskra and HAMITU in 1947 to form HADITU, by far the largest communist organization, was soon subject to internal dissension. This fragmentary character made it problematic from an AP perspective as to with whom it should maintain contact. Indeed, at its Seventh (and last) Congress in 1935 the Comintern had withdrawn formal recognition of the Egyptian party due to its ideological deviation and poor record of security (Yannakakis 1984:103; Carr 1982:419). This may have afforded a certain flexibility of relations between AP and Egyptian communists but, given its affiliation with the KKE, may also have placed AP under some obligation to observe the resolution, at least formally.

There were also practical reasons for maintaining a separate Greek organization. The most serious impediment to close cooperation was the poor standard of Arabic among Greek cadres and indeed within the Greek community generally. This, as already noted, had been a factor in the ultimate failure of the Greek section to integrate within the Egyptian movement. While there were exceptions among those living in Upper Egypt and in the Delta, Greeks in the main cities usually did not have Arabic of a very high standard. Greek community schools up until the time of the Second World War taught Arabic, but as a *fourth* language after Greek, French, and English, and often only at a basic level. (Those who attended French or English schools were even less exposed to Arabic.) Through business and social contacts, or interaction with servants, many Greeks were able to converse in colloquial Arabic but only more rarely were they capable of reading and writing the language. The situation was beginning to change after the war, but in short it was very unusual to conduct a meeting or a discussion of political ideas in the language. Even fewer Egyptians knew Greek, and therefore most political discussions and contacts were carried out in a third language, usually French, sometimes English.

Finally, AP faced the same political quandaries that had confronted the Greek section. Firstly, how was an ethnic Greek organization to work within the context of an *Egyptian* communist movement? The presence of the foreign sections notwithstanding, from the second half of the 1940s the issue of the role of foreigners and especially Jews in the Egyptian movement had prompted much heated debate. AP itself was critical of their disproportionate influence in HADITU (JD 1994). From the early 1950s, the character of communist membership in Egypt noticeably narrowed with the establishment of al-Raya, a group that

specifically excluded Egyptian Jews and foreigners.<sup>34</sup> The increasing vigor of pan-Arabist rhetoric in the second half of the 1950s further undercut the basis for any multiethnic communist discourse. Secondly, how was the class struggle within the Greek community to be reconciled with support for the Egyptian national movement given the relatively privileged position of Egyptian Greeks? Egyptian communists themselves were divided on the question of the priorities between class struggle and national independence, with some tendencies ideologically more allied with class interests and others to the anti-imperialist struggle. This potential conflict became clear with discussions on the character of the Nasser regime (Beinin 1990:97–101). Was it an instrument for national liberation or a military dictatorship? AP for its own part was ambivalent and sought a solution by distinguishing foreign from domestic issues. Nevertheless, these trends militated against a close organizational relationship with the Egyptian movement.

For these reasons, some with more force than others, the AP leadership avoided any structural affiliation with the Egyptian movement but instead preferred to maintain informal links with elements in the Egyptian movement at the highest level. The record of these contacts is not well-documented, but evidence suggests that the Greek communist movement in Egypt was not as disconnected from its Egyptian comrades as is often suggested. Certainly during the years of the Greek Civil War AP appears to have concentrated most of its energies on the struggle taking place on the Greek mainland. With the cessation of hostilities in October 1949 and the expulsion of the Communist forces from Greece, there seems to have been a reassessment of AP strategy and a realization within the organization that some formal arrangement with the Egyptian movement needed to be established. In early 1950, notwithstanding its reservations about HADITU, the AP leadership made overtures towards Curiel, meeting him on at least one occasion (Chrisostomidis 1994).<sup>35</sup> In addition to the mutual benefits of cooperation, Curiel, for his part, may have been attempting to negotiate recognition of HADITU by Moscow through the KKE's good offices (Hazan 1994; Perrault 1984:108). Whatever the content of the discussions, little appears to have resulted. Soon after, in August 1950, Curiel was deported from Egypt and for reasons not entirely clear—perhaps its longstanding reservations about HADITU were confirmed—AP drew back from these contacts. Instead, in 1951 it entered into an official *mubadara* (undertaking) with Workers' Vanguard (henceforth WV) (Yusuf 1994).<sup>36</sup>

At first sight the decision to enter into a formal relationship with WV seems odd. WV had no ethnic Greeks among its ranks and had insisted since its foundation in 1946 that all full members had to be both

Egyptian citizens and literate in Arabic. Moreover, its political line was more oriented to the Egyptian working class. What it did offer however was trusted and longstanding personal connections between members that predated the war. Yusuf Darwish and Raymond Duwayk in Cairo, and Ahmad Sadiq Sa'd in Alexandria, all prominent WV members, had been active in the Ligue Pacifiste in the 1930s, where they had come to know Thodosis Pieridis, Sokrates Kalliarekos, Stratis Tsirkas, Stratis Zerbinis, and others (Darwish 1994; Duwayk 1994). These relations were maintained during and after the war. Tsirkas at one point had asked Darwish to go to Cyprus on party business. WV also shared AP's regard for strict security procedures and its political strategy was both less ambitious and more coherent than that of HADITU in a way that was compatible with AP's own style.

Under the terms of the *mubadara*, regular connections were maintained and responsibilities allocated: AP printed and distributed pamphlets for the Egyptians; analyses were translated from Arabic to French or from Greek to French and exchanged, and advice was shared. Throughout the period, the standard mode of communication was through limited individual contacts where security remained a paramount consideration.<sup>37</sup> One Egyptian who acted as a contact through much of the 1950s was Abu Sayf Yusuf (codename "Sayf"), the secretary general of WV, and there were a number of Greek contacts. At critical times meetings were called. At the end of 1951, during the final months of the last Wafdist government, the leadership of AP and WV met to assess the military situation and formulate the best strategy in the event that British forces moved on Cairo from the Canal (Yusuf 1994). There must also have been discussions at other crucial times, such as during the Suez crisis of 1956, when elements within the Greek community publicly took up the Egyptian cause. Later, when solutions were being sought regarding the fate of the Egyptian Greek community, AP held discussions with WV and obtained its support for the idea of dual nationality, which was canvassed in the underground publication of the unified Egyptian party (Yusuf 1994).<sup>38</sup>

This pattern of moral and material assistance continued until Nasser's move against the communists in the late 1950s made contacts very difficult. Up to that time, according to Yusuf, AP leaders were convinced that, at the appropriate time, "their organization must be put under the patronage of Egyptian communists on the condition that the Marxist Egyptians build their one real Communist Party" (Yusuf 1994). Such a union remained only a theoretical prospect. The Egyptian movement itself was not united until January 1958, by which time the impending demise of the Greek community and the repressive measures of the Egyptian government made such a step impossible. With AP

members migrating to Greece in increasing numbers, Nikolas Halvatzakis as the last secretary of the AP, was left with the task of winding up the organization at the end of 1961. Some AP elements remained active in Egypt during the 1960s, long enough to voice puzzlement at the decision of the Egyptian Communist Party to dissolve itself in 1965 in return for accepting Nasser's offer of a limited non-party role in what was now a more socialist-oriented regime (JD 1994).

### *Conclusion*

The case of the Greek Left in Egypt exemplifies the complexities and contradictions both within the Greek community and Egyptian society. The AP, over almost two decades, and the Greek section of the Egyptian communist movement in the 1940s both sought to further the progressive and communist cause in Egypt. In the case of AP, first priority was given to the struggle in Greece, while the Greek section was more unequivocal in its commitment to the Egyptian cause. Nevertheless, each was motivated by a conviction that Greeks had a genuine place in Egypt and a political contribution to make to the milieu of which they were both part and product. In the end they failed to maintain a viable political discourse, succumbing to the increasing vigor of Egyptian and Arab nationalism, the practical difficulties of Greeks integrating within an Egyptian political movement, and the campaign waged against them by both Egyptian and Greek authorities. Despite this failure, the record of the Greek Left significantly undermines the characterization of the Greek community as an insular society and points to the existence of organic if often problematic relations that existed with the wider Egyptian community. In doing so, it provides an important counter to the essentialist division between Egyptians and Greeks found in much scholarship.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I have generally used "Egyptian Greeks" as an equivalent for Αιγυπτιώτες Έλληνες, the term most often used to refer to the Greek population of Egypt; it does not imply any official nationality.

<sup>2</sup> Kitroeff (1989) is an important if partial exception to this trend. Apropos the tendency to equate Greek ethnicity with nationality, it is worth noting that according to figures from the 1937 census of those listed as ethnically Greek (i.e., of “Greek race”) 75 percent held Greek nationality and 16 percent were Egyptians.

<sup>3</sup> The Capitulations, which remained in force in Egypt until 1937, were the series of agreements between the Ottoman Empire and European governments that gave European nationals significant legal and economic concessions; the system of Mixed Courts, established to deal with cases involving those of foreign and Egyptian nationality, continued to function until 1949. Egyptianization was an extended series of legislative measures that limited the employment opportunities for foreign nationals that became increasingly pointed from the late 1940s.

<sup>4</sup> This lack of dialogue is not altogether surprising given the glaring and almost universal failure of Greek scholars to utilize Arabic language sources, and the corresponding absence of Greek language sources in the work of historians of Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> While the activities of the Egyptian Greek Left have been addressed in the literature, significantly this has been almost wholly in the context of its wartime contribution to the struggle apropos mainland Greek politics (Psiroukis 1974:235–236; Nefeloudis 1981; Kitroeff 1984; Souloyiannis 1992). At a certain, albeit superficial, level this is also true of the influential trilogy of Stratis Tsirkas, *Ακυβέρνητες Πολιτείες*. Only Anastasiadis (1993) has addressed the postwar Egyptian Greek Left at any length; no scholar has dealt with the Greek section in the Egyptian movement.

<sup>6</sup> The development of communism and its importance in the national movement in Egypt after the Second World War has attracted considerable attention from scholars since the 1970s (al-Sa’id 1976; Botman 1988; Ismael and El-Sa’id 1990; Beinin 1990). For a list of the interviewees see appendix.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the tyranny of national categories as it relates to the work of Egyptian historians, see Gorman *Contesting the Nation* (forthcoming).

<sup>8</sup> There is some doubt about the exact date of the founding of AP. Nefeloudis (1981:70) puts it prior to January 1943 and its inaugural conference at the end of 1943 or beginning of 1944; Pangalos (1965:45–46) says the organization was set up following the proposal of Yiannis Salas in June 1943 and that it later changed its official name to *Πρωτοποριακή Οργάνωση Ελλήνων* in 1951.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the role of the EAS, see Kitroeff (1984).

<sup>10</sup> The term *working class* in this context requires some clarification. Generally speaking, Greeks were relatively better-off than their Egyptian counterparts, enjoying greater literacy and socioeconomic advantage. Nevertheless, there was still a sizeable working class. The diamond-shaped profile of Egyptian Greek society proposed by Kitroeff (1989:31) and followed by others (e.g., Karanasou 1999:37–41) has some validity, but it runs the risk of giving the misleading impression of a large middle class. A contemporary 1940s estimate of the Greek community gave the following breakdown: 5 percent capitalist, 35 percent petit bourgeoisie, 60 percent working poor (Souloyiannis 1999:58).

<sup>11</sup> Among these were the Union of Greek Graduates of Abetios School, the Union of Graduates of the Greek Community Girls’ School (both in Cairo), the Greek Students Association in Alexandria, the Union of Greek Veterans of Alexandria; workers’ associations included the Pastry Cooks’ and Waiters’ Unions and the Union of Greek Employees of Public Establishments (Anastasiadis 1993:107–148).

<sup>12</sup> This figure is suggested by a number of interviewees (Maloukatos, Chrisostomidis). Dagas gives 80 as the maximum number of AP members (1992:132), but this seems unlikely given that Anastasiadis lists just over one hundred deceased members alone in 1993 (1993: 159–160). A detailed analysis of the class profile of AP remains to be done; the view presented here is based on considerable anecdotal evidence.

<sup>13</sup> During the late 1950s *O Pároukos*, the daily newspaper of AP, had a circulation of 2000 (JD 1994) (JD is a former member of AP who wishes to remain anonymous). The Greek population by this time had probably declined to less than 50,000.

<sup>14</sup> The word *Koinótita* (literally 'community') is used throughout to refer to the formal institution and not the Greek community in a broad or abstract sense (for which the Greek word *παρουσία* is used).

<sup>15</sup> AP also had its in-house organ, *O Πρωτοπόρος*, which was circulated among its cadres and members of the Democratic Organizations (Anastasiadis 1993:105).

<sup>16</sup> The article was originally published in *Ellin* 9 March 1946.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Botman's comment, "Marxists from the . . . Greek communities were tied to the communist parties in their own countries and were not directly active in the Egyptian political field" (1988:5).

<sup>18</sup> Pangalos, a Cretan of working-class background, was already familiar with the Egyptian situation, having served there in the Greek navy during the war and returning again in early 1949 to raise money and volunteers for the Democratic Army. His arrival in 1951 presaged the removal of Stratis Tsirkas as secretary of AP (Anastasiadis 1993:99).

<sup>19</sup> AP archives are believed to have been forwarded to the KKE leadership in exile in Romania in the early 1960s after the dissolution of AP (Anastasiadis 1993:5).

<sup>20</sup> This conclusion is based on a number of interviews with both Egyptian and Greek communists. It is worth noting that in the 1980s and 1990s a separate organization of Egyptian Greeks existed within KKE *Esoterikó* in Greece.

<sup>21</sup> While *Iskra* is the name most commonly found in the literature, *al-Sharara* (Arabic for "The Spark") was used within the organization and was also the name by which it was known to AP members.

<sup>22</sup> PT was a leading member of the Greek section who wishes to remain anonymous.

<sup>23</sup> Ismael and El-Sa'id (1990:53–54) inaccurately state that the foreign sections were first established in HADITU.

<sup>24</sup> There was an echo of this latter sentiment within AP itself. Like *Iskra* and HADITU, the majority of AP members were of bourgeois or petit-bourgeois background. The replacement of Tsirkas as AP secretary in 1951 by Vasilis Momos, who had more suitable working-class credentials, was prompted by concerns regarding the character of the membership. In effect, it was Pangalos, also a worker, who became the dominant figure in AP for the next decade (Anastasiadis 1993:99).

<sup>25</sup> These foreigners were interned in a number of prisons and after a time were brought together in the prison at Qena. It was here and in other prisons that discussions were held among communists regarding the dissolution of the Egyptian Communist Party (which ultimately took place in 1965); the foreign members were opposed to the move (Gazis 1994).

<sup>26</sup> The owners of *I Foní* subsequently won a court appeal against this decision as unconstitutional. However, since *O Pároukos* was already being published by this time, *I Foní* was not revived (Chrisostomidis 1994).

<sup>27</sup> This criticism also may have been fueled by AP efforts to dampen down the maximalist tendencies of the Egyptian movement that it regarded on occasion as too radical or ambitious beyond its means (Chrisostomidis 1994).

<sup>28</sup> *Kirix* was sold in early 1947 and disappeared soon after; *Ellin* was closed by Egyptian authorities later in the year (Foreign Affairs 1947).

<sup>29</sup> On one occasion the Greek ambassador denounced *O Pároukos*'s publishers, Nikolas Potiris and Nikolas Aretakis as "enemies of the people" (Chrisostomidis 1994).

<sup>30</sup> In one case a Greek member of HADITU who wished to marry an AP member was instructed by the AP leadership that to do so she would first have to resign from the Egyptian movement (Papadopolou 1994).

<sup>31</sup> This has been confirmed in interviews by both Egyptian (Rif'at al-Sa'id, Abu Sayf Yusuf) and Greek activists (Lambis Rappas, Paul Maloukatos).

<sup>32</sup> Botman (1988:52) suggests Iskra had better security arrangements than HAMITU; Lambis Rappas (1994), a member of EAS, was also less censorious of Iskra.

<sup>33</sup> This characterization has been substantially confirmed by AP members. In *Drifting Cities* Tsirkas portrayed Curiel in pointedly unflattering terms:

The younger brother [i.e., Henri Curiel] went round Cairo like a tireless beetle, trying desperately to find left-wingers willing to be assisted. At a nominal rent, he let each national group occupy an office, with desks, chairs, and a couch. Never mind about political conscience—he left that to them! They were a motley crowd: Armenian sympathizers, Italian anti-Fascists, French journalists and artists, British professors and soldiers. Each office had its own political altar. As for the younger brother himself, he occupied the three offices at the end of the passage and considered himself the high priest of all these diverse groups, though he never said so or even admitted as much. The only people he had not managed to favor with his 'hospitality' were the Greeks, and this was a matter of sore concern to him, rather like a collector who needs just one more stamp to complete a series. (1974:287)

<sup>34</sup> Officially known as the Communist Party of Egypt, this group is generally referred to as al-Raya in the literature.

<sup>35</sup> The meeting took place in Cairo in the house of Sophianos Chrisostomidis some time between Curiel's release from prison at the end of 1949 and his re-arrest in July 1950 (and subsequent deportation). There had also very likely been high-level discussions between Curiel and Greek communists in Huckstepp prison in 1948–1949 (Hazan 1994).

<sup>36</sup> The Workers' Vanguard (*Tali'at al-'Ummal*) grew out of the *al-Fajr al-Jadid* group and underwent a number of name changes through the 1940s and 1950s: Popular Vanguard for Liberation, Popular Democracy, and the Workers' and Peasants' Communist Party. For convenience I will use Workers' Vanguard throughout this discussion.

<sup>37</sup> It is worth noting that Pangalos himself was illegally in Egypt throughout the 1950s and used the cover identity of Yiorgos Christodoulos throughout this period. Among his other codenames were *ο μικρός* and, to his Egyptian contacts, *wika*—an Egyptian word meaning "cheeky one" (Yusuf 1994).

<sup>38</sup> Abu Sayf Yusuf was present at the important AP conference held in Alexandria in 1958 when this issue was discussed.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

[All interviews were conducted by the author]

Chrisostomidis, Sophianos

Member of AP, journalist and editor of *O Pároikos* (Athens, 29 March 1994).

Darwish, Yusuf

Communist Labor lawyer, Member of Ligue Pacifiste, and later al-Fajr al-Jadid group and Workers' Vanguard (Cairo, 1994 and 2001).

Dayiantis, George

Member of Greek section of Iskra and HADITU (1946–49) (Paris, 19 April 1994).

Duwayk, Raymond

Member of Ligue Pacifiste, and later al-Fajr al-Jadid group and Workers' Vanguard (Paris, 20 April 1994).

Gazis, Nikolas

Member of Greek section of HADITU (1947-49); arrested in 1952 and imprisoned for 10 years; afterwards deported to Greece (Athens, 22 March 1994).

Hazan, Joseph

Member of HADITU, close associate of Henri Curiel (Paris, 21 April 1994)

JD

Member of AP (Cairo, 10 March 1994).

Maloukatos, Pavlos

Member of AP (Athens, 25 March 1994).

Papadopoulou, Maria

Member of HADITU during the 1950s, sentenced to five years' imprisonment in 1959 and afterwards deported to Greece (Athens, 22 March 1994).

PT

Member of Greek section of Iskra and HADITU (Paris, 19 April 1994).

Rappas, Lambis

Member of Greek communist group and Ligue Pacifiste in the 1930s, later joined the Greek Forces in the Middle East and was active in the April 1944 uprising on which he has written (Athens, 5 April 1994).

Schwartz, Hillel

Founder of Iskra, and later member of HADITU, deported 1949/50.

Yusuf, Abu Sayf

Member of al-Fajr al-Jadid group and Workers' Vanguard, later secretary-general of Workers and Peasants Party.

