



## **Speech by the General Secretary of the C.C. of AKEL A. Kyprianou at the 31st Pancyprian Festival of Youth and Students EDON**

**AKEL C.C. Press Office, Friday 6 July 2018, Nicosia**

We have all gathered here for yet another year at the 31st Pancyprian Festival of Youth and Students of EDON. Welcome to this gathering that fills us with pride, optimism and hope. Every time we pass through the Festival's gates, we see something so familiar, but also so different and fresh. I noticed that the artists' corner has now been established and that this year Turkish Cypriot artists are also exhibiting their own work too. That is why we talk about hope because by combating those who want Cyprus divided, you the young generation, the youth of the People's Movement of the Left you are abolishing the dividing line and are preparing together with the Turkish Cypriot youth the future of peace. You are sending out in your own way the message that nothing can stop peace in Cyprus!

On behalf of the Central Committee of AKEL, we congratulate EDON for the hard work it is doing for the preparation and realization of the Festival. When our people's poet Tefkros Anthias wrote about a defiant people who is fighting for an idea, I'm sure he was thinking of EDON, the vanguard youth of the country that does not yield and give in; that continues to assert for all young people the future that they deserve. He had in mind the militant youth of EDON that has never given up and yielded. EDON resists, struggles and persists.

The young generation is being called upon to pay the cost of the global economic crisis, but also of the austerity policies being imposed by the Anastasiades-DISY government, the most anti-youth government ever in power in our country. The only certainty for young people in Cyprus today is their uncertainty about the high unemployment, work with personal contracts, acute exploitation, low wages and salaries, high rents and soaring prices.

*"They are speaking about glorious times again..."* Brecht wrote, but as soon as the Presidential election was over, they announced to the people that the crisis and the debts are here. They have destroyed Cooperatives and made the future generations foot the bill of billions of dollars. They are speaking about "glorious times", building casinos and skyscrapers, selling passports, but are condemning young people to personal contracts and imposing labour relations resembling the Middle Ages. They are speaking about glorious times, but the people are facing enormous problems as a result of the crisis in the health system. They speak about glorious times but social policy has been cut savagely so that a whole family is forced to survive and make ends meet on 800-1000 euros per month.

They are talking about "the Nation" gain, but they are appeasing the monster of neo-fascism and glorifying those who led us to the betrayal of the 15 July 1974

coup d'état and subsequent Turkish invasion. They talk about the nation again, but they have in a way begun telling us that we should be thinking about even a two-state solution instead of the reunification of our homeland with a bizonal, bicomunal federation. President Anastasiades has a responsibility to the country and to the young generation. He has a responsibility not to go down in history as the President of partition. The elections in Turkey are over. Right now everyone must focus on returning to the negotiating table on the basis of the framework set by the UN Secretary-General and the long-standing positions for the solution of the Cyprus problem; on how we shall agree on a solution as soon as possible that will be based on the long-standing decisions of the National Council

Tonight EDON honors one of its own youth, the late and renowned Cypriot composer Marios Tokas. It honors the work of a great composer, a great man. Marios Tokas did not just write songs, he wrote History with his songs. His first steps were taken participating in the Festivals of EDON and in the student cultural clubs. Marios never stopped fighting for Cyprus and the people. That's what all of you who are our pride, optimism and hope are doing. Don't ever stop! Continue with your head high to struggle; to raise even higher the banner of the common people, for life and for freedom!

I would like to welcome to Cyprus and to the Festival of EDON the distinguished artists Yiannis Kotsiras, Demetris Mbassis, Miltiades Paschalidies and Yiota Nega. I'm sure the songs of Marios Tokas will give us an unforgettable musical feast.

Long live the EDON!