

MUNICH, 16 February 1973 (CAA/XX)

The expulsion of Lutfi Al-Kholi from active membership of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), Egypt's only legal political organisation, is a blow to Moscow's ambitions to form a "vanguard" of Marxists at the centre of the ASU to act as a pressure group and lead it towards scientific Socialism. Al-Kholi, a Marxist member of the ASU's Central Committee and Secretary of its Foreign Relations Sub-Committee, was expelled together with 14 other ASU members following a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee under the Speaker of the People's Assembly, Hafiz Badawi, on February 6, 1973. The mass expulsion of 64 members - lawyers, poets, authors, playwrights and journalists, mainly of left-wing sympathy - had occurred a few days earlier.

This development means that Al-Kholi will automatically lose his job as editor-in-chief of the Cairo left-wing magazine *Al Tali'a*, a post which he has apparently held - except for a break in 1970-71 when he was under house arrest - since its foundation. *Al Tali'a* [The Vanguard] is a publication of the *Al-Ahram* publishing house, and is the monthly organ of the ASU Ideological and Socialist Thought Committee.

Al-Kholi has served a number of terms of imprisonment, including one in 1959 when there was a purge of Communist elements in Egypt. In 1957 he was reported to have conducted a profitable business in obtaining exit visas for Egyptians wishing to travel abroad for reasons other than those approved by the authorities, and from mid-1970 to 1971 he was under house arrest in connection with an alleged currency smuggling offence.

A frequent visitor to Moscow, his last visit was in October, 1971, when he led an ASU delegation there. He followed it up with an article in *Al-Ahram* of October 21 drawing attention to the "sacrifices" made by the Soviet citizen to aid the Arabs, and dismissed anti-Soviet activity in the Arab world as "the work of infantile leftists or Arab reactionaries who in no way express the opinion of the majority of Arab peoples". Part of his importance to the Russians was that he played an active rôle in the ASU. *New Times* (Moscow) said on May 9, 1966, that he believed that "the vanguard party which is being created will become the ideological backbone of the ASU".

In October, 1966, Al-Kholi presided at the opening session of a seminar on "Africa: National and Social Revolution" which *Al Tali'a* organised in conjunction with the Communist theoretical journal, *World Marxist Review*. He wrote in the October, 1966, issue of the *Review* that

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"a revolutionary vanguard party is being formed, consisting entirely of Socialists who ... are imbued with the ideas of scientific Socialism" - usually a synonym for Communism. Al-Kholi explained that "the mission of this vanguard party is to lead the ASU and the entire people to Socialism..."

A book published in Moscow in 1969, in a limited edition of 2,500 copies, contained similar views in a chapter on "The Workers' Movement in the Arab Countries". It stated that "in the opinion of Egyptian Communists, they could best take the ideas of scientific Socialism and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism to the masses from within the ranks of the ASU, as well as best participate in the single party of the revolutionary *avant-garde* - now being established within the ASU - which recognises the leading rôle of the working classes and the principles of scientific Socialism".

Al-Kholi returned to this theme when in an interview which appeared in the weekly magazine *Jeune Afrique* of November 20, 1971, he referred to a grouping of militant Socialists which was being formed at the centre of the ASU, and commented that for the first time the various groups within the ASU could express themselves freely: "... we, the Marxists, can speak as Marxists".

As a member of the National Peace Council, Al-Kholy travelled widely to meetings organised by the World Peace Council (WPC), the Soviet-controlled international front organisation, and at the WPC Congress in 1971 he was re-elected a Council Member.

When Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation Executive Committee and spokesman of the commando organisation, *Al Fatah*, went to Moscow in February, 1970, Al-Kholy accompanied him. He subsequently wrote an article in *Al-Ahram* on March 4 extolling the Soviet attitude towards the Palestinians. The Soviet Union, he said, "has adopted completely and irrevocably the Arab cause", and added that Soviet policy for 1970 included "the restoration of the legitimate Palestinian people's rights". He addressed the concluding session of the Palestinian popular conference on April 10, 1972, and again praised the "honourable and disinterested aid of the Soviet Union".

At the Third Congress of the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) in Beirut in January, 1972, when he headed the ASU delegation, he said the leftist movement continued to suffer the effects of the US "offensive" but that the time had come to stand up to the challenge. He called for the elimination of contradictions in the leftist ranks which were obstructing the fulfilment of leftist unity. He also attended, as ASU delegate, the left-wing rally in Beirut in November, 1972, which set up the "Arab Front for the Support of the Palestine Revolution".

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