

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/3120/Add.1
13 June 1956

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Eleventh session

PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE ELEVENTH REGULAR SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: ITEM PROPOSED BY GREECE

APPLICATION, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, OF THE
PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES IN
THE CASE OF THE POPULATION OF THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

Letter dated 12 June 1956 addressed to the Secretary-General by
the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

New York, 12 June 1956

With reference to my letter dated 13 March 1956,^{1/} I have the honour to transmit to you the explanatory memorandum relating to the item "Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the Island of Cyprus", which has already been inscribed in the provisional agenda of the forthcoming eleventh regular session of the General Assembly.

Following the circulation by the Secretariat of the explanatory memorandum, the Permanent Mission of Greece will send to all delegations of the Member States the "Blue Book" mentioned in the memorandum.

(Signed) Christian X. PALAMAS
Permanent Representative of Greece
to the United Nations

^{1/} A/3120.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The question entitled "Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the island of Cyprus" has been taken up for the first time by the United Nations since the General Assembly decided at its ninth session to include it in its agenda, following a request submitted by the Royal Hellenic Government. A procedural resolution unanimously adopted and bearing provisional postponement of further consideration of the item, concluded a debate on the substance of the issue.

Since then the Royal Hellenic Government, considering that the situation in the Island was deteriorating and that the international implications of this situation were of immediate concern to the United Nations, requested the General Assembly, at its tenth regular session, to take appropriate action.

2. The General Assembly, by 28 negative votes against 22 affirmative and 10 abstentions, decided not to include the item in its agenda. However, from explanations offered by several delegations as to the true significance of their vote, it was made clear that the decision of the General Assembly had the following twofold meaning:

(a) The British Government pledged itself to seek through peaceful negotiations a just and equitable solution of the problem.

(b) In the face of such a British pledge, many delegations cast a negative vote, having serious misgivings as to the advisability of a public debate at that time and wishing to insure for all existing factors of good will and understanding the possibility of operating in favour of a peaceful settlement.

3. The Greek delegation contested the wisdom and efficacy of such an action by the General Assembly since it relieved the British Government from the pressure of immediate international responsibility and risked releasing more violence and further colonial excesses. This view was shared by many other delegations.

When shortly after the decision of the Assembly not to discuss the Cyprus question during its tenth session, Field-Marshal Sir John Harding was appointed Governor of Cyprus, the Greek delegation deemed it its duty to draw the attention

of the United Nations to this new British action which, in its opinion, indicated the beginning of a policy of increasingly violent and indiscriminate repression. Britain, said the Greek delegate, was now waging war against the people of Cyprus. In spite of British denials, the Greek fears came true.

4. The decision of the General Assembly offered the interested parties some directives for future action. Abiding by her faith in the United Nations, Greece saw herself bound to comply with such directives. It is in this spirit that the Royal Hellenic Government promised its full support and co-operation to Archbishop Makarios, spiritual and political leader of the Greek Cypriots, who accordingly entered into negotiations with the British Governor, Sir John Harding, aiming at reaching an amicable understanding for the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the people of the Island.

5. The documents contained in the Greek Blue Book^{1/} attached hereto give a factual account of the course of these negotiations.

It is only natural for differing parties to try to interpret facts according to their respective views and interests. But in the present instance the cause of the Cypriots is so clear and their rights so well established according to commonly accepted legal and moral rules, that Greece asks only for some impartial objectivity in the consideration of the relevant facts.

Conclusions emanating from such an impartial and objective consideration of existing factual evidence may be summarized as follows:

(a) The right of self-determination of peoples though unconditionally established by the Charter has not been so recognized by the British Government in the case of Cyprus, while self-determination - meaning national independence from foreign rule - is the main purpose and goal of the Cypriots.

(b) The British Government refused even to concede real self-government to the Cypriots for what would have been a transitional period. Besides reserving for itself full control of foreign affairs and military defence, the British Government sought to retain extensive powers even in the more restricted area of domestic matters. This would have been tantamount to a survival of the colonial administration, and this time, with the consent of the Cypriots.

1/ To be distributed later.

(c) In spite of a few niceties in words and phraseology, the British Government refused to make any substantial concession, while Archbishop Makarios, showing a high sense of moderation, made decisive steps towards compromise and understanding. British colonialism long entrenched in Cyprus stood firmly on its initial position.

Now, everyone will realize what the British mean when they talk of negotiations as a means of peaceful settlement.

(d) The breakdown of the negotiations resulted mainly from the unwillingness of the British to disclose what they meant by "elected majority" while retaining the right to nominate an undetermined number of ex officio appointed members of the future Parliament of Cyprus. This undemocratic and wholly inadmissible thesis made apparent the British intention to frustrate the will of the people and to continue to rule against it, as had been the case during nearly fifty years of previous colonial self-government of which the Cypriots had bitter experience.

(e) The negotiations showed clearly what was in the mind of the British Government when it talked of self-determination and self-government. Because Archbishop Makarios could not be induced to see things in the same colonial light, he has been punished by arrest and deportation.

The General Assembly will undoubtedly draw its conclusions from this sad but enlightening experience.

6. While the negotiations were carried on, as far as the Cypriots were concerned, in conformity with the views and wishes of the General Assembly, the situation in Cyprus was deteriorating further. New factors emerged from the plight created by the policies of harsh repression allegedly destined to quell a local resistance movement but aiming, in fact, at terrorizing the whole population and breaking the people's morale.

A powerful military machine of about 20,000 crack troops, naval forces, special police units and experts in intelligence and manhunting tactics was set up in the Island under the command of the Field-Marshal. This has been followed

by the complete suppression of all human rights and liberties. In implementing his Government's colonial policies, the Governor has actually transformed the Island into a huge concentration camp.

7. According to official British assertions, this is done with the purpose of establishing "law and order" against terrorism.

As this appears to be the crux of the problem, the United Nations is bound to consider it most attentively.

In all national communities, freedom and human rights, that is to say civic, economic and political rights, constitute the foundation of "law and order". Under the Charter of the United Nations, this democratic conception becomes an international rule and an international obligation. Wherever law and order do not emanate from the free will of the people but are the expression of forcibly imposed domination, the case becomes one of oppression.

Through the ages history has given many names to oppression. Colonialism is one of these names. "Law and order" expressing oppression is just the negation of law and order in terms of democracy, human decency and civilized standards. It is in vain that the British are trying to create confusion in the present instance. The case is only too clear. Law and order in Cyprus now mean nothing else but British domination and colonial rule arbitrarily imposed and maintained upon a reluctant and subjected population. Actually, material force, that is to say, violence, is the main source of British law and order as well as the main foundation of British government and administration in Cyprus.

Free men and free peoples have always considered that the only possible answer to violence is violence. The movement of active resistance started in Cyprus is like all movements of liberation. It serves no purpose to try to camouflage the truth by calling it by different names.

8. During the Second World War the forces of the Axis imposed their rule upon many peoples in Europe and elsewhere. These peoples actively resisted this rule not because they disliked the Italians or the Germans, but primarily because they were averse to foreign domination in any form.

In fighting the various liberation movements and the underground resistance forces, the Axis Powers contended that their repressive policies aimed at restoring law and order. To this end they abolished all freedoms and human rights, they

enacted regulations under which arrest, imprisonment and deportation without trial were permitted; they isolated areas through censorship and by jamming foreign broadcasts; they used deplorable practices of physical punishment and torture; they contrived measures of collective responsibility, which make the innocent pay for the guilty; they violated the most elementary privacy of families; they evicted people from their homes without any other justification than that they were unco-operative when asked to betray their fighting compatriots; they fined villages and towns as a reprisal for any material damage done by the patriots - the Nazis called them "terrorists" and "criminals"; they set up concentration camps, etc. etc.

All the measures listed above are being applied in Cyprus today by British colonial rule trying to breathe life into obsolete and unworkable imperialistic devices.

The British people who shared sacrifices with all other free peoples of the United Nations fighting for freedom and whose determination in critical times turned the tide of history, should be primarily concerned in this matter. If Governments often fail in their policies, peoples never fail in making history.

9. On the British side there is violence used against freedom. On the Cypriot side there is violence used in favour of freedom. But in neither case is violence to be praised. Greece is against the use of violence. As long as lawful action is left open to the contesting parties, Greece is in favour of such a peaceful approach. And this way of lawful action is the United Nations.

The Greek Government in taking the Cyprus issue to the United Nations in 1954 tried to prevent violence. If it failed in its efforts, it is because the British Government and other political forces, unmindful of the change of times, frustrated proper action by the General Assembly, thus closing all roads leading to peaceful adjustment. Had the General Assembly from the outset carried out its responsibilities according to the letter and the spirit of the Charter, the world would not have to be faced with such a critical situation as the one which has now developed in Cyprus.

It is high time for the United Nations to show wisdom and determination in playing its part properly and in using its political and moral strength to bring about reasonable and constructive solutions.

10. The fact is that war is actually being waged by the British forces against the Greek population in Cyprus which is now undergoing the tragic process of a most inhuman repression. This has had an immediate and understandable repercussion in Greece. Greek-British relations are being put under heavy strain. British violence and injustice in Cyprus are exasperating Greek feelings.

A politically critical situation has been created the impact of which is particularly heavy on the general conditions of peace and security of the world.

11. Furthermore, recent developments in British policies in the Middle East and in Cyprus are bringing new and so far undisclosed aspects of the present issue into the picture.

It should be pointed out that these new aspects are the direct concern and responsibility of the United Nations.

According to an official statement made by the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons, which has been followed by similar declarations from the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the United Kingdom intends to keep the Island of Cyprus under colonial rule because of specific strategic and political considerations, in order to be able to discharge her alleged responsibilities in the Middle East. In particular, Cyprus is to be used for the defence of British oil interests.

This latter revelation, which is likely to come as a shock to the United Nations, is most edifying. It calls for close consideration by the world organization to which it poses new problems of vital character.

(a) The British Government insists on keeping the people of Cyprus in perpetual colonial subjection in spite of the fact that this constitutes a flagrant violation of the relevant provisions of the Charter. Legitimate British defence interests evidently do not suffice to justify such a stand, neither on the political nor on the military level. In this connexion it must be recalled that in the opinion of most qualified military authorities in Britain as well as elsewhere, the value of the Island as a military base is rather limited.

(b) Therefore, the justification of the British insistence for prolonging colonial rule in Cyprus lies in other hardly commendable policies in the Middle East. These policies as defined by high ranking

governmental officials are connected with the display of political influence and prestige in the whole area of the Middle East. This involves the right of carrying out police supervision in the life and political developments of this region in particular for the defence of British oil interests. Cyprus is understood to serve as the springboard for such action.

(c) The problem considered in the light of this new aspect not only concerns the Cypriots but the peoples living in that area as well. It also constitutes a challenge to the United Nations.

12. The Royal Hellenic Government, considering:

(a) That the British Government, in refusing the application of the right of self-determination in the case of the people of Cyprus, is violating Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Charter,

(b) That the suppression of all freedoms and elementary human rights is in disregard not only of the letter and the spirit of the Charter, but also of all legal and moral standards of the civilized world, and foments violence in the Island,

(c) That the arrest, deportation and exile of Archbishop Makarios, Head of one of the most ancient Christian Churches and spiritual as well as political leader of the Cypriot Greeks, with whom the British Government was officially negotiating until the very last moment, constitute a heavy blow and damaging offence to the religious heritage of the world,

(d) That the political implications of forcibly and ruthlessly implemented British colonial rule engender conditions falling under Articles 10 and 14 of the Charter,

(e) That recent developments relating to the constantly deteriorating situation in Cyprus and to conditions of peace and security now prevailing in the Eastern Mediterranean fall under Article 35, paragraph 1, of the Charter,

Decided to request the General Assembly to take up the Cyprus problem in conformity with the relative provisions of the Charter and in order to preserve freedom, peace and security.