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CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 68:	
Question of Cyprus (continued)	
General debate (concluded)	295
Consideration of draft resolutions	299

Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

AGENDA ITEM 68

Question of Cyprus (A/3874 and Add.1, A/C.1/811, A/C.1/814, A/C.1/L.221-223, A/C.1/L.225, A/C.1/L.226/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.228 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.229) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (concluded)

1. Mr. ZORLU (Turkey) pointed out that the large majority of the delegations shared the view that the Cyprus question was a complex international and political problem, straining the relations among the three allied countries and the two communities on the island, and therefore favoured negotiations between the three Powers directly concerned in the question, with the participation of the two Cypriot communities; it would refrain from adopting any substantive resolution which might prejudice the outcome of the negotiations.

2. Some other delegations viewed the question as a colonial issue and were pressing for a resolution which would recognize that fact and draw certain pertinent conclusions. They asserted that Cyprus was an entity destined to become a nation and that the problem should be dealt with between that nation and the United Kingdom. Those delegations took no account of the existence of two separate communities on the island with different national aspirations, but maintained that they constituted one nation or that they could be welded into a nation simply by the adoption of a resolution, that the United Kingdom bore sole responsibility for the situation which had developed between them, and that the United Kingdom's policy had been to bring Turkey in as a party to the dispute in order to maintain British rule in Cyprus.

3. In answer, he quoted a number of authorities to show that the island had never been a separate entity in antiquity. In the course of history it had not been possible to find a single instance when Cyprus had been occupied by one homogeneous people or race, or when the people of Cyprus had appeared as one nation. Three thousand years ago, there had been ten kingdoms in Cyprus. As for modern history, for four hundred years Cyprus, under the Ottoman Empire, had never had a suzerain or been a vassal State, but had always been administered as an integral part of the Turkish homeland. Only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the United Kingdom had taken over the adminis-

tration of Cyprus, had a two-community system emerged.

4. The facts refuted the contention that Cyprus had been united until 1954. As early as 1880, the Turks on the island had petitioned the British High Commissioner to oppose a Greek demand for increased membership on the governing council, on which both communities had hitherto enjoyed equal representation. The struggle for equality had continued until 1925, when the United Kingdom had recognized the right of pre-dominance to the Greeks and had upset the balance in that council. That recognition, having ended the co-operation between the two communities, had ultimately forced the abolition of the council. Moreover, since 1878, societies opposed to *enosis* (union with Greece) had been formed to protect the rights of the Turks in Cyprus. Thus, the present inter-communal strife had its roots far back in history, and the comparison made at the previous meeting by the Indian representative between conditions in Cyprus 3,000 years ago and those which had prevailed three years ago had not been based on facts.

5. Some representatives had asserted that differences of race, language, religion and culture did not preclude the emergence of a single Cypriot nation. He pointed out that the primary requisite for the birth of a nation was a national consciousness based on a common ideal, common aspirations and a single will, freely expressed. That national consciousness did not exist in Cyprus. On the contrary, the two communities in the island were proud to belong respectively to the Greek and the Turkish nations. Important British personalities had acknowledged that there was no Cypriot people: there were only Greeks and Turks; and both the Government and the Opposition, in the debate in the Greek Parliament earlier in 1958, had agreed that the idea of Cyprus as a united nation or as a single people was untenable. The Greeks and the Turks in Cyprus had engaged in a constant political struggle, the former to infringe on the rights of the latter, and the latter to protect those rights. The Turkish community was part of the Turkish nation and did not wish to live under foreign domination or to be transferred to the rule of another foreign group and dominated as a minority. To assert that there should be a Cypriot nation composed of Greeks, with minority rights for the Turkish inhabitants, was tantamount to surrendering the island to Greece. The Turks in Cyprus received equal treatment with the Greeks at present; they could not agree to be reduced to a minority; under those circumstances, it was evident that the British had not had to instigate the efforts of the Turks in Cyprus to preserve their rights.

6. Under Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, the United Kingdom was in duty bound to take due account of the aspirations of the two communities in Cyprus. Undoubtedly the Charter was created not for

territories, but for peoples. Cyprus was a territory within the meaning of the Charter: it was neither a single nation nor an established State. The Turks and the Greeks on the island were the "peoples" of that territory, each with its own aspirations. It would therefore be inadmissible to assume that that territory was a nation and to attempt, without regard for the separate political and social aspirations of the peoples, to administer it in accordance with majority-minority rule. It had been argued that acceptance of that interpretation of Article 73 would be dangerous because it would create perturbations in many independent States with minorities. That argument was invalid because Article 73 applied only to Non-Self-Governing Territories. Furthermore, that Article emphasized that full account should be taken of the "particular circumstances" of each territory. That was what Turkey was asking in the case of Cyprus, for to impose nationhood on peoples merely because they happened to inhabit a given geographical entity was contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter. In accordance with the Charter, the Turks in Cyprus should be viewed, not as a minority, but rather as an entity enjoying equal rights with the Greeks, if the political progress of the island was to be promoted.

7. Turkey had always had a natural interest in Cyprus, a fact which had been dwelt upon, almost unanimously, by the speakers; that interest had not been instigated by the United Kingdom. Cyprus, with which Turkey had shared a common life for four centuries, was an integral part of Asia Minor and a vital factor in Turkey's security.

8. The Greek representative had contended that it was erroneous to attribute extremist ambitions to Greece in the case of Cyprus. The facts were, however, that aggressive claims had been made by Greek statesmen in the past, in particular, by Mr. Dragoumis in 1946, when he had been Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and by the Greek Prime Minister in 1951, when he had demanded the annexation of the island to Greece. While it was admitted that other Greek statesmen had, in their assertions, offset such claims—in particular, Eleutherios Venizelos in 1931 when he had stated that there was no problem of Cyprus for Greece—the course of wisdom was caution, for in a democracy, governments could change frequently. He was gratified by the Greek representative's assurance at the previous meeting that his Government did not endorse extremist claims. However, until recently, Mr. Averoff-Tossizza himself had called for self-determination, which was tantamount to enosis, and now, with the same tone of finality, he was claiming independence for Cyprus. That last phase of the progression, while it appeared as a move towards compromise, was actually disguising the continued Greek demand for enosis.

9. It was contrary to the Charter to speak of the two communities in Cyprus as a majority and a minority. The reports of the United Nations on Non-Self-Governing Territories did not employ those terms in the case of Cyprus, but spoke rather of the two major communities. The remainder of the population, composed of Armenians, Maronites and Israelites, could not be compared with those two major groups. The Turkish community in Cyprus feared that it would be pushed backward into minority status and that its rightful aspirations to partition might not be realized.

10. He was amazed by the idea put forward by a member of the Committee who, while being unwilling to

consider the possibility of limited migration of Turks and Greeks within the island in the case of partition, considered it a simple matter that the Turks who did not wish to submit to a new foreign rule as a minority should be expelled from Cyprus and compensated subsequently.

11. At the 996th meeting, in referring to partition, the United Kingdom representative had pointed to the misery that it would create in Cyprus. But he had added that there had never been any Cypriot nation or any specifically Cypriot national sentiment. He had also noted, in deploring the violence perpetrated by EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters), that Turks were emigrating to safer parts of the island and that if that movement continued, it could lead to de facto partition. The representative of Turkey pointed out that, much greater misery would be created if the Turks in Cyprus were forced to live under Greek rule. He thought that Mr. Averoff-Tossizza's criticism of Mr. Noble's remarks were uncalled for. The United Kingdom representative had been fully justified in warning against the dangers of EOKA violence. It was the United Kingdom's obligation under Articles 73 and 74 to avert any situation which would be prejudicial to the welfare of the inhabitants of Cyprus, to keep Turkey informed of incidents on the island and to maintain relations of good-neighbourliness. The higher interests of Turkey and Greece demanded that they should live on friendly terms and that the tension between them arising from the Cyprus issue should be dissipated.

12. The normal course towards a solution of the Cyprus question was negotiation in good faith, not with a view to obtain any advantage or to impose a preconceived plan. Care should be taken to leave the door open to various possible solutions and not to offend the susceptibilities of the countries and the two communities involved.

13. Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom), replying to the Greek representative's statement at the 1004th meeting, said that it was ridiculous to suggest that the United Kingdom, in warning the General Assembly of the danger of civil war in Cyprus, was threatening the United Nations with war. The United Kingdom was making every effort to restore peace to Cyprus and to avert that danger. The United Kingdom, as the Power in many ways in the best position to judge, believed that there was a real danger that the present inter-communal tension in the island might deteriorate into civil war. No one could then be sure that such conflict could be confined to Cyprus. It was the duty of the United Kingdom, which exercised responsibility for the island, to warn the Assembly and to point out that, if the Assembly acted unwisely, the troubled situation in Cyprus might be greatly exacerbated. He had attempted to explain, on the basis of direct experience, how to prevent such a deterioration of the situation and to create conditions for a peaceful solution.

14. The representative of India, in his intervention at the previous meeting, had attacked the British principle of partnership with regard to Cyprus. The United Kingdom representative had never compared the partnership existing in the Commonwealth with the proposed partnership principle as it would apply to Cyprus. He had merely stated that the principle had proved its worth in the development of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Without a feeling of common endeavour,

the Commonwealth could never have evolved as it did. He had never implied any limitation on the absolute sovereignty of any member of the Commonwealth. The Indian representative had made a sustained and fundamental criticism of the United Kingdom interim policy for Cyprus, a policy devised in the interests of the people of Cyprus and of the other parties concerned in the dispute over the island. He had stated that that policy was entirely wrong. By taking the position in advance that one party was wholly at fault, he had disqualified himself as an impartial and objective mediator in the dispute.

15. The revised Iranian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.226/Rev.1) had all the elements of a true compromise. It avoided the danger of prejudging the future and the conference for which it called could be unanimously agreed upon by the Assembly. Through negotiation, it should be possible to evolve a peaceful, just and democratic solution.

16. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece) thanked those members of the Committee who had looked with sympathy on the cause of the suffering people of Cyprus. Replying to the points raised by the Turkish representative, he said that the periods of political disunity in the history of Cyprus could hardly be adduced to support the Turkish argument. Asia Minor itself had repeatedly, throughout its history, been subjected to political disunity, but that did not mean that it had no integral entity.

17. The weight given in Greece to the ideas of Mr. Dragoumis, who had been referred to by the Turkish representative, could be deduced from the fact that he had almost never won election to Parliament. Mr. Zorlu had also quoted a statement by Mr. Venizelos that there was no Cyprus problem. What Mr. Venizelos had actually said, however, was that there was no Cyprus problem as far as Greece was concerned, because the problem was between the Cypriots and the United Kingdom.

18. The Turkish representative had simply ignored all the other minorities in Cyprus. British statistics—which had been prepared by Greek employees, so far as the Greek population was concerned, and by Turkish employees for the Turkish population—listed 19,500 members of other minorities in addition to the 93,000 Turks in Cyprus. The proportion of Turks to Greeks was exactly the same as that of other minorities to Turks, and the rights of the latter should also be safeguarded.

19. He would not deal at length with the Treaty of Lausanne,^{1/} for the articles relevant to the Cyprus question were clear and precise, as were the advisory opinions of Professors Georges Scelle and Henri Rolin which he had previously cited (998th meeting). The cornerstone of the Turkish case was the argument that the population of Cyprus consisted of two peoples and that international law and the Charter of the United Nations provided for self-determination for each of those peoples. If that argument were applied generally, it would be necessary to grant the right of self-determination to minorities in many other countries of the world, for it was impossible to decide when a minority ceased to be a minority and became a people.

Similarly, the argument that Cyprus was a special case would be countered by specific arguments designed to prove that every minority was a special case. If international law was thus disturbed in its basic concepts, grave consequences were sure to ensue.

20. The Turkish representative had at the 999th meeting cited Professor Podestá Costa in support of his thesis. But Professor Podestá Costa had now authorized the Greek delegation to state that the passage quoted had no bearing on Cyprus and even less on its partition. That great jurist's views on the proper way to settle minority questions in cases of inextricably mixed populations were in any case clear from many passages of the very book Mr. Zorlu had quoted. Professor Podestá Costa had been unable to disregard the fact that the protection of minorities was the only rule international law had been able to devise in cases of that kind.

21. The Turkish representative had also attempted to argue that there were two peoples, not two nationalities, in Cyprus. In answer, he (Mr. Averoff-Tossizza) would quote the words of Professor Maurice Bourquin:

"The Turkish Government appears to confuse the term 'people' with 'nationality' in the sense in which this latter term has been used since the emergence in Europe of the so-called policy of nationalism. . . . But the idea of 'nationality' . . . has never . . . been successfully defined. . . this concept has never been incorporated in international law, which. . . takes the factors to which that concept relates into account only in the case of a system which is sometimes set up for the benefit of minorities. . . . The many minority treaties concluded after the First World War largely fall into this category. . . . Those instances, however, related solely to minorities, not to distinct peoples." (A/C.1/814)

22. The Turkish representative had also attempted to argue the same theory of separate self-determination on the basis of Articles 1 and 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, which spoke of "peoples" in the plural. As Professors Alvarez and Bourquin had stated (A/C.1/814), the use of the plural had been dictated by grammatical considerations alone, and the interpretation placed on it by Turkey was entirely inadmissible. Moreover, that interpretation stemmed from the confusion between the word "people" and the word "nationality" he had just referred to.

23. Some delegations had argued that the United Nations was not the proper place in which to deal with the roots of the Cyprus question. In Greece's opinion, that view was quite incorrect. He had spoken of the Cyprus question as being a political problem only to refute the thesis that it was a domestic problem of the United Kingdom, for whenever a colony refused to remain a colony, that was a political question. Cyprus was a colonial question, and the island's normal development under the Charter was being improperly blocked, not only by the colonial Power, but by the claims of a third Power, Turkey. The situation thus created jeopardized the implementation of the relevant clauses of the Charter and endangered stability in the whole area. If the United Nations were incapable of dealing with such a problem, world public opinion would be justified in wondering what problems it could solve. To claim that all the United Nations could do was recommend negotiations to the parties concerned was

^{1/} Treaty of Peace, signed at Lausanne on 24 July 1923. League of Nations, Treaty Series, vol. XXVIII, 1924, No. 701.

tantamount to subscribing to the thesis of the complete ineffectiveness of the United Nations.

24. Negotiation was, of course, one of the principles and methods stipulated by the Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes. But when, despite efforts at negotiation, the dispute persisted—and in fact grew worse—the General Assembly could not simply limit itself to a call for negotiations without even daring to orient those negotiations in the direction of what the Charter itself regarded as fair and equitable. The role and usefulness of the United Nations became evident, not when negotiations were progressing, but when they failed. Since 1955 all attempts to negotiate on the Cyprus question had failed. In those circumstances, it was not a matter of choice, but an obligation, for the Assembly to lay down a basis on which negotiations should take place. The positions of the parties in the dispute were clear-cut and contradictory. Greece's position, for example, was firm because it was a last effort to achieve a compromise. Negotiations could not reasonably be entered into on the basis of such contradictory positions; it was for the United Nations to devise a framework, albeit a broad one, within which they could proceed. The abdication of that responsibility would sap the foundations of the United Nations and undermine the confidence of the peoples in it.

25. The Greek draft resolution (A/C.1/L.222) was itself a compromise so that the ten-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.228 and Add.1) must be regarded as a compromise text based on another compromise text. While not entirely satisfactory, the ten-Power text did provide a foundation on which the people of Cyprus could build their future in freedom since it was based on the principle that their interests were paramount and affirmed the unity and integrity of the island, while guaranteeing the legitimate rights of minorities. His delegation would therefore support that draft, and the granting of priority to it, in the hope that, if it secured the majority necessary for adoption, it would make a constructive contribution to the solution of the problem. If it failed of adoption, however, his delegation would request a vote on its own draft resolution.

26. He would assure the Committee once again that his delegation wanted nothing for Greece. It asked everything for the Cypriots—all Cypriots. Recognizing that at present the majority and minority would not co-operate, it had accepted the principle of an interim arrangement for a period which would allow tension to abate and the two communities to relearn co-operation. During that transitional period there would be a system of progressive self-government, under full British sovereignty, the duration and exact nature of which would be negotiated with due regard for the need to restore that co-operation between the two communities. There could be nothing to fear in such an arrangement, in which the United Kingdom and the United Nations would participate as long as necessary. Those who, in the face of that solution, refused even to guarantee the integrity of the island were moving against the course of world opinion. Even within the British Conservative Party a strong movement against partition and for the independence of Cyprus was developing, while the Labour Party had denounced the Government plan as unwise and dangerous and the Cyprus Conciliation Committee, representing leading British personalities, had reaffirmed as recently as

25 November 1958 its support for a solution leading to independence and safeguards for minority rights under United Nations guarantee.

27. His Government would never take it upon itself to ignore principles for reasons of convenience. It would not enter into negotiations which were doomed to failure. In a spirit of conciliation, it had offered a compromise solution which fully satisfied the legitimate interests of all. But since it had been unable to make that spirit of conciliation prevail by negotiation, it was the responsibility of the United Nations to lay down the basis without which no negotiations could be fruitful. The people of Cyprus were convinced that it would fulfil that responsibility.

28. Mr. Krishna MENON (India), replying to the Turkish representative's observations at the previous meeting, denied that he had stated at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly that, once Cyprus had gained its independence, it would be free to join another country if it so desired. He had actually said that "it is for the Cypriots to decide—after the establishment of their independence and when there is no outside restraint—whether they should be allied to" Greece or Turkey, or should "establish cordial relations with the United Kingdom" (774th plenary meeting, para. 62). Those remarks had not related to the possibility of Cyprus' annexation by Greece or Turkey.

29. With regard to the Turkish representative's observations that there had been ten kingdoms on Cyprus 3,000 years ago, he noted that the question of dividing the island had not arisen again until the present time. It was scarcely proper to approach the problem of the island's future on the basis of the recent agitation for partition.

30. Turning to the observations made by the United Kingdom representative, he said that his intention had been to point out that the word "partnership" could apply only to a relationship entered into by independent countries of their own free will. With regard to the question of whether there was such a thing as a Cypriot nation, he cited the statement in the United Kingdom's 1946 census report for Cyprus to the effect that politically, socially and economically "Cyprus is beyond question a single unit".

31. He pointed out that his statement at the previous meeting had contained many complimentary references to United Kingdom policy. However, it would not be in conformity with the Charter's provisions concerning non-self-governing peoples for the United Kingdom to share its sovereignty in Cyprus with Greece and Turkey rather than with the people of that island. His views on the United Kingdom's Cyprus policy were shared by a number of former members of the United Kingdom Government; Mr. Aneurin Bevan, for example, had recently described the "partnership" plan in the House of Commons as one bound to be rejected at the outset by the overwhelming majority of the people on the island.

32. It was imperative that the General Assembly should take a stand on behalf of a peaceful solution of the problem and of the Cypriot people's legitimate aspirations to self-government.

33. Mr. ZORLU (Turkey) quoted a passage from the verbatim record of the General Assembly's 774th plenary meeting, held on 7 October 1958, and said that

the Indian representative's statement at that meeting and the ten-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.228 and Add.1), of which India was a sponsor, clearly indicated that the Indian representative favoured independence and eventual enosis for Cyprus. The Indian representative had also failed to mention the portion of the 1946 census report on Cyprus which stated that the Greek and Turkish communities on the island were independent of each other rather than complementary and that each retained its autonomy in the fields of education, religion, and even finance and commerce.

34. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) categorically denied that his Government favoured enosis for Cyprus; while it supported Cypriot independence, it did not envisage the latter as a transitional stage leading to enosis. His previously quoted statement that an independent Cyprus might ally itself with other countries in no sense implied that Cyprus would thereby be sacrificing any of its independence.

35. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece) said that any alliance which an independent Cyprus might contract would be entirely its own affair. However, he felt that, in view of the United Kingdom's economic and other interests on Cyprus, an independent Cyprus would have close ties with the United Kingdom as well as with Greece and Turkey.

Consideration of draft resolutions

36. Mr. de la COLINA (Mexico) said that the salient facts in the Cyprus question were the following: the existence of two distinct communities which were linked to Greece and Turkey by linguistic, cultural and ethnic ties; the sovereignty exercised over Cyprus by the United Kingdom, whose past record with regard to other Non-Self-Governing Territories belied the fears expressed concerning its intentions with respect to Cyprus; the strategic importance of the island; and the Cypriot people's desire for freedom, which had unfortunately not caused them to submerge their narrower loyalties in a feeling of common nationality. Accordingly, the General Assembly should avoid taking a decision which might be rejected by one of the three parties directly concerned and subsequently disregarded.

37. His delegation considered the revised Iranian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.226/Rev.1) to be the most viable of those submitted. In particular, the phrase "to meet the legitimate aspirations of the inhabitants of Cyprus" in the third paragraph of the preamble represented a step forward from the original draft

resolution (A/C.1/L.226). However, his delegation, as well as the Austrian, Swedish and other delegations which he had consulted, felt that it might be advisable to substitute the word "Cypriots" for "inhabitants of Cyprus", to make a clear-cut reference to Cypriot self-government as a future objective, and to transfer those ideas to the operative part of the resolution.

38. At the same time, since the Colombian (A/C.1/L.225) and ten-Power draft resolutions (A/C.1/L.228 and Add.1) also contained many valuable elements, he agreed with the Peruvian representative's suggestion at the 1005th meeting that the three proposals might be combined into a single compromise draft resolution; the draft resolutions submitted by the three countries directly concerned probably could not be incorporated in such a compromise draft because they reflected their sponsors' special interests in the question.

39. He proposed the creation of working group, composed of the sponsors of the Iranian, Colombian and ten-Power draft resolutions, which could attempt to combine those three documents in consultation with the Greek, Turkish and United Kingdom representatives.

40. Mr. SYLVAIN (Haiti) said that, in the present tense atmosphere, the Committee should treat the Cyprus question with caution lest it should infringe upon the real or imagined interests of any of the parties concerned and thereby delay a solution.

41. He wished to point out, in reply to the observations of the United Kingdom representative, however, that the ten-Power draft resolution, of which his delegation was a sponsor, made no attempt to specify the objectives of any future negotiations on the Cyprus question.

42. His delegation endorsed the Mexican proposal that a compromise draft resolution acceptable to all parties concerned should be worked out; in view of the complexity of the problem under consideration, however, such a compromise resolution should call for the gradual application to Cyprus of the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter.

43. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece) expressed the opinion, in which Mr. de la COLINA (Mexico) concurred, that it would be premature to set up the proposed working group until the members of the Committee had had an opportunity to express their views on the various draft resolutions.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.