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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 25 September 1954 from the Permanent Representative
of Greece addressed to the Secretary-General

New York, 25 September 1954

Following yesterday's decision of the General Assembly to include in
the agenda of its current session the item 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",

I have the honour to request you to kindly arrange for the circulation, as a
document of the General Assembly, of the letter addressed to Your Excellency
on 22 August 1954 by His Beatitude the Archbishop Ethnarch of Cyprus Makarios III
(through the Cyprus Federation of America) and of the attached Memorandum
pertaining to the aforementioned item.

(Signed) Christian X. PALAMAS

Permanent Representative of Greece
to the United Nations

54-26155

10 P.

THE ETHNARCHY OF CYPRUS,
ARCHBISHOPRIC
NICOSIA, CYPRUS
22 August 1954

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Building
New York, N.Y.
U.S.A.

Sir,

The question of Cyprus has been brought up for discussion by the Royal Hellenic Government at the Ninth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The decision of the United Nations will vitally affect the life and future of the Greek people of Cyprus, whose views should be heard and taken account of in the debate.

On behalf of this people and as their elected National Leader we wish to lay before you the following:

1. The island of Cyprus is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the administration of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a State Member of the United Nations.
2. The Greek Cypriots, constituting 80.2 per cent of the total 511,000 inhabitants of the island, have repeatedly put forward to successive British Governments, their claim to self-determination. An open unimpeachable Plebiscite was held on the 15th January, 1950 the result of which was that 95.7 per cent of the Greek inhabitants or 80 per cent of the whole population of Cyprus by their vote expressed their determination to be incorporated into the Greek State by the organic union of this island with its Mother-Country Greece. The result of this Plebiscite was duly communicated to the British Government, and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to whom also the records containing the signatures of all the persons who voted in that Plebiscite were delivered on the 26th September 1950 by a Cypriot Delegation and are still kept at the Secretariat of the United Nations.

3. The British Government persistently refuses to respect the right of the Cypriot people to self-determination.
4. Whereas by articles I (2) and 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, to which Great Britain is a signatory, the respect of the right to self-determination of peoples is recognized as a basic principle and purpose of the United Nations;
5. And whereas the General Assembly by its Resolution of the 16th December 1952 (Ag.It.30.A/Res/40) recommends that the State Members of the United Nations "shall uphold the principle of self-determination of all peoples and nations" and "shall recognize and promote the realization of the right of self-determination of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing territories ... who are under their administration and shall facilitate the exercise of this right ... according to the principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations ... and to the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, the wishes of the people being ascertained through plebiscites or other recognized democratic means, preferably under the auspices of the United Nations;
6. And whereas by our letter of the 24th April 1953 on behalf of the Cypriot people we invited the Governor of Cyprus, as the Representative in the island of the British Government, to promote the realization of the right of the people of Cyprus to self-determination by giving effect to the verdict of the Plebiscite of the 15th January 1950, or to facilitate the exercise of this right by allowing them a free expression of their wishes by means of another Plebiscite to be held as soon as possible, in compliance with the aforesaid Resolution of the United Nations;
7. And whereas by his letter dated the 11th May 1953, the Governor of Cyprus replied "that Her Majesty's Government do not contemplate any change in the sovereignty of Cyprus" and consider the question as closed;
8. And whereas the British Government further violated and showed its disregard of the principles, purposes and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and of the recommendations contained in the aforesaid Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations of the 16th December 1952 by declaring in the House of Commons on the 28th July 1954 that Cyprus can never expect to be fully independent;

9. And whereas the status of colonial servitude to which Cyprus is subjected has recently been aggravated by the revival of an illiberal and undemocratic legislation, which suppresses freedom of speech and freedom of the press making mere discussion of the Cyprus question a crime of "sedition" and aiming at stifling the voice of the Cypriot people;

10. And whereas the above constitutes a further violation and disregard of the ideals of the United Nations, as embodied in the preamble of the Charter and in articles 1, 19, 20 of the Declaration of Human Rights;

11. We therefore fully support the demand of the Royal Hellenic Government that 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",

be included in the agenda of the Ninth General Assembly of the United Nations and request that the present, as well as the attached Explanatory Memorandum, be circulated among the Delegations.

With Our Blessings and Best Wishes

(Signed) ARCHBISHOP AND ETHNARCH OF CYPRUS
MAKARIOS III

THE ETHNARCHY OF CYPRUS,
ARCHBISHOPRIC,
NICOSIA, CYRUS

22 August 1954

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Accompanying 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".

In compliance with Rule 20 of the Rules
of Procedure of the General Assembly.

1. Present Status of Cyprus

Cyprus is an island in the Eastern Mediterranean with a present total population of about 511,000 of whom 80.2 per cent are Greeks, 17.9 per cent are Turks and 1.9 per cent other small minorities. It is a non-self-governing territory under the administration of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Cyprus and Human Rights: The way Cyprus is administered is in itself a flagrant violation of the declaration of Human Rights, under which Member States of the United Nations undertook to promote respect of those rights among the peoples and territories of their jurisdiction.

It contravenes Article 1 of the Declaration which provides that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

It contravenes Article 19 whereby everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression without interference.

It contravenes Article 20 whereby everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful Assembly and Association.

It contravenes Article 21 which provides that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of Government.

It also contravenes Article 26 (2) which provides that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and

article 26 (3) which provides that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

All these violations of fundamental freedoms follow in the furrow of the major violation of Human Rights, namely the denial to the people of Cyprus of their right to self-determination. They are herein stated only in order to show some of the evils that denial of national liberty entails; for it should be made clear that our claim is that of self-determination and nothing less.

2. Greek Civilization of Cyprus and National Consciousness of its people

Historical Background: In ancient times Cyprus had its own independent Greek city states, on the same pattern as those in the mainland of Greece. When under Alexander the Great the whole Hellenic World was for the first time united into one national state, Cyprus was one of the first to join it. In later years Cyprus formed part of the Byzantine Empire and for a hundred years enjoyed national liberty as a province of that Greek Empire. When the Byzantine Empire and the rest of the Greek lands fell under the Turks, Cyprus followed and shared their fate in 1570.

Throughout the period of Turkish domination Greeks in Cyprus as well as in the rest of Greek lands looked to the day of liberation and to their union in a new Greek state. When in 1828, after a seven years heroic struggle for liberty in which many Greeks from Cyprus took part, a portion of the mainland of Greece was liberated and was established as an independent State, the Cypriots aspired to be united with their free mother-country.

The Convention of 1878: Cyprus would eventually have been so united to Greece during the Balkan Wars of 1912 or the first World War 1914, were it not that in the meantime it had passed from Turkish into British hands as a result of the Convention of 1878. Although in that transfer the wishes of the islanders were not considered, yet the Cypriot Greeks welcomed the change; they looked upon it as a decided step towards the realization of their national aspiration for union with Greece; and in this spirit the then Archbishop of Cyprus welcomed the first British High Commissioner of the island.

The National Claim of Cyprus and British Statesmen: Since that time and until the Cypriots have through their representatives by memoranda, resolutions and delegations repeatedly expressed to successive British Governments, their claim for self-determination and their steadfast desire for union with Greece.

When in 1907 Mr. Winston Churchill visited Cyprus as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and was met everywhere with the demand for union with Greece, his reply was:

"I think it is only natural that the Cypriot people who are of Greek descent should regard their incorporation with what may be called their mother-country as an ideal to be earnestly, devoutly and fervently cherished. Such a feeling is an example of the patriotic devotion which so nobly characterises the Greek nation". (From his address to the Legislative Council in October 1907). But the obligations towards Turkey under the said Convention of 1878, he added, prevented the satisfaction of that claim for union. In 1914, however, those treaty obligations came to an end as a result of the declaration of war between Great Britain and Turkey.

Offer of Cyprus to Greece: In 1915, Cyprus was offered by Great Britain to Greece on condition of immediate entry of the latter in the war against Germany. Greece being unable at the time to comply with the condition, the offer lapsed and was not repeated although Greece later in that war fought on the side of Great Britain. This offer is, however, in itself another official British recognition of the legitimacy of the claim of Cyprus for union with Greece.

Attitude of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Macdonald: At the end of that war in 1919 a Delegation from Cyprus claimed from the British Government union with Greece. The Prime Minister Mr. Lloyd George in a letter to the Delegation dated 14th November 1919, promised that "the wishes of the inhabitants of Cyprus for union with Greece will be taken into a most careful and sympathetic consideration".

In the same year Mr. Ramsay Macdonald stated at the International Labour Conference at Berne that "the principle of Self-determination will be applied as far as the British Labour Party is concerned to the people of Cyprus". (Official Bulletin International Labour and Socialist Conference, Berne, February 21 1919). In 1929 a negative reply was again given to the claim for union although the Prime Minister then was Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who had made the above statement at Berne.

National Rising of 1931: The general discontent of the people due to the denial of all rights to freedom, reached its apex in 1931 when all the Greek members of the Legislative Council resigned in protest. Their resignation was followed by a rising of the people demanding union with Greece. The rising was quelled by British military intervention while ecclesiastical and political leaders of the people were deported or confined, hundreds of Cypriots were imprisoned and some were killed. What scanty constitutional rights existed were immediately abolished and the Legislative Council was dissolved. Since then Cyprus has been and to this day still is administered in an autocratic mode, all legislative and executive authority being vested in the Governor.

Second World War and Cyprus: Upon the outbreak of the second World War, when Greece joined the Allied front the Cypriots voluntarily enrolled in great numbers with the British army and fought for "the cause of liberty". Placards had been placed over the British recruiting centres inviting the Cypriots to fight for Greece and liberty. The call was effective as it carried a recognition of the legitimacy of Greek patriotism of the Cypriots and conveyed a promise of national liberty. At the successful conclusion of the war, the people of Cyprus asked that the blessings of national liberty should not be withheld from them. A Cypriot Delegation visited London in 1946 and officially put forward the claim for self-determination. At that very time the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, made in the House of Commons the following declaration:

"We invite but we do not compel people to stay within the British Empire". And he added "I believe this the right attitude. It was the attitude adopted towards India by the previous Government and I see no reason why the Burmese should be treated worse than Indians in this respect". (See Hansard Vol. 431 Col. 2355).

The reply to the Cypriot claim was, however, an unqualified refusal and no reason was given why the people of Cyprus should be treated worse than the Indians or the Burmese or the Sudanese.

The Plebiscite of 1950: In December 1950 the Ethnarchy of Cyprus formally requested the Government to hold a plebiscite. The reply being a refusal, the Ethnarchy took upon itself the task of holding an open Plebiscite. The result

was that 80 per cent of the whole population of Cyprus, or 95.7 per cent of the Greek population, voted for union with Greece. The 4.3 per cent abstention was due to the non participation of persons holding Government appointments or under their influence. The records containing the signatures of the persons who voted at the Plebiscite were delivered to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the 26th September 1950 by a Cypriot Delegation.

Call on the Administering State to comply with United Nations Resolution:

On the 27th April 1953, the Archbishop and Ethnarch of Cyprus, as the National Leader and Representative of the Greek people of the Island, by letter of that date, requested the Administering State to promote the realization of the right of the people of Cyprus to self-determination, in compliance with the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations of the 16th December 1952.

3. Recent Developments

In July 1954, it was repeatedly stated by members of the British Government in the House of Commons that there is no question of independence or self-determination for Cyprus. At the same time, it was announced that a "Constitution" would be applied to the Island, although the Greek people of Cyprus have repeatedly made it clear that they are not asking for a Constitution, but for self-determination which will give them national freedom. It is worth noting, however, that this Constitution, which is intended to impress world opinion with British liberalism and to deflect attention from the present regime of barbaric autocracy:

- (a) Will not guarantee the basic freedoms of the individual;
- (b) Will provide for a "Legislative Council", the majority of which will consist of members appointed by the Government;
- (c) Will not provide for any advance of Cyprus towards self-determination, even in the remote future.

At the same time as this deplorable constitutional comedy was being prepared the true face of British colonialism appeared in the announcement, made on the 2nd August by the British Authorities in Cyprus, according to which any person who expresses "seditious intentions" is liable to five years' imprisonment.

It was further explained that the expression of a wish to bring about a change of sovereignty over the Island (this includes self-determination!) is "seditious".

Since that day, the Cyprus question may be freely discussed all over the world but not in Cyprus.

4. Our demand

In view of the refusal of the British Government to apply the principle of equal rights and self-determination, as this has been set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Declaration of Human Rights, we request the General Assembly to ensure the application of the above principle, under the auspices of the United Nations, to the people of Cyprus.

The people of Cyprus hope that the United Nations, which represents humanity's greatest effort towards an era of freedom, peace and justice will remain true to the spirit that created it and will prove a fair and equitable judge of their case.

(Signed) ARCHBISHOP AND ETHNARCH OF CYPRUS
MAKARIOS III
