

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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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/L.221-223) (continued)**

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ZORLU (Turkey) pointed out that Cyprus was an island forty miles off the mainland of Turkey which had been a part of Turkey for almost four hundred years, contained a large Turkish community and was very important to Turkey's security. It had always been ruled by Powers established in Asia Minor and had never in its history belonged to Greece; the influx of Greeks, which had resulted in the present Greek majority, had begun some three and a half centuries ago under the tolerant rule of the Turkish Empire.

2. Cyprus had been under Turkish sovereignty and had had a Turkish majority until 1878, when it had been placed under British administration, even though Turkey had retained sovereignty; after that, the Turkish population on the island had begun to decline in numbers. Yet, in the past as in the present, there were two distinct and separate communities on the island, developing in divergent social and cultural directions. Cyprus had been annexed by the United Kingdom during the First World War, and the annexation had been recognized by the Treaty of Lausanne,^{1/} of which both Greece and Turkey had been signatories. Article 21 of the Treaty had granted the island's inhabitants the right to opt for Turkish nationality if they wished.

3. Greeks and Turks had lived together for many centuries, so that they had between them as many memories which tended to generate friendship and brotherly feeling as recollections which tended to create mutual lack of confidence and animosity. It was the duty of Greek and Turkish statesmen to help promote amity rather than antagonism between their two countries. Greece had pursued frequently expansionist and sometimes aggressive policies towards Turkey and others of its neighbours. After the First World War, Greek armies had marched to the gates of Ankara, inflicting great destruction in the process. When Greece had driven her armies on a thousand-mile campaign on Turkish soil and forced a disarmed Turkey into a struggle for survival, it had destroyed in

Turkey twenty-two major cities, 1,400 villages, 98,000 dwellings and, apart from tens of thousands of Turks who had lost their lives, had left one million Turks homeless and destitute.

4. Nevertheless, the founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Ataturk, had sought to live with the Greeks in peace and tranquillity. Thus the Treaty of Lausanne, which had established a state of equilibrium between Greece and Turkey, had been signed. Turkey had ceded to Greece the province of Western Thrace, in which the Turkish population greatly outnumbered the Greek. The Greek Prime Minister at that time, Eleutherios Venizelos, had based his country's claim to the territory on the contention that national security was as important a factor as the local population's right of self-determination. In that connexion, it was significant that the Treaty of Lausanne had not assigned Cyprus to Greece in spite of the fact that the majority of the island's population was ethnically Greek. Greece's claim to Cyprus clearly reflected nothing more than a desire for territorial expansion. Whereas Turkey had always observed the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne, Greece had disregarded it in such actions as its occupation of the Dodecanese Islands after the Second World War. Greece's claim to Cyprus represented the last phase in a campaign to control Turkey's lanes of communications in the Mediterranean.

5. British sovereignty over Cyprus could be terminated only by revision of the Lausanne Treaty, by a decision of the United Kingdom, or under the terms of Articles 73 and 74 of the United Nations Charter, which enjoined Powers administering Non-Self-Governing Territories to promote the latter's self-government. Yet in the background of those juridical aspects was a new phase of the question of achieving an equilibrium and a settlement between Turkey and Greece—a question which had been going on for a century and which was the real core of the problem.

6. Turkey had hoped that the Cyprus question would not give rise to a dispute; now that it had, Turkey ardently desired a peaceful solution and did not wish to gain prestige or to annex any territory. Greece had provoked a dispute over Cyprus despite repeated warnings by Turkey that such action would aggravate relations between the two countries. The Greek Government had first officially demanded the union of Cyprus with Greece in 1951. Until 1954, partly out of deference to Turkey, it had not pressed the issue very vigorously. In 1954, at the ninth session of the General Assembly, Greece had come before the United Nations with a demand for the annexation of the island, although the demand had been formulated under the guise of the application of the principle of self-determination. The General Assembly had refrained from discussing the substance of the question during the next two years.

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

7. In 1955, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom had held an unproductive conference on the Cyprus problem in London.^{2/} At the conference, the United Kingdom had spoken in terms of promoting the island's political development under the provisions of Articles 73 and 74 of the United Nations Charter. Turkey had contended that, if the status of Cyprus was to be altered, it should, in view of such recognized principles of international law as the security of the homeland, geographical proximity (namely, the contiguity of the island to Asia Minor) and the existence of historical ties, revert to Turkish sovereignty, while Greece, on the basis of the exclusive application of the principle of self-determination to the Greek community, had demanded annexation of the island to Greece.

8. Since 1955, certain changes had occurred in the Turkish and British positions. Turkey had agreed to the idea of partition as a compromise solution for the question of Cyprus, while the United Kingdom had proposed a system of partnership rule for the island and self-determination for the two Cypriot communities on the basis of equal rights. General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI) of 26 February 1957, which had yet to be implemented, had urged the resumption of negotiations on the matter. Later in that year, Greece's demand that the principle of self-determination should be applied to Cyprus on its own terms had been rejected by the Assembly. Turkey had consistently favoured a negotiated settlement, which the United Nations Charter required in all international disputes, but the Greek Government had shown so far no desire to enter into conversations to that end.

9. In the summer of 1958, in order to end the violence which was ravaging the island and aggravating to an intolerable degree the tension between the two communities, the United Kingdom had announced a plan^{3/} for placing Cyprus under a system of partnership rule for seven years; at the end of that interim period, union with Greece, partition or any other type of solution might be considered. Even though the plan had not met with the approval of Turkish public opinion on the Turkish mainland or on Cyprus and had subsequently been modified to conform more closely with the wishes of the Greek Government, Turkey had decided to co-operate in its implementation in order to end the present bloodshed and relieve the strained international situation. At the same time, the Greek Government, by intimating that implementation of the British plan might cause it to change its attitude towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had compelled the NATO Council to take up the question of Cyprus. Even though it had not felt that Cyprus came within NATO's jurisdiction, Turkey, desirous of exploring every possible avenue of agreement, had taken part in the discussion. Yet, the Council meeting had come to nought because Greece, after first appearing to favour a special conference on the Cyprus question, had at the last minute rejected the idea.

10. The true objective of Greece had always been the annexation of Cyprus. In fact, when it had first raised the matter officially in 1951, Greece had demanded the annexation of Cyprus; in 1954, it had come before the

United Nations with a demand for annexation under the guise of self-determination; in 1957, it had again urged self-determination for the island's inhabitants. Its present proposal that Cyprus should be given independence (A/C.1/L.222) was nothing but a tactical move which masked a desire to annex the island to Greece; official Greek statements made as recently as 22 October 1958 showed that Greece regarded independence as only a transitional phase which would ultimately lead to annexation. Moreover, Greece's demand for the independence of Cyprus was based entirely on the authority of Archbishop Makarios, the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church on Cyprus. Makarios certainly could not speak for the Turkish Cypriot community, which was Moslem, and his authority to represent the Greek community was questionable in view of the fact that it rested solely on a decree issued by the Sultan of Turkey in the sixteenth century which had conferred such authority upon the Archbishop's predecessors. Moreover, the Greek terrorist organization on Cyprus had found it necessary to murder more dissenting Greek Cypriots than it had Turks or British soldiers.

11. The right to independence could be granted only to nations in accordance with their expressed will, not to geographical entities. In the particular circumstances of Cyprus, independence should be granted, if at all, in accordance with the national will of the island's two separate communities. A Cypriot nation or a concept of "Cypriot nationalism" did not exist, for the two national communities on the island identified themselves with the independent nations of Turkey and Greece, possessed no common aspirations, lived separately, and were linguistically, religiously and socially distinct. In fact, leading Greek statesmen both from the governmental and opposition parties had ridiculed the concept of a Cypriot nation. The Turkish community on Cyprus desired union with Turkey and was determined not to accept the rule of either the Greek Government or the Greek Cypriot community, while the leaders of the Greek community openly advocated the annexation of the island to Greece. Thus, there was no single Cypriot nation whose independence could be recognized.

12. The ideal of self-determination should not be abused by unilateral claims or resort to violence and invoked as a means of achieving other ambitions. If independence was to be considered in the case of Cyprus, it should be on the basis of the various stages envisaged in Articles 1, 73 and 74 of the Charter of the United Nations. In reality, the Greek Government's proposal was nothing but a tactical rewording of its claim for *enosis* (union of Cyprus with Greece) and the Cyprus question was in essence a new phase of the struggle for a Turkish-Greek settlement. Moreover, the question involved, on the one hand, a modification of the Treaty of Lausanne and, on the other, the mode of application of the principle of self-determination in the context of Articles 1, 73 and 74 of the Charter in the particular circumstances of Cyprus. Turkey would not approve of, and did not practise, a policy whereby a unilateral revision of treaties was demanded on the basis of moral pressure and resort to force. Turkey fully respected the provisions of articles 20 and 21 of the Treaty of Lausanne. However, it could not remain indifferent to the revisionist actions of the Greek Government which, particularly through terrorism, caused suffering and anxiety for the Turkish com-

^{2/} Tripartite Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus, held at London from 29 August to 7 September 1955.

^{3/} Cyprus: Statement of Policy (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, June 1958), Cmnd.455.

munity on Cyprus, especially since Turkey considered that United Kingdom policy as regards those actions of the Greek Government had been developing in the spirit of Articles 1, 73 and 74 of the Charter and in a direction which might even lead to a revision of the Treaty provisions. Article 21 of the Treaty of Lausanne, by establishing the principle of a right of option only between Turkish and British citizenship for the population of Cyprus, had recognized Turkey's stake in the future of the island and Turkey had accepted a status for Cyprus under which its inhabitants could be only of British citizenship.

13. He then reviewed the scope and purposes of articles 16 and 27 of the Treaty of Lausanne, which had been invoked by the Greek Government as relevant to the Cyprus question. Turkey maintained the position that article 16 had been inserted to cover those territories detached from the Ottoman Empire which had not been specifically dealt with in other articles and, since the status of Cyprus had been specified in articles 20 and 21, was irrelevant to the whole question of Cyprus. Indeed, Turkey had rejected the original draft of article 16 on the grounds that it could not commit itself to accept provisions which would be established in future, regarding those territories, and because it refused to recognize the Mandates System established over the Arab countries. Article 27 of the Treaty of Lausanne was also irrelevant to the Cyprus question since its sole purpose had been to separate the temporal from the spiritual attributes of the Turkish Caliphate—since abolished in Turkey—and to normalize the relationship between the Caliphate and Moslems of other nationalities living in countries outside Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey did not concur in the view of the Greek Government that Article 103 of the United Nations Charter had superseded the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne concerning Cyprus: the Article had not been intended to supersede territorial clauses and the delineation of frontiers provided for by mutual consent in treaties signed by independent States. However, even if the Greek contention was accepted, Article 103 would have superseded the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne not only for Greece and the Greek Cypriots, but for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.

14. Turning to the methods used by the Greek Government in representing the Cyprus question as an international issue, he pointed out that Greece's diplomatic approaches had invariably been preceded by public demonstrations and terrorist actions on the island. The terrorist organization EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) was commanded by Colonel Grivas of the Greek Army, who had been detached from that Army by the Greek Government in 1954 and sent secretly to Cyprus to organize terrorism. Greek ships had carried Greek-manufactured arms and ammunition to Cyprus to supply EOKA. The aims of EOKA were, first, to intimidate those Greek-speaking Cypriots who were opposed to enosis; secondly, to kill British inhabitants of the island, including women and children, with a view to arousing British public opinion to bring pressure on the United Kingdom Government to relinquish its responsibilities in Cyprus; and thirdly, to threaten and intimidate the Turkish community of Cyprus into submission. It was significant, in that connexion, that the Greek terrorists had thus far killed a larger number of Greek Cypriots than Turks or Britons, that the official government radio of Athens

was being used to abet EOKA's activities, and that among the Turks killed by the terrorists, there were large numbers of old people and women.

15. The terrorists, estimated to be about 400 in number, had followed a pattern of increasing their activities before every session of the United Nations General Assembly. They had done so prior to the eleventh session and again during the summer preceding the current session, when they had forced the Turkish Cypriots to retaliate in self-defence. There was ample evidence to show that they were being openly supported by the Greek Government. As recently as 9 September 1958, Athens Radio had broadcast the threat that all Turkish Cypriots were to be ousted from Cyprus. A Government engaged in the support and instigation of terrorism was hardly in a position to come before the United Nations and demand the application of the principles of the Charter. Moreover, the Greek religious leader who was asserting claims of independence for Cyprus should repudiate the actions of the terrorists instead of hailing them as a fight for freedom. An end to terrorism was the first prerequisite for the solution of the Cyprus question. It was essential to create a favourable atmosphere between the parties before any settlement could be worked out. Turkey had attempted to contribute to such an atmosphere by avoiding all statements that might have a disturbing effect. Unfortunately, the Foreign Minister of Greece had pursued a contrary policy and had on 13 October gone so far as to describe relations between Greece and Turkey as so bad that they could hardly be worse, barring war. He had made further inflammatory statements which had coincided with intensified EOKA activities, continued intimidation by Athens Radio and a campaign conducted by the Greek Press in favour of annexation.

16. The purpose of the activities of EOKA and of the pressure brought by the Greek Government on Turkish and international public opinion was obviously to bring about the annexation of Cyprus in the same way as Greece had acquired Crete, Western Thrace and the Dodecanese Islands, all of which had been inhabited by substantial Turkish communities, even in some cases by Turkish majorities. Over half a million Turks from those various territories had emigrated to Turkey: during the past twenty-five years, the number of Turks who had had to emigrate to Turkey from Western Thrace alone had amounted to 60,000; and the number of Turkish inhabitants living in the Dodecanese Islands had been reduced by half. Those emigrants had been leaving their homes owing to the constant pressure exerted on them by the Greek Government. In the circumstances, it was difficult to conceive that the Turks of Cyprus would be resigned to living under Greek rule. Surely, if the 120,000 Turks on the island were placed under Greek domination, the dispute between the two countries would be further aggravated. Surely it would be prejudicial to the security of Turkey to yield to a country whose statesmen so lightly spoke of war, an island which controlled Turkey's last lanes of communication with the free world in the Mediterranean. The present behaviour of Greece certainly did not reflect its respect for the principle of good-neighbourly relations established in the Charter.

17. Moreover, it was clear from the Charter that the principle of self-determination could be applied only with due regard to the particular circumstances of

each territory and its peoples, the paramount interests of the inhabitants, and their political aspirations. In Cyprus, not only were the national aspirations of the two communities different, but the communities were economically distinct and self-contained. In those circumstances, it would be a grave mistake to consider the two communities as one people and to presume that they could live together under some majority-minority arrangement. It was only the presence of the British security forces and the fact that the two communities were administered by a third authority that had to some extent reduced the dimensions of the tragedy in Cyprus.

18. Before the Charter of the United Nations had come into effect, self-determination had been applied in a number of cases, especially after the First World War, with due regard to such considerations as economic and security requirements and the exigencies of good relations between States, for example, in the case of the Aaland Islands, in which Finland's security requirements had been the decisive factor, and the Schleswig, Marienwerder and Allenstein plebiscites in 1920. Other historical examples, such as the Free City of Danzig and the more recent attempt to establish a Free Territory of Trieste, neither of which having been viable as a separate entity and both having had mixed populations affiliated with near-by independent States, proved the unworkability of attempts to solve such problems by the establishment of guaranteed independent States. Such experiments had not only proved unworkable, but had very often been a source of danger for the world.

19. The Greek delegation had often attempted to argue on the basis of the rights of a majority over a minority. It was true that there were more Greek Cypriots than Turkish Cypriots. But in the case of Cyprus the use of the words "majority" and "minority" in a juridical or political context could not be justified under international law. In all existing legal definitions or attempts at definition, those terms had been used to imply juridical consequences only in the case of constituted States or nations forming political entities. Since Greece had objected to the present status of the island, its future was now being discussed, but no decision had been reached as yet. No one had a right to prejudge the issue and speak as if his own views were already a reality, for international law and precedent had established a variety of solutions in similar cases and in each successful settlement the special circumstances of the case had determined the appropriate solution.

20. In the case of Cyprus, many theoretical possibilities were open: the entire territory could be annexed to Greece, or declared an independent State in view of such annexation, or annexed to Turkey or retained under United Kingdom sovereignty. There had also been similar cases in which a final solution had completely eliminated majorities and minorities by uniting them with their respective motherlands.

21. At the twelfth session of the General Assembly the Greek representative had maintained that Article 73 of the Charter was not relevant to the case of Cyprus, adducing, in support of his contention, the fact that the question was being discussed in the First and not the Fourth Committee (929th meeting). The Turkish delegation could not agree that discussion of a question in one Committee excluded the applicability of any provision of the Charter. In the consideration

of any specific problem the Charter should be taken as a whole, and as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, Cyprus fell within the scope of both Articles 1 and 73. His delegation did, however, agree that the problem was primarily a political one. Cyprus could not be regarded as a colony in the process of achieving independence, and the heart of the problem did not lie in its relations to the United Kingdom, but in the permanent physical ties between Cyprus and Turkey and Greece.

22. There could be no question of subjecting the Turkish community on the island to a treatment less favourable than that granted the Greek community. If the principle of self-determination was to be applied it must be applied to both communities. And if independence was to be granted, it must be granted to both. Above all, the conditions which would enable the two communities to express their separate national will must be created. Moreover, it was of the utmost importance that the friendship between Turkey and Greece, and between those two countries and the United Kingdom, should be preserved and the dispute arising from the Cyprus problem solved.

23. There was no more practical way of settling such an international dispute than negotiation, as General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI) indicated.

24. Turkey wished to live in good-neighbourly relations with Greece. The situation demanded that henceforth Greece should not attempt to bring under its rule any person of Turkish origin, nor should Turkey try to subject to its rule a single person of Greek origin against his will. Turkey had no intention of doing so. On the other hand, it could not be expected to abandon its just cause, which was grounded on the Charter of the United Nations and involved issues vital to its existence. But it did not believe that those considerations were irreconcilable, and it did not seek to deny the legitimate claims of both Greece and the United Kingdom in the matter.

25. His delegation had submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.223) whose purpose was to reconcile those viewpoints. He was confident that the Committee, by accepting that proposal, would enable the three countries to reach agreement and to emerge from the problem as friends.

26. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece), offering preliminary comments on some of the points raised by the Turkish representative, said he did not wish to enter into a discussion of the island's long history, but would point out that Cyprus had been a centre of Greek civilization for 3,000 years. In connexion with the population statistics referred to by the Turkish representative, he pointed out that according to British official figures issued in July 1957, the population of the island was 417,000 Greeks and 92,000 Turks.

27. The Greek statements with regard to the status to be given to Cyprus referred to by the Turkish representative had been justified by the circumstances at the time. The Cypriot movement had always been a movement for unconditional self-determination and at the time those statements had been made the idea of guaranteed independence had not ripened. He could assure the Committee that at present that idea had ripened among the great majority of Cypriots and Greeks.

28. The militants of Cyprus had been referred to by both the United Kingdom and the Turkish representa-

tives as a band of murderers without ideals. In answer to those aspersions he would quote the words of a great British leader, Sir Winston Churchill, who had written in The Birth of Britain that it was the primary right of men to die and kill for the land they lived in and to punish with exceptional severity all members of their own race who had "warmed their hands at the invader's hearth". And that theory was in accordance with the almost universally accepted idea that to repel violence by violence was permitted by all laws and all right. Why should a small people, civilized for many centuries, be denied what for others had been both a right and a duty and hear its patriots slandered as terrorists without conscience or honour?

29. The answer offered was that Cyprus was a special case. But he did not know of many colonies which had not been a "special case" before their liberation.

30. It might also be said that the Cypriots were terrorists because they fought their war by guerrilla methods. But most wars of liberation had been conducted by similar methods.

31. It might also be said that the Cypriot fighters were killing women and civilians. His Government had repeatedly expressed its disapproval of such acts. Nevertheless, it must be asked in whose interest it

was that such acts should be committed. His Government had repeatedly proposed that a neutral commission should be established to make a complete investigation of the facts, and of the accusations that Greece was in contact with the EOKA—an accusation which Greece had always officially and categorically denied.

32. The Turkish representative had told the Committee that Colonel Grivas, a member of the Greek Army, had been sent to Cyprus to establish such contact. Colonel Grivas, who had been born and raised in Cyprus, was a retired officer who had not been a member of the Greek Army since the Second World War.

33. In any case, the Greek Government's request for the establishment of a commission of investigation proved its good faith. He could well imagine that excesses had taken place, but they had taken place on both sides and Greece was willing to have them judged by neutrals.

34. What was important above all was the basic cause of those acts and that cause was the persistence of colonial oppression in Cyprus. As long as that oppression continued, disturbances would be inevitable. It was the cause which should be attacked and abolished in order to put an end to all violence.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.