



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/3299
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

Title:

ALP Broadcast presented by Don Dunstan, Member for Norwood

Please acknowledge the source as:
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/3299

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

A.L.P. BROADCAST PRESENTED BY DON DUNSTANMEMBER FOR NORWOOD

Good Evening,

In talking of foreign policy it is often a good idea to look back at the last few years and see just how the attitudes taken by various parties in Australia were justified by the events. When a tense and critical situation in foreign affairs occurs quite often neither the newspapers nor the Government are willing to tell the Australian people the facts, but strike emotional attitudes which are but ill adjusted to the realities.

From 1955 to 1959 the island of Cyprus was much in the news.

We were told of the horrible activities of terrorist groups; we were told that the ethrarch of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios was the mastermind directing the evil work of the terrorists, and we were told that British Government was being entirely reasonable in that (a) it was looking after the Empire's defences and (b) it was in Cyprus protecting the Turkish minority from a holocaust which would overtake it in the event of union with Greece occurring, and union with Greece was said to be the sole aim of the Archbishop and his nefarious supporters.

That picture was untrue. The newspapers had they printed information available to them, and the Government, had it bothered to read the publications of Her Majesty's Stationing Office.

The fact was that in Cyprus there was a population far better educated and far more able to govern itself than many other peoples to whom self-government had been granted. Four-fifths of the population was Greek-speaking, one fifth Turkish.

They had had a Legislative Council with some elected members making ordinances for the colony until 1931, when all members of the Legislative Council who were not Government servants combined to reject the budget which the Governor proposed. The Governor then imposed the budget by decree without the consent of the Legislative Council and proceeded to collect his taxes by force. This led to severe protest riots and the constitution was then

abolished.

Since that time the Governor had ruled as a military dictator and a whole series of harsh and repressive ordinances had been promulgated which made the lot of those seeking self-government a very difficult one.

The struggle in Cyprus was not a struggle for union with Greece, or for partition of the island between Greece and Turkey ^{these} these were political catch cries of the moment merely characterising extreme positions -, the struggle was to obtain for Cypriots an effective say in their own governance and their future.

But the reasonable demands of the Cypriot people for this were not met and then the disastrous announcement was made in London in the House of Commons by a Conservative minister that because of defence and strategic requirements, Cyprus could never have the principle of self-determination applied to it.

It was that word "never" which produced violence in Cyprus. It should have been expected. Whenever we deny to peoples the rights to which we have subscribed in the United Nations Charter, history ought now to have taught us not only that we are gravely and morally wrong to do so, but that we can expect that the peoples concerned will endeavour to assert their rights by every means to hand.

A state of emergency was proclaimed in Cyprus, people were not allowed to hold meetings, the possession of weapons or ammunition was punishable by death even for juveniles, there were wholesale arrests and hundreds of people were held in ~~detention~~ detention without charge or trial. Brutal tactics of security police and the proud use of third-degree methods were excused by the Governor who said that you could not expect men whose friends had been shot to be gentle and who brought out a special decree which prevented Cypriots from bringing cases to prove brutal treatment before the Courts.

While all this was going on the Governor asked the Cypriot

ethnarch Archbishop Makarios for his proposals. These proposals, never published in Australia, although available to every newspaper, were for Britain's retention of foreign affairs and defence powers and the right to use bases in Cyprus for its internal affairs under a reasonable constitution and with full guarantees of protection and participation in Government for the Turkish minority.

The Governor did not agree to those proposals, but merely made the vaguest of outlines of proposals for some limited measure of self-government in the future.

When the Archbishop said he was going to Athens to consult with the metropolitan, he was arrested, without charge or trial, conveyed to the Seychelles islands and kept a prisoner behind barbed wire for over a year.

He was then accused in ^{his} ~~the~~-absence and without proof which could be examined by any tribunal, of complicity in terrorist activity and the Advertiser published libellous cartoons of him of the most disgraceful kind.

Again, the people of Australia were not told the facts I have set forth above either by the Government or the newspapers. Indeed, the Government ~~month~~ of Australia was before the United Nations Organisation, vociferous in its support of the British Government's repression of the legitimate demands of the Cypriot people.

Eventually, the British Government tired of the campaign in Cyprus and against the wishes and advice of Field Marshal Harding released Archbishop Makarios, who was able after a time to participate in an accord arranged between the Turkish and Greek Governments for a constitution for Cyprus. Under this proposal there is a Greek President and Turkish vice-president who jointly exercise a number of executive powers. There is a legislature with responsible ministers, with a due proportion of Turks. The Turkish and Greek communities are separately responsible for commercial and religious matters. The Turks, though only

one in five of the population, are guaranteed 30% of the public service posts and 40% of the armed forces. Britain is allowed to retain certain bases in Cyprus, but otherwise has no rights in the island which has become an independent republic.

Now this settlement is less favourable to Britain than the one which it could have obtained on Archbishop Makarios' original proposals, and could have obtained without bloodshed, without repression, without the denial of almost all the things for which we proudly claim the British Commonwealth stands.

When the Labor party pointed out the wrongness of the course being followed by British Government in Cyprus, it was assailed by the Advertiser and conservative opinion. I myself was the subject of untruthful reports in that newspaper.

But now what do we find. The arch-fiend of yesterday's newspaper has become the respectable statesman of today's. Archbishop Makarios, the new president of Cyprus is pictured accompanying Her Majesty the Queen about this land in peace and high favour. All is forgiven and forgotten. But we shouldn't forget you know. Our newspapers and our Government endeavoured to conceal from us and misrepresent to us a grievous wrong done to the people of Cyprus.

And as they were willing to do it on that occasion and as the dire forecasts of a massacre of the Turks and loss of British forces if the Cypriot people got ordinary and reasonable self-government just did not happen, we might be pardoned for being a little suspicious of them in the future.

Goodnight.