

CHAPTER V

DECLARATION ON GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

On 14 December 1960, a "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" was adopted by the General Assembly. By this, among other things, the Assembly solemnly proclaimed "the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations." The Declaration was adopted by 89 votes to 0, with 9 abstentions, and was sponsored by 43 African and Asian countries. (See p. 49 for text.)

The matter was initially proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the Assembly's fifteenth session by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Nikita S. Khrushchev, during his address to the General Assembly on 23 September 1960.

In an explanatory memorandum accompanying his request, he declared that the time was at hand for "the complete and final liberation of peoples languishing in colonial bondage." The United Nations, he said, could not remain indifferent to the fact that more than 100 million human beings were still living in conditions of colonial oppression and exploitation; in keeping with the principles of its Charter, the United Nations must declare itself in favour of the "immediate and complete elimination of the colonial system in all its forms and manifestations."

In the draft declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, which the USSR submitted for Assembly consideration, United Nations Members were called upon solemnly to proclaim three demands.

First, all colonial countries and Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories must be granted forthwith complete independence and freedom to build their own national states in accordance with the freely expressed will and desire of their peoples. The colonial system—and colonial administration in all its forms—must be completely abolished in order to afford the peoples of the territories concerned an opportunity to determine their own destiny and form of government.

Second, all strongholds of colonialism in the form of possessions and leased areas in the territory of other countries must be eliminated.

Finally, the Governments of all countries were urged to observe strictly and steadfastly the provisions of the Charter and the present Declaration concerning equality and respect for the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all states without exception, allowing no manifestations of colonialism or any special rights or advantages for some states to the detriment of other states.

On 28 September, the Assembly's General Committee recommended that the USSR item be put on the Assembly's agenda and, by a vote of 8 to 2, with 9 abstentions, recommended that the item be allocated to the First (Political and Security) Committee. After deciding, on 10 October, to place the item on its agenda, the General Assembly on 13 October unanimously adopted a USSR proposal to discuss the item in plenary meetings—which it did between 28 November and 14 December. Over 70 delegations took part in the debate.

The USSR representative, opening discussion of the item on 28 November, said that, although the process of liberation of peoples under colonial rule had already achieved striking results in Asia and Africa, colonialism was not yet dead. As recent events in the Congo had shown, some countries had not been completely freed from colonial domination in spite of their nominal independence. Then, too, there were still many countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania "languishing under the yoke of foreign domination."

He recalled that Mr. Khrushchev had warned the General Assembly on 12 October 1960 that, unless the most urgent measures were taken, colonialism was capable of causing still more suffering and much loss, destroying many millions of lives, giving rise to military conflicts, and endangering peace and security not only in certain areas but the world over. The USSR