

THE DODECANESE

Article 12 of the draft treaty provided for the cession to Greece of the Dodecanese Islands, and for their demilitarization. Though this article was agreed upon in advance by the Four Powers, the U.S.S.R., while not opposing it, raised various technical and procedural difficulties—especially in the Legal and Drafting Commission—and delayed final approval until the last moment. This may have been intended as a further sign of displeasure towards Greece, though it is natural that the Soviet Union should give minute scrutiny to the arrangements made for the future of a group of islands which are intimately connected with the Dardanelles and with Mediterranean strategy.

PROTECTION OF THE INHABITANTS OF CEDED TERRITORIES

Three paragraphs of Article 13 provided that Italian citizens in any territory transferred to another State by the treaty should have the right to retain Italian citizenship (and risk being repatriated to Italy), or to obtain the citizenship of the State in which they would now find themselves. These clauses had been agreed upon by the Four Powers and were approved by the Conference.

A fourth clause, proposed by the United States, had not been agreed. It was designed to bind the States receiving territories from Italy to secure to all the inhabitants of those territories the enjoyment of fundamental rights and human freedoms. Australia had put forward an amendment to all the draft treaties, including the Italian, which was practically the same as this United States proposal.

The Russian group objected to such proposals, which put victors on the same level as vanquished. It was right and proper to bind ex-Fascist States to guarantee the rights of their citizens, but it was an insult and a humiliation to victorious democratic States to be told how they should treat any new citizens they might acquire. Each of the United Nations had joined the war—a war between Democrats and Fascists—in order to fight for liberty, and each now wished to be free to run its country in its own way. One had only to look at the record of the new Yugoslavia, for instance, as the Yugoslav delegate pointed out, to see that in truly democratic States human rights and freedoms exist in fact not just in theory.

The French delegate stated that France, who was directly concerned because she had received territory from Italy, had also fulfilled all her Charter pledges concerning human rights. Nevertheless, they understood that States who consented to the transfer of territory felt impelled to satisfy themselves that the inhabitants concerned did not suffer. Therefore, they had no objection to agreeing to the proposal and to allowing any of its Allies to see that all was well with the people of the transferred territory.