

and the National Council for the Liberation of Libya (all of which were known to play an important part in the political life of their countries), declared their bitter opposition to such a course and asserted that the people they represented would resist the return of Italian administration, whatever its form, by force of arms.

The Main Points of Disagreement

At the end of a month's discussion it was revealed that disagreement existed not only on the question of a restoration of Italian authority, but also on the following issues:—

(1) *The Preservation of Libyan Unity.*—Several delegations protested that proposals for the establishment of separate regimes in Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and the Fezzan were unjustifiable since for historical, ethnological, political, and economic reasons Libya should be preserved as a unit. They recalled that Libya had been so administered in the past and that the economic interdependence of its parts was such that in time of drought dates from the Fezzan had fed the people of Tripolitania and live-stock had been driven to pasture in Cyrenaica. Under separate administrations, it was asserted, economic and social development in the three territories would take place at such widely differing rates and in such diverse ways that the ultimate achievement of unity would be impossible. Those who defended the separate treatment of the three areas contended in reply that the regions were geographically separated by deserts and that economic exchanges among them were comparatively limited. They pointed out that Libya had in the past often been administered in the same divisions into which it now fell and they emphasized that while Cyrenaica had no Italian inhabitants and possessed a political and social structure that was both compact and homogeneous, Tripolitania had a large Italian population and some measure of racial diversity. They claimed, therefore, that while unity should be the ultimate goal there were good reasons for temporary maintenance of the existing divisions.

(2) *Libyan Independence.*—Closely allied to the question of unity was that of independence. Many delegations based their attitude on this matter upon the unanimous conclusion of the Four Power Commission of Investigation that Libya, though the most advanced of the territories, was not yet ready for independence. The opinion was frequently advanced, however, especially by states which had themselves recently gained their independence, that Libya was already more fitted for self-government than many members of the United Nations. It was pointed out that the United Kingdom had recognized this fact when in 1946 it had proposed the immediate granting of independence to a united Libya.