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C O N T E N T S

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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/2126 and addendum, A/2126/Corr.1, A/2172, chapter IV, section VI, A/C.3/L.322, A/C.3/L.323) (<i>continued</i>)	321
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Chairman: Mr. S. Amjad ALI (Pakistan).

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/2126 and addendum, A/2126/Corr.1, A/2172, chapter IV, section VI, A/C.3/L.322, A/C.3/L.323) (*continued*)

[Item 27]*

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that 10 December 1952 was the fourth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Third Committee, which had drafted the Declaration, should be proud of having produced an instrument which had so greatly influenced the thought of the whole world.

2. Mr. HESSEL (France) pointed out that, whereas the Declaration had established the general moral responsibility of all Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had rightly stressed the direct responsibility of the United Nations towards refugees. A distinction should be drawn between the general position of refugees and the specific action taken on their behalf by the High Commissioner. The general problem was vast and the United Nations should deal with it in parts, taking appropriate action in each case. The High Commissioner was dealing only with a part of the problem.

3. The High Commissioner had stressed five points in his detailed statement at the preceding meeting. In connexion with the first point, the international protection of refugees, France had signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and had set up an *Office français de protection des réfugiés*. A branch of the High Commissioner's Office was also operating in Paris.

4. With regard to the second point, the French delegation did not agree with representatives who persisted in defending the theory of forcible repatriation; the

responsible authorities concerned with refugees were fully aware that few of the remaining refugees could still be usefully repatriated.

5. His delegation was also unable to agree with the High Commissioner's conclusion that migration was the only real solution for the refugee. Some categories of refugees had been able to settle and become assimilated in the countries which had first received them; moreover, although migration often benefited both the migrant and the country of immigration, it frequently gave rise to serious psychological and economic problems and sometimes to competition between refugees and other categories of migrants. It was important in that connexion to achieve close co-operation between the International Labour Organisation and other interested organizations; if such co-operation were continued, assistance could be extended to many more refugees. He was glad that the High Commissioner had stressed the fact that the solution of migration did not apply only to the "hard-core" cases.

6. The fourth solution of the refugee problem was assimilation on the spot and integration in the economy of the receiving country. That solution required financial support, but the funds thus spent were not a dead loss, since experience had shown that refugees who became assimilated could reimburse sums advanced to them. Such a revolving fund had been created by a gift from the Ford Foundation and other methods of financing were being considered.

7. The category of assimilated refugees should not be confused with the fifth group, consisting of serious cases in need of immediate aid, for whom an assistance fund had been set up.

8. The High Commissioner could not hope to assist more than the small number of refugees who fell within his terms of reference. Although many other groups needed such assistance, it would be dangerous to ask the High Commissioner to undertake further responsibilities without giving him means for fulfilling them.

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

By laying down methods of specific action, the High Commissioner would be able to obtain the necessary support and gradually approach a solution. The problem was not exclusively European, since the countries of residence and of immigration were also involved and the economic and political stability of the world was generally affected.

9. The French delegation considered that the High Commissioner's work was satisfactory and had therefore joined the delegations of Colombia, Denmark and the Netherlands in submitting two draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.322 and A/C.3/L.323).

10. The first draft resolution (A/C.3/L.322) was concerned with the international financing of plans for the assimilation of refugees in their countries of residence and invited the High Commissioner to consult with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on possible sources of funds.

11. The second draft resolution (A/C.3/L.323) took note of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and expressed the hope that contributions would be forthcoming to enable the High Commissioner to assist the most needy groups of refugees. It also stressed the importance of the question of visas for the Shanghai refugees and drew attention to the place of refugees in international migration programmes.

12. Mr. TUNCEL (Turkey) said that the examination of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/2126 and addendum) was timely, since the General Assembly was to review the arrangements for his Office at its eighth session, in order to decide whether that Office should be maintained after the end of 1953.

13. The report effectively depicted the situation, particularly as regards the refugee problem existing in most of the countries of Europe.

14. The High Commissioner's work, it was gratifying to note, was being supplemented by that of the Council of Europe, which had more effective means at its disposal and a wider competence.

15. Paragraph 118 of the report was not quite accurate. The number of refugees in Turkey, given as 700, in fact varied continually owing to the special geographical situation of that country. In reply to a circular sent to the governments by the High Commissioner under General Assembly resolution 428 (V), the Turkish Government had stated that there had been about 4,200 refugees who had not acquired a new nationality in Turkey in July 1952.

16. When the High Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Refugees had considered the question of assistance to refugees at its first session, the Turkish representative had asked that the assistance provided for should also be granted to the 154,000 refugees from Bulgaria. The Advisory Committee had adopted a draft resolution submitted by Denmark asking the High Commissioner to investigate their status and situation. At the second session, the Turkish Government had reserved its position in some of the legal aspects of the matter.

17. Paragraph 114 referred to the serious problems facing the governments of the countries of the Near

and Middle East with regard to their own ethnic refugees. Ethnic origin should never be a consideration in dealing with refugees. A reference to ethnic origin in a special context in the draft statute submitted by the Economic and Social Council had been deleted after thorough discussion in the Third Committee.

18. The report did not mention the Far East, except Shanghai and Hong Kong, but the High Commissioner had stated that his deputy had recently visited most countries in that area in order to study conditions. The task would undoubtedly be hard, but the Committee could rely upon the High Commissioner's tenacity and his deputy's competence.

19. In his recent report to the Council of Europe the High Commissioner had stated that there were refugees covered by his Statute in the Americas, Australia and New Zealand. They were probably people whom the International Refugee Organization had settled in those countries with their own consent and with the assent of the governments concerned. They would probably not require international protection.

20. It was to be hoped that full information on refugees would be compiled, in order that the United Nations might be in a position to determine the extent of its responsibilities and proceed in the proper manner to make the necessary revisions in the Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner. Moreover, it would be desirable for the High Commissioner to inform governments what amendments he thought necessary before the eighth session of the General Assembly.

21. It was true that the Provisional Inter-Governmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe, the Council of Europe and the International Labour Organisation were also working on the problem of refugees and that the High Commissioner alluded in paragraphs 146 and 147 of his report to the difficulties of co-ordination. Those bodies and the High Commissioner's Office were, however, dealing with different categories of refugees, so that the aim of any co-ordination should certainly not be to give preferential treatment to the refugees coming under the High Commissioner's terms of reference.

22. The General Assembly had approved the principle of the integration of the refugees. The practice, however, seemed to be encountering many difficulties, mainly financial. The problem seemed to concern mainly those countries whose economic structure had certain individual characteristics. The investigation by the Council of Europe showed that in Sweden, for example, all the 42,000 refugees had been integrated in the local economy, and the same was true in certain European countries. The High Commissioner was again stressing the urgent need for funds and his belief that the countries of refuge should not be asked to bear the whole expense. Obviously, special credit institutions would eventually have to be set up. The Council of Europe was trying to set up some such institution with the participation of the governments of its members or with the aid of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to which those governments had subscribed. Irrespective of whether the High Commissioner's office or the Council of Europe first carried

out that ambitious scheme, the problem would thus be solved.

23. Mrs. DOMANSKA (Poland) said that the High Commissioner had stated, in paragraphs 148 and 149 of his report, that the problems set out were so grave in terms of human suffering that they called for urgent consideration by the United Nations, and had then supplied his three prescriptions for their remedy: emergency aid for the most needy groups, long-term plans of economic development and migration opportunities.

24. Emergency aid was merely alms-giving. No social problem had ever been solved by charity. Donations, however generous, could not assure the refugees work, education or prospects. Long-term plans could at best help the refugees' grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Unemployment was rife in the countries of refuge, and refugees found difficulty in obtaining work and the benefits of social security. Furthermore, when workers were laid off, the foreigners were always the first to go. Emigration, too, was not a solution. It had failed in the United States of America, Brazil and Canada. The refugees there, condemned to permanent exile, failed to make a home. All three prescriptions were useless.

25. The Polish delegation had always maintained that the only reasonable and fair solution was repatriation. An overwhelming majority of the General Assembly had taken that view in 1946 and 1947. Public opinion had demanded the promptest possible settlement of the tragic aftermath of the Second World War. But quite the opposite view had been taken, even at that time, by those who were preparing a third world war. They had looked upon the refugee camps as a reservoir of cheap labour and future soldiers. In the camps they had gathered citizens of the peoples' democracies and the USSR, precisely those countries against which the United States of America had launched a campaign of hatred. The refugees had not been allowed to learn the truth about their own country, their minds had been poisoned by slander and their repatriation had been prevented. The International Refugee Organization had been given that work from the outset and had worked strictly on the orders of the occupation authorities in Western Germany.

26. It should be remembered that IRO had repatriated some 73,000 persons between 1947 and 1951, leaving more than 1 million persons in exile in ghastly circumstances. The High Commissioner's Office had inherited the tasks of IRO.

27. The Polish and other delegations had shown from the outset that IRO not only had had no intention of complying with resolution 136 (II) adopted by the General Assembly on 17 November 1947, but also that it regarded the prevention of repatriation as its main task. Undoubtedly IRO had merited the gratitude of its United States masters, but it was more than doubtful whether it had deserved that of the United Nations, although the French and Belgian representatives had said so at the fourteenth session of the Economic and Social Council.

28. The Polish delegation had strongly opposed the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The High Commissioner's report and appeals showed that it had done nothing to

improve the refugees' lot. Further details of their tragic plight could be found in Polish *émigré* newspapers such as *Dziennik Polski*, published in the United States of America, and *Gazeta Polska*, published in Paris. In the latter there had recently appeared a letter from an engineer in a refugee camp near Adelaide, Australia; he had reported that the refugees were treated as white slaves, were separated from their wives and children, were half-starved and ill-housed. The camp at Bonegilla, also in Australia, was guarded by the police and by soldiers. She had had first-hand experience of the miseries of Poles in exile in Canada when she had attended the conference of the International Red Cross. The picture was equally deplorable in Europe, particularly in Western Germany, Austria and Trieste.

29. As war preparations were intensified, the use of displaced persons for military purposes was growing. The Army of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States forces in Korea and the French Foreign Legion in Vietnam required material for their wars of aggression. The refugees, bred on lies and weary of their horrible straits, saw no way out but to sell themselves, without caring to whom or for what. The High Commissioner, like IRO in the past, was acting as broker. Many examples could be cited from the Press and elsewhere.

30. At the sixth session of the General Assembly the Polish delegation had supplied the Third Committee with full details of the way in which the United States Government was employing common criminals, traitors and renegades in espionage and diversionary activities against the peoples' democracies, using for the purpose funds voted by the United States Congress for sabotage and armed action in the USSR and the peoples' democracies. Events since then had shown how right the Polish delegation had been.

31. During an espionage trial in Warsaw in January 1952, a witness had testified that he had been recruited as a spy for the United States counter-intelligence service in an IRO camp in which there had been an office with the letters C.I.C. on the door. A right-wing Polish newspaper, *Kurier Codzienny*, published in the United States of America, had given details of a so-called "Suicide Legion", recruited from 5,000 East European refugees and trained by the United States forces in espionage, propaganda and commando tactics. The United States Government's commission on displaced persons had stated on 2 January 1952 that no investment could be more profitable than funds for recruiting refugees to work with the propaganda services of the "Voice of America".

32. The United States occupation authorities in Western Germany were also using the High Commissioner's Office to prevent the repatriation of Polish children. Despite the reiterated requests of the Polish Government, they were retaining even children whose parents lived in Poland. In March 1952 the Polish Government had sent yet another note to the United States Government, supplying fresh details on the non-repatriated Polish children in Western Germany. The arbitrary abolition of the delegation of the Polish Red Cross in Western Germany, which had been engaged in trying to repatriate the Polish children, was yet another indication of the hostile attitude of the United States authorities.

33. Thus, the Polish delegation felt bound to point out that neither IRO nor the High Commissioner for Refugees had complied with resolution 136 (II); everything they had done in preventing the repatriation of refugees had been in flat contradiction to that resolution.

34. Mr. LOOMES (Australia) gave notice that he would reply to the Polish representative under rule 114 of the rules of procedure.

35. Mr. KOS (Yugoslavia) commended the High Commissioner for his efforts to give effect to the provisions of the resolutions (538 A (VI) and 538 B (VI)) adopted by the General Assembly at its sixth session on the recommendation of the Third Committee. He noted, however, that the High Commissioner's activities appeared to be increasing rather than diminishing, owing to the new problems which had arisen in the course of his search for a final solution of the refugee problem. Rather than treating his report as a routine matter, therefore, the Committee must give it close attention and endeavour to answer the specific questions raised. The Yugoslav delegation had a few suggestions which might contribute to a solution of the problem.

36. As regards the problem of repatriation, he anticipated long statements during the debate from those who were making use of the problem for political and propaganda purposes. His own Government still maintained the view that repatriation should be on a voluntary basis, although all Yugoslav refugees who wished to return to their country would be welcomed into the social, cultural and economic life of Yugoslavia. His Government was aware, however, that repatriation alone would not solve the problem permanently, so long as conditions in some countries continued to create new refugees.

37. He drew attention to the position of the 4,300 refugees then in Yugoslavia, who were not mentioned in the High Commissioner's report. Although their number was not large, his country might eventually have to ask for assistance if they continued to arrive at the current rate, which was about 150 a month. Fleeing from neighbouring countries at the risk of their lives, those people constituted a special category of refugees, since their political opinions differed from those of the majority of European and other refugees. The Yugoslav Government was meeting the situation to the best of its ability; despite the country's economic difficulties, the refugees were being temporarily resettled and their needs satisfied at the expense of the Government. He hoped, however, that the High Commissioner would give his attention to the problem, with a view to providing eventual assistance if the refugees in question proved unacceptable for resettlement in other countries. Despite their political opinions, they were as truly in need of help as any other refugees.

38. With regard to the question of migration, his delegation agreed with the High Commissioner that governments which were helping to solve the refugee problem by facilitating migration to certain countries should make their arrangements in collaboration with the High Commissioner's Office. The establishment of numerous bodies to deal with the refugee problem outside the framework of the United Nations, merely created confusion and hampered the High Commis-

sioner in the discharge of his duties. The activities of such organizations, while they need not be under the High Commissioner's control, should be closely co-ordinated with the activities of his Office.

39. The Yugoslav delegation also agreed that the United Nations could help the refugees by promoting their assimilation and integration into the social, economic and cultural life of the countries in which they were living. It was obvious that the problem could not be solved through permanent support, which would merely lead to the creation of a category of idle dependents of no use to the community.

40. In that connexion, his delegation was interested in the High Commissioner's remarks concerning his negotiations with such international financial institutions as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. While the International Bank could not handle small loans, it might be interested in the promotion of larger projects in certain countries, on which refugees could be employed. In order to be effective, however, such a plan should benefit not only the refugees but all concerned; the projects undertaken would therefore have to fit into the general economic programme of the country, which would itself have to make a financial effort. Each country which harboured refugees should be asked to plan such projects, in which international institutions could collaborate. The scheme was not new in the United Nations, and it might well be applied to the refugee problem with beneficial effects.

41. The refugee problem was old but, in its current form, largely the consequence of the Second World War. It was conceivable that it might never be finally solved. The number of refugees could be reduced, however, by the establishment of decent conditions of life in all countries and peaceful relations among nations. In the meantime, new refugees were continually appearing and would continue to appear so long as individuals were forced to live under continuous pressure and in fear of their lives. It was to be hoped that in time the problem could be solved through the efforts of the United Nations.

42. Mr. TRHLIK (Czechoslovakia) pointed out that according to General Assembly resolutions 8 (I) and 62 (I), adopted in 1946, the problem of refugees and displaced persons was to be solved speedily by their repatriation to their countries of origin or habitual residence. Although the purposes of the resolutions had been reaffirmed at each succeeding session of the General Assembly, it was evident from the report of the International Refugee Organization and the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that the task laid down by the General Assembly was not being fulfilled.

43. The causes of that situation could be found, first, in the policy of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France of placing obstacles in the way. Both IRO, and later the High Commissioner, had become willing and effective tools of that policy. The occupation authorities in Western Germany, through IRO, had attempted to frustrate the repatriation of citizens of the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies by hampering the activities of their repatriation missions. Their purpose was to further

their campaign of hatred by spreading propaganda among the refugees. There were instances in which Czechoslovak citizens who had wished to return to their homeland had been detained by force and subjected to persecution and torture.

44. The High Commissioner's report spoke of repatriation in only a few empty phrases, but went into considerable detail concerning the measures which were regarded as prerequisite to a permanent solution of the problem. It gave a list of the field offices which had been set up and the contributions of the various governments, but did not explain why the General Assembly's resolutions were not being implemented. The Office of the High Commissioner was thus continuing the policy pursued by IRO, which had endeavoured not to solve but to perpetuate the refugee problem. From the beginning, IRO had tolerated and even promoted propaganda against States Members of the United Nations. It had provided the Western occupation authorities in Germany with cheap labour and with spies to carry on subversive activities in the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies. There were several incidents which showed that the camps for displaced persons and refugees organized by IRO in Western Germany had been used by the armies of the United States and other occupying Powers as centres for the recruitment of espionage agents.

45. By means of the Mutual Security Act, put into effect in 1951, the United States Government had utilized refugees for espionage and subversive activities against the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies. They were carried out by armed units made up of refugees and displaced persons from eastern European countries, many of whom were condemned criminals registered as political refugees. The Act further confirmed the fact that the United States policy was based on interference in the internal affairs of other States and was hostile to the peaceful co-existence of peoples. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, following the lead of IRO, was supporting that policy.

46. The facts showed clearly that the High Commissioner, whose work was supposed to be purely humanitarian and non-political in character, had become a willing tool of the instigators of war. Indeed, he had indicated the true nature of his so-called financial assistance to refugees by placing his own financial programme on the same plane as that of the notorious Mutual Security Act, which was contrary to all principles of international law. His Office had become an agency of the States associated in the aggressive North Atlantic Treaty Organization, instead of discharging its true function and co-operating effectively with governments which were striving to help the refugees return to their homes.

47. The Czechoslovak delegation vigorously opposed the course adopted by the High Commissioner. To prevent the refugees from returning to their homes, to maintain them permanently in the status of displaced persons, to force them to work as traitors to their own countries, was a crime against the peace and against the interests of the refugees themselves. The only just solution of the problem, the only solution consistent with the stated purposes of the United Nations, was to encourage and assist them to return to their countries of origin as soon as possible.

48. For those reasons the Czechoslovak delegation would vote against the draft resolutions before the Committee (A/C.3/L.322 and A/C.3/L.323).

49. Mr. KHALATBARY (Iran) wished to correct an error in the High Commissioner's report (A/2126 and addendum). It was stated, in paragraph 43 of the addendum, that the Iranian Government had decided to ask all aliens not in possession of valid national passports to leave its territory before 21 March 1952. The decision in question had in fact concerned only persons of non-Iranian nationality who did not have identity papers in good order; it did not apply to refugees with identity cards issued by the High Commissioner.

50. It had been recognized by the High Commissioner that not all of the 2 million "refugees" in Iran could be considered as being under his protection. The accepted definition of the word "refugee" covered only a small percentage of the individuals who had, for one reason or another, been obliged to take refuge in Iran. His Government, which considered that definition too restrictive and could not endorse it, could not be of direct and active assistance to the High Commissioner; but its attitude did not prevent it from helping all such persons who were worthy of its compassion and aid.

51. There were those among the refugees, however, who might in certain circumstances become undesirable persons. The High Commissioner had to recognize that fact and be prepared to provide for the transportation of such persons from the country harbouring them to another part of the world at the proper time. Otherwise, difficult and complex situations would undoubtedly arise.

52. In any event, his Government, faithful to its tradition, would continue to be animated by a generous and humanitarian spirit in its dealings with all refugees.

53. Mrs. SPERANSKAYA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that IRO and the High Commissioner's Office had ignored General Assembly resolutions on refugees which stressed that repatriation was the principal task of the United Nations. A repatriation agreement had been concluded in 1945 between the USSR, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, and in 1947 the Council of Foreign Ministers had agreed unanimously to allow accredited government representatives to visit displaced persons' camps, with a view to repatriating the inmates, and to prohibit propaganda against repatriation. The Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France had failed to observe their obligations under those agreements and had done all in their power to undermine the work of USSR repatriation missions, by forbidding representatives to hold private conversations with USSR citizens in the camps, prohibiting collective lectures on conditions in their country and imposing strict censorship. USSR broadcasts and films had been banned in Western Germany and open anti-repatriation agitation was rife in the camps, where displaced persons were kept by force and starved into submission. In the circumstances, the USSR had been compelled to discontinue its repatriation missions.

54. The facts showed that many refugees wished to return to their countries of origin because of the appalling conditions in the countries to which they had been

sent. Several displaced persons in Sweden had been arrested and persecuted for having appealed to the USSR Embassy for assistance; a USSR citizen who had refused repatriation in the United States zone of Germany had subsequently testified that he had been forced to make that refusal. The United Kingdom used displaced persons as slave labour and forced them to live in shocking conditions in former prisoner-of-war camps. A USSR citizen who had returned to the USSR from Canada had given an extremely adverse account of the conditions of displaced persons in that country. The same applied to Latin-American countries such as Venezuela, where USSR citizens had tried in vain to get work and had been obliged to live in unhealthy camps.

55. The High Commissioner's Office was not only an agency for slave labour, but also a centre for espionage and subversive activities. Training schools had been set up for agents who were to overthrow the governments of the USSR and the peoples' democracies by returning to their countries of origin and carrying on treasonable activities. An example was the training school established at Strasbourg in December 1951. The United States of America had set up a National Committee for a Free Europe, financed under the Mutual Security Act. Moreover, United States spokesmen openly declared that persons who had fled or might flee from the Eastern European democracies should be formed into military units. That was tantamount to promoting armed intervention against countries with which the United States maintained diplomatic relations.

56. The High Commissioner had expatiated in his statement (470th meeting) on the funds which he would require, but had omitted any reference to the appalling conditions in displaced persons' camps or to the fact that the camps were being used as espionage and recruiting centres. The United States of America, the United Kingdom and France were enlisting displaced

persons from Eastern European countries to fight in their aggressive wars in order to save their own manpower.

57. Arbitrary methods had also been used against Soviet children who had been taken away from the USSR by the Germans. In spite of the repatriation agreements, United States, United Kingdom and French authorities still kept the children from their families and had no intention of returning them. The USSR repatriation missions had been unable to obtain any information about certain children's camps in Germany and had subsequently heard that the inmates had been taken to the United States of America and Canada. The United States authorities had illegally set up a special court to deal with the children and had denied three USSR representatives the right to make statements there. The court had passed a collective judgment to the effect that it would be in the children's interest to send them to the United States.

58. There could be no doubt that the activities of the High Commissioner's Office had nothing in common with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The USSR delegation would therefore vote against the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.322 and A/C.3/L.323), which noted the High Commissioner's report with approval.

59. The CHAIRMAN set the time limit for the submission of amendments to the joint draft resolutions as 11 a.m. on Thursday, 11 December.

60. He suggested that, in view of the pressure of time, no general debate should be held on the next item, concerning the draft convention on political rights of women, but that general statements might be made during the discussion on the text of the draft convention.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.