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Chairman: Mr. Erik NETTEL (Austria).

AGENDA ITEM 62

International Year for Human Rights (continued) (A/
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(a) Measures and activities undertaken in connexion
with the International Year for Human Rights:
report of the Secretary-General;

(b) International Conference on Human Rights

GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF
DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.3/L.1623/REV.1 (con-
tinued)

1. Mr. SHERZOY (Afghanistan) emphasized the im-
portance of the General Assembly's decision to pro-
claim 1968, the twentieth anniversary of the adoption
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as
International Year for Human Rights. The individual
would always be the basic cell of mankind, and he
stressed the necessity of respect for the dignity,
equality and inalienable rights of all members of the
human family, which were the foundation not only
of freedom and justice, but also of world peace. Unfor-
tunately, history and the hard facts of the present
showed the extent to which concern for the life and
well-being of the individual was sacrificed to military
requirements. Even while the International Year for
Human Rights was being celebrated, the existence of
the majority of the human race was threatened by
poverty, inequality, injustice, discrimination and
ignorance, and the shadow of colonialism was still
stifling the aspirations of large numbers of people.

2. Recalling the words of the representative of
Afghanistan, Mr. Pazhwak, at the 1968 International
Conference on Human Rights, he said that political
freedom, economic development, international co-
operation, and peace and prosperity were of little
value unless human rights were protected and dignity

was guaranteed. Efforts must be made, particularly
during the current year, to ensure that the recognition
of human rights transcended all borders, while at the
same time differences were respected. The highest
values of human society could be protected only if
the free choice of the individual in selecting the
direction to be taken by his nation and by civilization
was guaranteed.

3. Everyone was familiar with the tyrannies of
poverty, disease and ignorance, and scientific advance
had made it possible to discover remedies to many
calamities. A greater and more subtle challenge
was to be met in creating a single society where all
individuals enjoyed what they were entitled to enjoy,
in giving the new capabilities which man had dis-
covered a deep and meaningful role in man's life,
and in safeguarding the rights which man had had at
birth but which had been eroded as the price of
progress. It was time to move from making "great
excuses" to making "great admissions", from the
stage of great possibilities to that of great certainties,
and from confused subjective states to conditions of
a new life. Ignorance might be widespread and might
have prevailed throughout eternity, but no human being
lacked enlightenment as to the violation of his rights
and freedoms.

4. In the view of his delegation, the International
Year for Human Rights required concentration on the
following goals: action for the universalization of
human rights, which was the first and only justifica-
tion for the International Year; ratification without
any delay of the legal instruments already adopted;
adoption of an internationally binding instrument in
the field of freedom of information and freedom of
the Press; assertion of the need for judicial machinery
to protect individual rights, on the domestic level, and
in particular an independent and objective judiciary
immune to political pressures; establishment of an
office of High Commissioner for Human Rights; setting
down of judicial norms in the field of human rights;
consideration of a permanent tribunal to deal with
particular situations; consideration of means and
machinery for impartial and independent examination
of problems by a supranational authority giving atten-
tion to the details of each particular case; review of
the complaints of individual petitioners without their
having to fear reprisals from their Governments;
assistance to Governments themselves in clarifying
the complexities of human rights problems and to non-
government organizations, particularly in the less
developed countries.

5. Unfortunately, the principles of the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights were thus far nothing
more than leaves in the wind. Consequently, the
current year, which should be of particular significance

to all the peoples of the world, required that countries should appraise their own actions as individuals, and that individuals should do likewise as human beings, with a view to determining, through a searching of the conscience which of those actions were useful to mankind and should continue.

6. Mrs. PICKER (United States of America) said that, but for an unfortunate indisposition, her delegation's statement on the item under discussion would have been made by the Permanent Representative of the United States, Mr. Wiggins.

7. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been a historic occasion, marking the first time that the representatives of many diverse nations had adopted without dissent a statement of the rights to which all men were entitled. In the twenty years since the Declaration had been approved, there had been great progress in human rights, but there had also been great frustrations and occasional sharp reverses, and the International Year had been the occasion for taking stock of what had been achieved and for renewing the efforts to create a general awareness of the rights in question.

8. In the United States, during the International Year for Human Rights, there had been both progress and tragic disappointment. There had been continued gains in rights and opportunities for minorities, and millions of citizens had improved their earnings and standards of living. A general economic advance had resulted in more general employment at higher levels of reward than had ever prevailed in the United States or in any other country of the world. Racial and geographical minorities, outside the mainstream of that advance, had been assisted by a variety of special programmes. Politically, restrictions on voting rights had been progressively eliminated in order to ensure that everyone could participate effectively in the government of the community and of the nation. The way in which voting districts were now defined reflected more equitably than before the ideal of "one man, one vote". At the same time, the great transformation of the civil rights scene that had commenced with the decision requiring the end of segregation in schools had continued. The result of all that was that the individual citizen, whatever his race, religion or economic status, enjoyed a greater degree of economic, legal and political equality.

9. That progress, even though it had been spectacular, had not eliminated at once the social, political and economic consequences of previous disabilities and injustice. Out of the understandable discontents of the past, combined with the disappointments of a present in which all ambitions had not yet been satisfied, had come disturbances in the great cities. Those disturbances also in part reflected the unwillingness of a great democracy to suppress the manifestations of popular discontent, which in some countries would be swiftly put down by police methods.

10. In the midst of the general progress, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy had brought the nation face to face with the realization that a generation of advancement had not removed racial prejudices nor eliminated an impulse towards violence and disregard of the rights of others.

Probably there was no other country in the world where the citizen was as safe against any deprivation of right engineered by the Government itself. However, the Government had not yet succeeded in making all human rights secure against trespass accomplished in spite of the Government.

11. The President's Commission on Human Rights Year had publicized throughout the United States the importance of human rights to the national and international community. It had issued books and other materials, encouraged human rights programmes in schools, and had held conferences. The Commission had served as a reaffirmation that the United States people would not be satisfied with the accomplishments of the past and were determined to implement the ideals which had always been a central part of their culture. In the past year the United States Senate had given its consent to the ratification of two human rights conventions: the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Six other conventions, already signed by the United States, remained for ratification. The Executive Branch had repeatedly made clear its support of them.

12. In the field of human rights no nation today could restrict its attention to its own desires and ideals or even to its own problems and shortcomings. Rights diminished anywhere in the world were rights diminished of all mankind; and progress anywhere was a cause of rejoicing for all. The progress of human rights depended to a great degree upon the intangible suasion of moral force. Progress or failure anywhere inevitably affected the prospects and the strength of the ideals of human rights throughout the world.

13. The greatest measure of progress since the adoption of the Universal Declaration was the fact that fifty-nine new nations with populations totalling 300 million had obtained their independence since 1948. Although independence did not in itself guarantee observance of human rights, it did create the opportunity for a people to set its own goals and, by taking charge of its own destiny, to mobilize the energies of its people towards progress in the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It was also worth noting that since 1948 forty-three new constitutions had drawn upon the Universal Declaration.

14. However, in the very continent where the greatest progress has been made in the last twenty years, millions of people were still being denied the right either to self-determination or to meaningful participation in the political, social and economic life of their country. Discrimination on the basis of race, colour or religion was not of course limited to southern Africa. It existed in almost every part of the world, but only in South Africa had the Government based its policies not on eliminating the age-old curse of discrimination but on perpetuating it. That situation was a subject of grave concern to the United States, which was doing its utmost both outside and within the United Nations to persuade South Africa that it was self-destructive to attempt to stand against the tide of racial justice and human dignity.

15. She was particularly interested in those provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which asserted the right of all persons to freedom of opinion and expression, to receive and impart information without intervention of the State and regardless of frontiers, and the right to peaceful assembly and association. Those rights were brought into relief when on 21 August 1968 Radio Prague and the Czech News Agency CETEKA closed down announcing that they had just been occupied by foreign troops. Unfortunately, those sad messages represented not the extinction of a single light but the darkening of lights all over a country.

16. Her delegation did not refer to those matters in a desire to rekindle the cold war but because injustices, regardless of who committed them, should be condemned. It would serve neither the cause of the United Nations nor the cause of the people of Czechoslovakia to pass over those matters in silence. Her delegation spoke of those events in sorrow but not in despair. Wrongs could still be righted and those who had strayed from the paths of international morality and rectitude might yet return to them.

17. She wished to pay a personal tribute to the journalists of Czechoslovakia who had for many months been struggling with anguishing decisions as to how far they could risk the safety and freedom of others in order to pursue their ideal of the freedom of the Press and as to what extent the exercise of freedom might bring the risk of its own destruction.

18. Those who framed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights knew well the role of free assembly and a free press and free speech in a free society. Where the citizen was fully informed, he had opinions of his own. Where he was only partly informed, he had only the opinions of those who partly informed him. Where he was free to assemble with fellow citizens, he had private views that sprang from the open exchange of thoughts and sentiments among free men. Where the freedom of assembly was inhibited, that mutual enrichment ceased, to be replaced by the sterile and synthetic substitute of an authoritarian State. The right to vote, to a fair trial, to economic opportunities were empty rights if the citizen did not have the necessary information to exercise them intelligently. Free speech, free press and free assembly were the foundations of all the rights of a modern State. Where they were not secure, no rights were secure.

19. Those rights were not secure today in the very heart of Europe because the constituted authorities of a State had been compelled by occupying Powers to curtail and suppress those rights, notwithstanding their own faith and confidence in the integrity and loyalty of their fellow citizens, not only to the national identity and the national aspirations of the country but to its socialist principles and socialist allies. Czechoslovakia was not the only country in which liberties envisaged by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been curtailed. In the Soviet Union jamming of international radio broadcasts was occurring once again, denying the people the right proclaimed in the Universal Declaration to "receive and impart information and ideas ... regardless of frontiers". However, it was in Czechoslovakia that there had occurred

one of the most tragic reversals of progress towards the realization of those universally held ideals.

20. Wherever there was a dramatic denial of human rights, the cynics questioned the value of declarations of human rights which afforded no means of enforcing those rights. They pointed out that the United Nations was impotent to remedy such calamities. There had been other moments in history when the great articles of faith of the human race had been disregarded, but the triumphs of the desecrators had been momentary. The ideals had remained. The instinct for liberty and the unquenchable thirst for knowledge were indestructible aspirations of the human heart. The United Nations could not summon on to the field vast armies to do battle for the rights that its declarations asserted for all men. But it could appeal to something more powerful than statements, more irresistible than Governments, more imperishable than national States: the opinion of mankind. All the Members of the United Nations had a solemn duty to make those appeals wherever and whenever any nation, large or small, pursued a policy that disregarded universal human rights. That appeal must be made, not in anger, not in hate, but in the high hope that the conscience that never died in any man would move the rulers of national States to return to wiser policies. The international instruments of the United Nations that dealt with human rights might be disregarded, but they could not be destroyed. The lamps that were but lately lighted in Czechoslovakia and in other dark corners of the world might now be dimmed. But wherever the faint flicker of freedom had shed its rays upon the consciousness of a people, it would never be utterly extinguished. After a few hours of darkness, the light would shine again; after an interlude, there would be no night.

21. Mr. LOPEZ (Philippines) said that during International Year for Human Rights, now drawing to a close, nations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and men and women all over the world had dedicated themselves with still greater zeal to the task of guaranteeing every human being enjoyment of the freedoms and rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That was perhaps the most noble and formidable task facing the international community. His delegation was under no illusions as to the magnitude and number of the obstacles that stood in the way of the effective realization of human rights. Age-old prejudices and animosities, international strife and power struggles, economic want and social stagnation were only some of them. It also realized that the task of protecting human rights could not and should not be isolated from the need to establish a just and democratic society at the local, national and international levels. A balance must also be struck between observance of the individual's rights and the reasonable requirements of the society of which he was a member. The international community should not let itself be discouraged by the difficulties of that great undertaking but should face them with dedication and resolute purpose.

22. His delegation considered the International Year as a major landmark in the progress made by the international community in advancing the cause of human liberty. But the Year would not have achieved

its true purpose if the enthusiasm and energy it had generated was not channelled towards definite and worthwhile objectives. The United Nations should, among other things, translate the ideas and initiatives that had emerged from the International Conference on Human Rights into guide-lines for action-oriented programmes based on objective research and study. New techniques and methods of co-operation and implementation would have to be devised in order to develop the capacity of the United Nations family to promote and protect human life to the maximum. The systems of promoting human rights that had been adopted by the international community should be given serious study with a view to co-ordinating and harmonizing their operation. New programmes of education and information at the international, national and local levels should be drawn up and carried out in order to instil into the great masses of the people an understanding of the value, nature and extent of their inalienable rights. His delegation was ready to support any practical and constructive proposal designed to infuse the spirit of the Conference into programmes for the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

23. In keeping with the broad perspective in which it regarded the work of the Teheran Conference, the Philippines had sponsored, together with many other delegations, draft resolution A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1. The draft resolution was primarily intended to keep the spirit of the International Year alive and to give support and inspiration to future labours in the field of human rights. His delegation hoped, therefore, that the Committee would adopt the draft resolution unanimously.

24. Referring to the observance of International Year for Human Rights, he said that his Government had reported to the Secretary-General on the measures and activities undertaken in his country in connexion with the Year (see A/7195). The President of the Philippines had officially proclaimed 1968 International Human Rights Year. Under the supervision of the national committee, all sectors of Philippine society had participated in a broad programme of activities in observance of the Year, the main purpose of which was to create a greater awareness of the value of human rights. Two significant proposals had also been put forward for the protection of human rights: one was the proposal by the Secretary of Labour to make a detailed study of instances in which Philippine labour practices might constitute violations of the relevant provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other was a proposal by the Civil Liberties Union, a Philippine non-governmental organization, to undertake a similar study on possible violations of human rights in the Philippines.

25. Finally, he said that he was encouraged by the progress which had been made in the twenty years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. Today a point had been reached where it was possible to speak of the right and obligation of the United Nations to take action to put an end to violations of human rights wherever they occurred. It was also true that there had been failures and set-backs, which showed that the progress of human rights merely reflected

the fluctuations of human life, with its triumphs and defeats. If the same injustices and abuses occurred in the modern world as in the past, he would like to think that there was one significant difference, namely that the international community through the United Nations, was more determined than ever to devise new and more effective methods and strategies to overcome such evils and to make possible the genuine liberation of the human mind and spirit.

26. Mrs. ESHEL (Israel) said that looking back today over the United Nations' record of activities in the field of human rights, one might justifiably be satisfied with the number of important conventions and instruments drawn up under its auspices. There was also no doubt that the Teheran Conference held early in 1968 had made an important constructive contribution to the cause of human rights. It should not be forgotten, however, that while a conference could clarify and reaffirm principles, it was left to each individual Member State to apply them. The moral force of ideas that were formulated and approved at the international level derived chiefly from the consensus on which they were based. By that standard, the Proclamation of Teheran had been a worthy achievement. It was regrettable, however, that the work of the Conference had not been conducted wholly in the spirit she had mentioned, i.e., in a desire to find a positive consensus. Her delegation had found itself the target of a political propaganda offensive which had disrupted the proceedings, created dissension and led to the adoption of a one-sided political resolution.

27. She also expressed her concern over the serious breaches of the most fundamental freedoms still occurring in the modern world twenty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Injustice and the denial of human rights were particularly flagrant in certain parts of the African continent, where millions of people still suffered from the humiliation and misery caused by policies of racialism and discrimination. As far as colonialism was concerned, much had been achieved, particularly in the course of the past decade. The striking growth in the membership of the United Nations reflected the progress from colonial vassalage to independent sovereignty of great territories and vast numbers of people. It was regrettable, on the other hand, that during the year dedicated to human rights the world had witnessed the tragic events in Central Europe, which had been the most flagrant violation of fundamental freedoms. The issue was of the greatest importance to all small nations. Significantly, however, the question was not even on the agenda of the General Assembly.

28. As far as international legal activities in the field of human rights were concerned, there were also some important gaps to be filled. The instruments so far drawn up by the United Nations dealt more with the right of the individual than with the collective rights of minority groups and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had devoted itself more to the former than to the latter. She wished to draw attention in that connexion to the plight of the Jewish minorities in certain Arab countries in the Middle East.

29. She deplored the credibility gap between legislature and practice and cited the discrimination practised by the Soviet Union against its Jewish minority, which numbered more than 3 million people. The Soviet Constitution recognized the existence of many ethnic groups and guaranteed them the right to use their own language, develop their special culture and traditions and practise their religion. Yet all those rights were being denied to the Jewish minority and, although it was officially recognized as a national group, it was doomed to forcible assimilation, spiritual strangulation and the loss of its culture.

30. It might have been hoped that the discrimination practised against that minority would diminish in celebration of the International Year for Human Rights, but instead, there had been a resurgence of anti-Semitism not only as a social phenomenon but as a political instrument.

31. In the circumstances, it was with deep concern that her delegation considered it its duty to draw attention to the systematic campaign of propaganda undertaken by the official mass media in the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany against the Jews. The campaign was allegedly directed against Zionism as an ideology and as a political movement. But it was evident from the tone and tenor of innumerable publications and statements that what was taking place was nothing less than a powerful revival of anti-Jewish prejudices and policies. Bertrand Russell, in a letter to *The Times* of London in September 1968, had warned that such manifestations, which he had thought were gone forever, were still an imminent possibility. Her delegation also noted with deep dismay that Trofim Kichko, a notorious anti-Semite and former collaborator with the Nazis, had resumed his activities in the official Press of the Soviet Union.

32. Since it was profoundly disturbed by those alarming developments, her delegation was deeply appreciative of the firm stand taken by the Government and people of Czechoslovakia against the pressure from the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany and their refusal to be drawn into anti-Semitic practices.

33. Although her people were deeply troubled by the problem of discrimination against minorities, she recognized that there were other serious problems besetting the world and that something more than formal declarations and legal instruments was required to resolve them. In that connexion, her delegation warmly welcomed the initiative taken by a number of Latin American countries to create a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; it felt that it would be still another way to promote respect for human rights throughout the world, and ensure their implementation.

34. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/7195, A/7195/Add.1 and Add.3-6) showed that all Member States had embarked on a series of positive measures and activities relating to the International Year for Human Rights. Italy had sought, first and foremost, to continue and intensify institutional activities in the human rights field although, fortunately, it had no significant problems relating to civil and political rights. Among those

activities were the training of elementary and intermediate school teachers through *ad hoc* courses. New initiatives specifically connected with the International Year for Human Rights had also been taken. The most important was the organization of a National Convention on Human Rights, which had been held at Turin in December 1967 under the auspices of the Italian National Consultative Committee on Human Rights. The records of the Convention, translated into English, had been circulated to the participants at the Teheran Conference. The thorough preparation of the Italian social work experts who had represented their country at the International Conference on Social Welfare held at Helsinki in August 1968 had been another important measure.

35. Finally, in reply to the request made by the United Nations Secretariat about documents and reports concerning human rights, the Government offices as well as public and private institutions had been busy collecting, elaborating and evaluating the relevant information. In addition, it should be noted that Italy had been one of the first countries to sign the International Covenants on Human Rights. She further noted that Italy had been represented at the Teheran Conference by a large delegation which included not only representatives of the Government, but also members of the Italian Consultative Committee for Human Rights and professors of international law.

36. Operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1, of which her delegation was a co-sponsor, contained a comprehensive evaluation of the work done at the Teheran Conference, which had on the whole been satisfactory. The draft resolution also reaffirmed the opinion of the Conference concerning the urgency of eliminating gross and massive violations of human rights and proposed that the Proclamation of Teheran, which had been adopted unanimously, should be endorsed by the General Assembly. In that connexion, she wished to thank the people of Iran and His Imperial Majesty the Shahinshah for their hospitality and for the capable manner in which Iran had fulfilled its commitment as host for the Conference.

37. The necessity of establishing specific initiatives as items of a programme of work was not debatable since it was required by the celebration of the International Year of Human Rights and by the hopes aroused by the Teheran Conference.

38. The Italian delegation had been particularly active in obtaining the inclusion in the Proclamation of Teheran of a specific paragraph dealing with youth. The draft resolution introduced by the Italian delegation (A/C.3/L.1635) concerning the need to impart a knowledge of human rights and of the activities of international organizations to the teaching staff of primary and secondary schools was directly motivated by the International Year for Human Rights and the Teheran Conference.

Mrs. Ould Daddah (Mauritania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

39. Mr. TEKLE (Ethiopia) emphasized the significance of the International Conference on Human Rights held at Teheran, which he had attended. The Proclamation of Teheran summed up the hopes and

aspirations of the Conference. As a corollary to the debates at the Conference, which he regarded as very important, the Committee should adopt draft resolution A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1, which had been co-sponsored by Ethiopia.

40. During the period of preparation for the Teheran Conference, his delegation had had an opportunity to inform the Committee of the activities undertaken by Ethiopia in celebration of the International Year for Human Rights. That information had been reproduced in the report of the Secretary-General (see A/7195/Add.1) and he would not dwell on it further.

41. In conclusion, he requested the representative of Iran to convey his appreciation to the people of that country and to the Emperor and Empress.

42. Mr. PAOLINI (France) said that full details of the displays and exhibitions organized in his country for the proper celebration of the International Year for Human Rights would appear in an addendum to the Secretary-General's report.^{1/}

43. The history of France was characterized by the achievement of the fundamental freedoms and the recognition and application of human rights, beginning with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789 and culminating in the work of decolonization through which the principle of the self-determination of peoples had been implemented, sometimes in the face of serious difficulties, in the regions and Territories that had been under the administration of the French Government. In the present International Year for Human Rights, that progressive development had been formally endorsed and had been crowned by the granting of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Cassin, who had been one of the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and since then had constantly upheld and inspired the French theses in the sphere of human rights, especially at the Teheran Conference, at which his delegation had taken the Chair.

44. Although the danger of the debates taking an unduly political turn had not always been avoided at the Teheran Conference, it had some positive achievements to its credit and the text of the Proclamation constituted an important reaffirmation of the principles already embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those achievements were due in large part to the Government of Iran, not only because of its generous hospitality but also because of the wisdom and impartiality shown by Her Imperial Highness Princess Ashraf Pahlavi in her functions as President of the Conference.

45. Nevertheless, no international conference could by its own efforts alone solve the fundamental problems that stood in the way of human progress. His delegation was convinced, however, that the very condition for such progress lay in respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had been reaffirmed in the Proclamation of Teheran.

46. The deplorable events that in 1968 were still causing the world such anguish were closely linked with the violation of the principle of self-determination

of peoples, which was one of the very foundations of peace. His country's position with regard to the events of Central Europe had been clearly stated by its Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 1683rd plenary meeting of the General Assembly held on 7 October 1968 and he would not, therefore, enlarge on the subject.

47. His delegation would like to see the basic principles of the Charter, in particular the self-determination of peoples and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, as also the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, not only universally accepted but universally applied, so that mankind might continue its progress along the road of détente and co-operation.

48. Mr. PIPARSANIA (India) proposed that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions should be 11 a.m. on Monday, 2 December.

It was so decided.

Mr. Nettel (Austria) resumed the Chair.

49. Mr. RAPOS (Czechoslovakia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United States representative had started a political debate on the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia which could only complicate the work of the Committee and which, moreover, did not constitute a friendly attitude to the present Government of Czechoslovakia. The head of his delegation had already explained, at the 1682nd plenary meeting of the General Assembly held on 4 October 1968, the events that had occurred in his country and he hoped that his position would be understood and respected. His delegation thought that the Committee should make very possible effort to accomplish constructive work.

50. Mr. NASINOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United States representative's statement interrupted the positive work that the Committee was doing and was calculated to encourage a return to the period of the cold war and to aggravate the international situation. Its object had been to use the debate on the present item in order to continue a defamatory campaign against the USSR and the socialist countries. The malicious insinuations voiced by the United States representative had nothing to do with the item before the Committee, for there was nothing political in any of the documents relating to it. Despite the appeal by the representative of Iran, the United States delegation had tried to initiate a political debate—in which the USSR delegation had no intention of participating—with the object of diverting the world's attention from the bloody aggression that the United States was perpetrating in Viet-Nam, the war of aggression unleashed by Israel against the Arab States and the revanchist activities of West Germany.

51. The imperialist countries were trying to undermine the successes achieved by the socialist countries, since in the imperialist countries there was no freedom except for the wealthy classes, whereas true freedom and the enjoyment of human rights were only to be found in countries where the workers themselves ran the government.

^{1/} Subsequently circulated as document A/7195/Add.7.

52. With regard to the statement by the representative of Israel, its sole purpose had been to support the defamatory campaign of the United States and to conceal the violations of human rights perpetrated by Israel against the Arab countries in the Middle East. It was indeed traditional in the Committee for the Israel delegation to hurl insults and invective of every type at the USSR on account of the alleged persecution of the Jewish minorities in the USSR, whereas in the USSR absolute equality of rights was guaranteed to all citizens without discrimination of any kind whatever.

53. He appealed to delegations to allow the discussion to resume its normal course and to proceed constructively.

54. Mr. TOMEH (Syria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that in his statement the representative of Israel had referred to a one-sided resolution that had been adopted at the Teheran Conference and to the alleged Arab propaganda carried out at that Conference, to the fact that the resolutions adopted at the Conference had reflected the voting machinery rather than the reality of the international situation and, lastly, to the alleged persecution of the Jewish minorities in the Arab countries of the Middle East.

55. The truth was that the Teheran Conference had not been subjected to any Arab propaganda, since the question of the violation of the human rights of the Palestine refugees had been closely related to the items that had been studied. The question had not been raised out of context, but with reference to a report on the subject submitted by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which had been submitted to the Conference by the Secretary-General, and his delegation had formally requested that that report should be circulated as a General Assembly document.^{2/}

56. Israel's assertions were merely a smoke-screen designed to hide its failure to comply with a number of humanitarian resolutions regarding the Palestine refugees, such as Security Council resolution 237 (1967), reaffirmed unanimously in General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V), and Security Council resolution 259 (1968), in which the Secretary-General had been asked to send a special representative to the area. In a later report by the Secretary-General^{3/} it had been stated that Israel had refused to receive the special representative; the report had also revealed Israel's obstructionist attitude with regard to the investigation of the tragic condition of the refugees, some of whom had found themselves in that unfortunate situation for the third time. It was in such circumstances that Israel came to the Committee to shed tears about human rights.

57. The report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East covering the period 1 July

1967 to 30 June 1968^{4/} revealed that the Palestine refugees lacked the most basic needs for their subsistence and that Israel, far from complying with the relevant resolutions, had destroyed the camps and schools that the refugees had been using. Moreover, the tragedy was not over. Israel was still demolishing houses, forcibly expelling the civilian inhabitants from their homes and committing an infinity of acts contrary to the Geneva Conventions, which were not only described in the statements by the Arab delegations but were recorded in official documents of the United Nations.

58. In contrast to the generous treatment given to the Jews in Syria, as described in his letter of 25 July 1968 to the Secretary-General,^{5/} the Arabs in the territories occupied by Israel were subjected to a multitude of repressive measures and restrictions imposed by the military authorities and were regarded as second-class citizens. As Uri Avnery said in his book *Israel without Zionists*, hatred of the Arabs seemed to be the corner-stone of Israel's Zionist policies.

59. History was continuing along the course it had followed during the past twenty years and there were today another 500,000 displaced persons in Arab territory. In view of those facts, it was regrettable that the representative of the United States, who had spoken so eloquently about human rights, had not seen fit even to mention the violations of those rights in the territory occupied by Israel.

60. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait), exercising his right of reply, said that it was unfortunate that the representative of the United States had not considered it necessary to refer to the observance of human rights in the territory occupied by Israel. The United States was fully aware of the situation, since it had voted in favour of the United Nations resolutions condemning Israel. Its attitude, therefore, could not be due to lack of information. He considered that the eloquence and fervour displayed by the United States representative would have been more convincing if more fairly distributed.

61. Mrs. ESHEL (Israel) reserved her right of reply, but wished to point out in passing that the representative of Syria had replied in advance to a statement which she had not made, although she intended to make it later on.

62. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia), exercising his right of reply, said that anyone who talked about freedom of information would find himself at odds with many small countries which since 1947 had been trying to preserve their freedom and not be buried under the avalanche of propaganda masquerading as genuine and responsible opinion. It was for that reason that the item on freedom of information traditionally appeared on the Committee's agenda. For ten years priority had been given to the item and, in particular, to the draft convention on freedom of information.

63. There was no freedom of information when the information media were in the hands of sectarian

^{2/} Subsequently circulated as document A/C.3/L.1636.

^{3/} Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-third Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1968, document S/8851.

^{4/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 13.

^{5/} Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-third Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1968, document S/8689.

factions which distorted the facts, either altering them directly or using indirect means, such as silence and censorship. Hence the need for a convention on freedom of information which would, among other things, put a stop to the flood of obscene literature

claiming to have an artistic purpose, which was protected by judges appointed for political reasons.

64. He considered that the Committee should avoid political debates and reserved his right of reply.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.