

the situation. In the light of those considerations the Committee would doubtless take a decision along the lines suggested in the joint draft resolution of which his delegation was a sponsor.

40. Mr. BEBLER (Yugoslavia), while reserving his right to speak later upon the substance of the question, replied to two accusations which the representative of the Soviet Union had implicitly levelled against his Government in asserting that "claims have been presented upon Albania by some other neighbours who are also protected by some great Powers . . ." That was aimed at Yugoslavia since the latter was the only other country adjacent to Albania. The accusation that Yugoslavia had powerful protectors had been adduced for the first time in the resolution adopted by the *Cominform* in June 1948. That accusation

had been repeated many times thereafter but it had not succeeded in convincing anyone in Yugoslavia, nor had many been convinced abroad. Consequently, Mr. Bebler felt it unnecessary to deal with the criticism at any length.

41. The second accusation was contained in a hint that Yugoslavia had made territorial claims upon Albania. Mr. Bebler denied that any such claim had been advanced in any form by any public figure in Yugoslavia and he challenged Mr. Vyshinsky to show otherwise. The Yugoslav Government had no territorial claims upon Albania. On the contrary, its policy was aimed only towards maintaining the independence and honour of its country.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.

### THREE HUNDREDTH MEETING

*Held at Lake Success, New York, on Friday, 28 October 1949, at 10.45 a.m.*

*Chairman: Mr. Lester B. PEARSON (Canada).*

#### **Threats to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece: report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans<sup>1</sup>—general discussion (continued)**

##### REPORT OF THE CONCILIATION COMMITTEE (continued)

1. Mr. VAN LANGENHOVE (Belgium) said that his delegation considered the events set forth in the report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans to be established facts. That Committee was composed of representatives from various parts of the world. Their impartiality and objectivity could not be questioned seriously. For the most part, their findings corroborated the conclusions of the previous year: that moral and material support had been given to the Greek partisans; that Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia had persistently refused to recognize the Special Committee and that those countries had completely disregarded the resolutions of the General Assembly. Lastly, the Special Committee reaffirmed the conclusions of its previous reports according to which continuation of the present situation "constitutes a threat to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece and to peace in the Balkans." Though the facts constituting the threat remained fundamentally the same, the Special Committee nevertheless pointed out that the situation had developed somewhat. "Albania is the principle source of material assistance but the Special Committee has taken note of certain activities in countries other than the northern neighbours of Greece, particularly Romania, in support of the Greek guerrilla movement."

2. There was another finding of the Special Committee which deserved particular attention: "The Governments which received Greek children removed from Greece have not complied with the General Assembly resolution 193 C (III) of

27 November 1948 calling on them to co-operate in the return of the children to their families. In violation of fundamental humanitarian principles, some of these children, both boys and girls, of adolescent age, have been sent back to Greece to fight in the ranks of the guerrillas. Those children, numbering several thousands, had been urgently asked back by their parents. In spite of the persistent efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League Red Cross Societies, the children had not been returned to them. Such a situation could not but profoundly shock the conscience of the world.

3. Turning to the report of the Conciliation Committee set up during the current session, Mr. van Langenhove said it was unusual to make the conclusion of an agreement, the sole purpose of which was to re-establish normal relations, dependent on the recognition as final of the existing Greek-Albanian frontier. There were many countries in the world between which there were or had been territorial disputes but which had yet maintained normal and even friendly relations. The essential thing was for them to show a determination as Greece had done, not to resort to threats of or the use of force, as prescribed by the Charter. In applying the Charter, Greece had been bringing the events of which it was complaining to the attention of the United Nations for the last three years. On several occasions the great majority of the General Assembly had recognized that those events constituted a threat to Greece's political independence and territorial integrity, as well as to peace in the Balkans, and that they were incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter. Greece had followed, and had agreed to follow, all the procedures of inquiry or of settlement adopted by the General Assembly. On the other hand, the countries accused had constantly refused to comply with the terms of the Assembly's resolution and had not even recognized the body set up by the United Nations in the Balkans. Those who had defended those States during the current session had tried to divert attention from the actions of those States by accusing the State which was

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly* Supplement No. 8.

the victim of aggression. If such attempts were to succeed, the guarantees for security which all States, and particularly the small ones, had the right to expect from the application of the Charter would be in danger. The Belgian delegation would vote in favour of the joint draft resolution (A/C.1/513) which would confirm the previous resolutions of the General Assembly.

4. Mr. VYSHINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to the statement made by the Yugoslav representative at the previous meeting of the Committee, said that he had never stated anything like what had been imputed to him by that representative. He had said that if the decision of the General Assembly with regard to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Greece had not been complied with, the responsibility lay with the Greek Government, which had been unwilling to abandon its aggressive appetites with respect to Albania and certain other neighbours. Mr. Vyshinsky said that any other passage of his statement had been to the effect that the USSR would always defend Albania or any other small State that was in the right, and whose neighbours wished to take advantage of it, whenever States would use other States, like Greece, in order to serve their own interests.

5. Mr. Vyshinsky noted that the Belgian representative had praised the objectivity, work and conclusions of the Special Committee. The USSR delegation had a completely different point of view and considered that the present report (A/935) was marked by the same flagrant drawbacks as had marked previous reports of the Special Committee. For example, the anecdotal data previously used as evidence against the northern neighbours of Greece had placed defenders of the Special Committees in a ludicrous situation. Anecdotal conclusions and testimonies were no longer common, however. While previously the observation groups had been happy to obtain stupid but sincere witnesses, a premium had now been placed on the cleverness and willingness of the witness to testify. However, all persons with any legal or judicial experience realized how carefully such over-zealous witnesses had to be dealt with.

6. He noted that the United Kingdom representative had said at the previous meeting that attention would be drawn to some minor inconsistencies in the report and that those would perhaps be utilized in an attempt to compromise and jeopardize the value of the report and of the testimony. The United Kingdom representative had been right in assuming that course of action would be followed but wrong in believing that the inconsistencies or falsifications in the report were only minor. The Special Committee had endeavoured to attach to its work a certain aura of decency. It had tried to cover up its true purposes and objectives under the guise of objectivity and impartiality and had therefore created a new special procedure for the questioning of witnesses. That procedure was not in itself particularly exceptionable. However, it was merely a design to mask the perpetuation of the tendency of the Special Committee to select only such material as provided accusing data. All materials that would have served to deny such data had been rejected. That was a most arbitrary procedure and proved a bias most intolerable in a tribunal. In demonstrating such

bias, the Special Committee had shown that its activity was harmful and evil, and was likely to lead to those international complications that the Committee supposedly was expected to avert. That fact could be demonstrated by an examination of the work of the observation groups of the Special Committee on the Balkans, the cornerstone of which was the testimony of witnesses. In that connexion, Mr. Vyshinsky said that the brief categorical formulae used to characterize and describe the witnesses were completely insignificant. That fact would not fail to find its reflection in the value of the kind of evidence given by the witnesses. In view of the numbers interrogated, it could not be expected that all the testimony given would be included in the final report. As was stated in paragraph 61 of the report, some kind of selection had therefore been essential. According to the second sentence of that paragraph, reference had been made "only to representative or especially significant witnesses." However, no mention had been made of the fact that the testimony had been hand-picked. The witnesses had not been placed at the disposal of the Committee on the basis of principles set forth in the rules of procedure. According to the report, ordinarily witnesses had been brought up by the Greek police and by the Greek liaison officers after having been questioned by the police. Mr. Vyshinsky said that the overwhelming majority of witnesses heard by the Special Committee and by the observer groups of that Committee had been supplied by the Greek police from concentration camps and gaols. Those witnesses had been persons whose cases had been *sub judice*, and had known that anything they said would be used against them. While all the formal specifications appeared to have been complied with, such testimony could not be considered. Even if all the testimony had been correctly recorded, witnesses brought in by the police from such places as Makronesos Island, with the threat of punishment hanging over their heads, were not free, and an indictment or verdict could never be based on the testimony of that type of witness.

7. A witness must be truly free and independent for his testimony to be credible. Referring to paragraph 62 of the Special Committee's report, which stated that a number of the witnesses had been under detention pending further investigation by Greek Authorities, Mr. Vyshinsky said that the nature and location of those investigations was well known and had been described during the discussion regarding the death sentences passed on nine outstanding Greek social, political and trade-union leaders. He quoted a recent article written by the Secretary-General of the Greek Socialist Party and published in the Greek newspaper *Make*, which analysed a recently adopted law that had been represented as a progressive piece of legislation on the part of the Greek Government. That law had established so-called measures of national re-education and was said by the author of the article to permit Greek reaction to use its provisions as a tool in the struggle with its political enemies. Moreover, according to the author of the article, who had quoted the statement of a Minister to the effect that the Makronese schools were being set up for many years and would continue to function even after the revocation of the third decree, that law, dealing with the reorganization of the concentration camps on the Makronesos Island

was not a temporary or extraordinary measure. Mr. Vyshinsky pointed out that the third decree dealt with extraordinary measures whereby the Government could have anyone it wished shot summarily. The author of the article had listed the categories of persons to be relegated to those concentration camps and had described the methods used by the "re-educators". Mr. Vyshinsky described an incident in which 600 prisoners had been transferred from one camp to another on 14 October 1949. The prisoners had been beaten for a number of hours by soldiers armed with clubs, and, as a result of those atrocious floggings, five of the prisoners had died and thirty had become insane. Two hundred other political prisoners considered as unfit for re-education had also been subjected to floggings and tortures and had been faced with the alternatives of abandonment of their views or death. Mr. Vyshinsky said that according to press reports, one of the prisoners faced with that cruel alternative had already committed suicide.

8. That was the kind of "previous interrogation" to which the witnesses heard by the Special Committee or by its observation groups had been subjected. It was on the testimony of such witnesses that the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Committee had been based. It was clear that that testimony, and therefore the conclusions and recommendations, were vitiated and untrustworthy.

9. Mr. Vyshinsky said that he would take a number of representative facts and would analyse them, since it was impossible to analyse everything contained in the report. The scandalous foundation of those supposed facts was invariably to be found at the basis of the other facts in the Special Committee's report. One example was furnished by two witnesses who figured in the reports of the observation groups. Those two witnesses had been numbered 4/W/212 and 3/W/160 and had given very similar testimony. The reports of the observer groups stated that the two witnesses were one and the same person. Mr. Vyshinsky pointed out, however, that according to one observation group the age of the witness was 41, whereas according to the other it was 57. Moreover, the background of the witness was completely different in the two reports. While such differences might be dismissed easily by Mr. McNeil, it was clear that there was either a flagrant error or a falsification. That was something quite inadmissible in the case of serious documents on which serious charges against Governments were based.

10. Another indication of the kind of discrepancy to be found in the report was contained in the chapter alleging that Albanian Authorities actively co-operated in the recruitment of partisans. It was stated that an order had been published in Albanian newspapers to the effect that all Greek refugees were to enroll and fight with the guerrillas. The footnote to the paragraph in which that allegation was made referred to the records of some observation groups which included testimony by a number of witnesses on which those charges were based. Mr. Vyshinsky said that he had read the testimony of the four witnesses who were cited in the footnote. One of them, No. 1/W/377, had left Albania because he had been afraid of persecution owing to the fact that he was not a member of the Communist Party. That indicated that the witness had not been unbiased.

Moreover, it was hardly possible to say somebody had fled because he had not been a member of the Communist Party, since under those conditions a large section of the population of some countries would have to flee. In any case that witness had merely stated that the order in question had appeared in Albanian newspapers on 12 and 13 March. Another witness, No. 1/W/383, had not stated that the order had appeared in a newspaper, but had been made by Greek officers who were partisans. While that might be an accidental contradiction, the next witness, No. 1/W/385, had stated that he had received an order from some Greek organ to appear in Delvine to be recruited into partisan ranks. One of the witnesses had said that out of three hundred persons at a meeting, forty-five had actually been conscripted. Such a statement was obviously completely inconsistent, as those persons must have volunteered. Those statements of the three witnesses were obviously contradictory. The first witness had not said what he had seen or read but what he had been ordered to say. Thus when the Special Committee had started to investigate the facts it had found a statement of the Greek liaison officer, contained in an official document, to the effect that the Albanian Government had published a certain order. On 5 May 1949, the Special Committee had sent a letter to that liaison officer, requesting him to submit a copy, together with a translation, of that alleged Albanian order to the Chams to enter Greek partisan detachments. The Greek liaison officer had also been told that it might be desirable to have additional data regarding the training of those refugees and their conscription into partisan detachments. In its reply to that letter, on 5 June 1949, the Greek Liaison Service had merely sent a verbatim copy of the testimony of the witnesses which Mr. Vyshinsky had just referred to, though the numbers of those witnesses have not been given. The Special Committee had noted that no newspaper confirmation, no textual confirmation and no documents to authenticate the information had been submitted by the Greek Liaison Service. Thus a most heinous accusation to the effect that the Albanian Government had taken measures to mobilize Greek refugees in Albanian territory into the partisan army had been based on the testimony of one witness who had alleged that he had read the story in some newspapers. Moreover, no authentic copy of an order or newspaper had been furnished to back up that accusation.

11. Mr. Vyshinsky concluded that the work of the Special Committee on the Balkans with respect to Albania did not look very trustworthy. Exactly the same was true of the accusations against Bulgaria. All the accusations in the report were based on the same kind of testimony. Thus according to the testimony of witness No. 4/W/271, leaders of the guerrillas had negotiated with Bulgarian privates about the supplying of arms on the Bulgarian border. However, that could hardly be taken as an official action of the Bulgarian Government, even if the testimony were taken as correct. It was well known that smugglers contacted certain border guards in order to smuggle through illegally what they could not get through legally. That happened not only in Bulgaria but elsewhere, and could hardly be represented as having anything to do with the Bulgarian Government. Mr. Vyshinsky said that the testimony of that same witness was completely

contradictory with regard to how such weapons or supplies were actually transported over the border. There was a great deal of inference and of unauthenticated information in the report. Furthermore, the type of question called for by the rules of procedure had never been asked, according to the records of the testimony. Those questions had not been asked because they would only have indicated how untrustworthy the witnesses were.

12. Mr. Vyshinsky declared that there was no piece of testimony showing any relation of the Bulgarian or Albanian Governments to any such supplying of weapons. There were other interesting documents, however. He quoted a statement of a Greek Army commander, in secret army document No. 40186 to the effect that ten sailing vessels going to the Dodecanese and other Greek islands from the port of Bari were used for smuggling arms and supplies to the partisans. Other confidential documents issued by the Greek General Staff had also described such smuggling from French or Italian ports, as well as from regions of North Africa. Those documents showed how weapons had been supplied to the partisans.

13. The accusation made by the Special Committee was that Bulgaria and Albania had been supplying the Greek guerrillas with weapons and ammunition. Nothing was said of the French, American and Italian equipment found in their possession. The Special Committee adduced as evidence a certain number of such weapons which had been found on territory evacuated by the guerrillas. In actual fact all that the Greek Army had discovered was a small quantity of arms and ammunition bearing Bulgarian markings some of which had been manufactured as long ago as 1924. Even if the Greek Army had discovered large quantities of such equipment, that would not have proved the accusation in any way since, as was well known, the Bulgarian troops which had occupied Greece during the war had left considerable supplies behind during their hasty withdrawal and it was only natural that the Greek people should have employed them in the struggle against the monarcho-fascist régime.

14. A further piece of evidence adduced by the Special Committee was the report by the Fourth Observation Group that it had observed a convoy of trucks crossing the frontier from Bulgarian territory into Greece. If one consulted the map appended to the report of the Fourth Observation Group it would be seen that the headquarters of the group was situated 8 kilometres from the border and the convoy of trucks was said to have been observed from a distance of 10 kilometres, at night, by its lights. The map showed that there were two roads at the spot indicated, running parallel, one of which crossed the border while the other continued on Bulgarian territory. Mr. Vyshinsky saw no reason to suppose that the observation group had not been mistaken and that the convoy had actually been travelling on the second road. Likewise, it was reported that trenches had been dug by the guerrillas on the Bulgarian side of the frontier. Here again the evidence was not conclusive. There was no reason to suppose that the trenches had not been constructed by the Bulgarian border guards. Actually, there were Bulgarian fortifications at the place referred to. On the other hand, there was much evidence that the Greek guerrillas who crossed into Bulgaria were disarmed and

interned. Mr. Vyshinsky cited the evidence of two witnesses who had given testimony before the Special Committee to that effect. It was significant that all that evidence which favoured Albania and Bulgaria was ignored in the Special Committee's report.

15. The foregoing clearly led to the conclusion, despite the contrary assertions by preceding speakers, that the Special Committee's report was biased and unjudicial. It artificially ignored the evidence which did not advance the objectives of the Special Committee and it was replete with contradictions and inconsistencies. Mr. Vyshinsky recalled that, in 1946, when the Security Council Commission of Investigation had first been created he had pointed out the complexity of such an investigation which required that it be entrusted not to a political body but to a group of trained expert investigators. It might well be that the members of the Special Committee were very honest persons but they lacked the requisite experience. Furthermore, the work of the Special Committee was tendentious and showed a definite political bias. That was why the Soviet Union delegation could not accept its conclusions and recommendations.

16. Moreover, Mr. Vyshinsky considered that the conclusion drawn in the joint draft resolution from the findings of the Special Committee did not accord either with those findings or with the evidence upon which those recommendations were based. The Soviet Union delegation would therefore oppose the joint draft resolution. It held the view that the only correct solution would be one based upon the proposals which it had submitted (A/C.1/518) and upon which Mr. Vyshinsky would speak at a later time when the Committee commenced discussion of the various draft resolutions.

17. The representative of the Soviet Union replied to a number of points contained in the statement of the United Kingdom representative (299th meeting). Mr. McNeil had asserted that the Greek claim to Northern Epirus was based upon certain national interests, widely supported by the Greek people, and he had referred to a communist, an EAM leader, who had said something in that spirit. That was not the question. What was important was that the Greek Government coveted the territory of Albania whereas the latter had presented no territorial claims upon Greece. Moreover, the Greek Government had refused to accept the existing frontier as final and was only willing to agree that it would not use force or the threat of force for territorial aggrandizement. That clearly meant that the Greek Government still coveted Albanian territory and in such a situation it was hardly possible to expect any agreement. Of course, Mr. Vyshinsky recognized that national frontiers were not immutable. But they could be modified only on the basis of mutual understanding and respect for the equality of States and the self-determination of peoples. It was in accordance with those principles that the Carpathian Ukraine had been transferred from the Czechoslovak Republic to the Ukrainian SSR. In the same way, the frontier between Poland and the USSR had been modified in accordance with the Curzon Line by a mutual exchange of territory. That was a very different thing from attempting to seize territory against the will of its owners. The United Kingdom Government today supported Greek claims but,

in a book published in 1923, Mr. Churchill had described Greece's annexation of Bulgarian territory after the First World War as an untactful act and had favoured Bulgarian demands for its return.

18. The United Kingdom representative had also said that the Greek Government had been freely elected by its people. But, had not the preceding Premier, Mr. Sophoulis, said on the eve of the elections that none but the Monarchists enjoyed freedom to express their opinion and had not two Ministers resigned because they could not agree to those elections? Mr. Vyshinsky cited several reports of American journalists who had watched the elections being carried out to show that the plebiscite had been controlled by the rightist parties by intimidation and falsification of ballots. It was especially noteworthy that one of the international observers had been dismissed because he had stated that, out of 38 registration cards which he had examined, 30 had been false. There was also a news agency report from Athens to the effect that 16 electoral lists had contained the names of dead persons. Out of 2 million persons about half had abstained from participating in the elections on the grounds that they were not free.

19. The United Kingdom representative had resented the assertion that his Government had strategic interests in Greece. He had said that his Government did not conceal the fact that it desired to have a friendly Greek Government. But, on 26 October 1948 (172nd meeting), Mr. McNeil had himself stated that the United Kingdom did have certain strategic interests in Greece. In Mr. Vyshinsky's view, there was ample evidence to show that the source of the threat to peace in the Balkans did not only lie in the aggressive intentions of the Greek Government but in the influence exerted by certain ruling circles in the United States and the United Kingdom which desired to transform the Balkans into a springboard for economic and strategic action. That was why the Soviet Union delegation insisted on the withdrawal of foreign troops as the prerequisite for normalizing the situation in Greece. It likewise insisted that the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans be abolished because it served no useful purpose and because the material which it submitted to the General Assembly misled the latter into taking action which further complicated the relations between Greece and its northern neighbours, and did not help the internal situation in Greece.

20. Mr. DE ALBA (Mexico) believed that a solution to the Greek question could be found only if all Members of the United Nations, in a spirit of good will, employed all their efforts towards conciliation. It was especially important to act with the utmost care in order not to further exacerbate the hatreds and passions that had been aroused as a result of the sufferings on the part of all the inhabitants of the area. It must be recognized that the situation was rendered extremely complex as a result of the many issues involved. The United Nations should act in a spirit of humanity and sympathy towards the people concerned. That fact was dramatically emphasized by the information that had been received concerning Greek children. The situation

had been properly stated in a speech by a Greek representative at a recent international conference. He had pointed out that in Greece there was no division between vanquished and victors: everywhere there was bitterness and unhappiness and endless suffering extended throughout the land. The proper role of the General Assembly, which accorded with the ideal of international harmony and co-operation upon which the United Nations was based had been shown in the efforts at conciliation undertaken during the third session of the Assembly in Paris under the leadership of Dr. Evatt. The present situation was characterized by accusations and counter-accusations which merely hardened the political division between opposing ideologies and offered no hope of a solution. Mr. de Alba therefore appealed for a return to the ideals of co-operation and harmony among the great Powers which had been expressed at San Francisco, Teheran and Yalta. The United Nations was based on the belief that differing ideologies could exist together in a world at peace. It was therefore of vital importance both for a solution in the Balkans and for the future of the United Nations that the great Powers should utilize their influence to bring about an understanding. The United Kingdom representative had said that the Soviet Union could do much to influence events. Perhaps the representative of the Soviet Union could say something to the same effect regarding the United Kingdom. It was therefore the duty of the great Powers, as also of the other Members of the United Nations, to make every effort to preserve the spirit which imbued the Charter.

21. Mr. de Alba believed that a means should be sought to enable the Conciliation Committee to continue its work. He noted that the joint draft resolution did not close the door to that possibility. On the question of repatriation the Greek children the representative of Mexico believed that the proposal contained in the joint draft resolution should be adopted unanimously. The remainder of the proposal should be subjected to careful consideration. Clearly there should be an attempt to seek a settlement by diplomatic negotiations. Such negotiations presupposed, on the part of both sides, a flexible attitude of give and take. The proposal of the Soviet Union might well have been appropriate when the Second World War had just ended and reconstruction only just begun. However, it could not be accepted at the present time. Mr. de Alba believed that the representative of the Soviet Union knew very well that his proposal would not receive general support. He had put it forward as a measure of a political nature because it would give him a basis for all kinds of new arguments.

22. In conclusion, Mr. de Alba recalled the draft resolution (A/662/Rev.1) of the Mexican delegation which the General Assembly had unanimously adopted at its third session in Paris and which had resulted in the establishment of the first Conciliation Committee. He hoped that that resolution would receive some encouragement and reaffirmation so that it could once more become operative.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.