

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING
held on Thursday, 25 April 1968, at 3.45 p.m.

President: H.I.H. Princess Ashraf PAHLAVI Iran

REVIEW OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED, AT THE INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS, IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THE ADOPTION AND PROCLAMATION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN 1948, PARTICULARLY IN THE PROGRAMMES UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES (item 9 of the provisional agenda) (A/CONF.32/4, A/CONF.32/5 and Add.1, A/CONF.32/7 and Add.1-2, A/CONF.32/8-9-10, A/CONF.32/12, A/CONF.32/13 and Corr.1, A/CONF.32/16; A/CONF.32/L.9-11) (continued)

General debate (continued)

The PRESIDENT invited the Observer for the League of Arab States (LAS) to address the Conference.

Mr. NOFAL (League of Arab States) drew the attention of the Conference to the reports that had been distributed outlining the activities of LAS in the field of human rights.

The LAS had been set up on 22 March 1945, a few months before the United Nations, and shared with the latter its principles and concepts and the circumstances which had led to its creation. During the past twenty-three years it had achieved considerable success in guaranteeing the economic, social and cultural rights of man. Multilateral agreements had been concluded on economic and cultural unity, on the establishment of an Arab common market, and in health, labour and social affairs. Co-operation between LAS and the United Nations was covered by an exchange of correspondence, and agreements had been concluded with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In addition, in commemoration of the International Year for Human Rights, a permanent commission for human rights had been established.

The Arab countries were following the work of the present Conference with keen interest, the more so because the history of the Arabs had been a long struggle for the defence and fulfilment of human rights. Their interest in the subject stemmed from a constant aggression, which had reached its climax in an unprecedented violation of the rights of the Arab man. In the middle of the twentieth century the people of Palestine had been subjected to an aggression which had evicted half of them from their homeland and usurped their sacred right to live in their country and to own their land. For twenty years the minority which had remained in occupied territory had been subject to martial law and racial discrimination. In 1967 the rest of the Palestinian people had been exposed to a worse aggression, as a result of which the remaining part of their homeland had been occupied. Half a million Arabs had been rendered homeless and three Arab countries had been attacked. The acts committed against humanity during the past ten months exceeded in atrocity the Nazi and Fascist crimes.

The present Conference had been convened by the United Nations, which had adopted several resolutions condemning the violation of the rights of the Arab man. Yet the forces of aggression were still challenging the United Nations, violating human rights and international laws and values. The LAS therefore hoped that the Conference would contribute to the restoration of the Arab man's rights in Palestine and the occupied territories around it, and would take positive steps to protect human rights in every part of the world where they were being violated.

Mr. KAMENOV (Bulgaria) said that although his country had not been a Member of the United Nations in 1948 and consequently had been unable to take part in the preparation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it had supported the many measures connected with its application. Bulgaria's interest in human rights was a natural concomitant of its socialist system, which reflected the great ideals of freedom, fraternity, equality and well-being for all. The struggle for socialism was inseparably linked to the struggle for democracy and for the liberation and fulfilment of the individual. It was untrue to say, as certain critics of Marxism had maintained, that socialist countries were partisans of violence and destruction. Whenever the conditions existed for peaceful development towards socialism, the working class and the socialist parties had always chosen peaceful means. The fight for national liberation of colonial peoples was a case in point: it was only because the colonialists had resorted to violence that the colonial peoples had been obliged to take up arms.

The chief task of Marxists in human rights was to give practical expression to rights and freedoms, which were often formally recognized in the constitutions and laws of capitalist countries but generally remained a dead letter. The chief obstacle to the fulfilment of human rights in the capitalist countries lay in the very nature of capitalism, which as an economic and social system transformed those rights in most cases into a pure formality. The constitution and laws of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, on the other hand, recognized and guaranteed to citizens all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration and allied texts. It was true that most of those rights had also existed under the former bourgeois Constitution, but as a result of the different conditions then obtaining they had been meaningless. For example, under the capitalist system, the right to education had held no meaning for the children of millions of workers and peasants, who could not afford to send their children to school and had often been obliged to put them to work for the upkeep of the family. At the present time the right to education in Bulgaria was a real right extended to all children. Illiteracy had been

practically eradicated and more than 20 per cent of the population were receiving education. The same could be said of the right to employment, which had been an empty phrase for tens of thousands of unemployed workers under the former capitalist system. In other words, under one system rights and freedoms had a purely formal sense, while under the other there were genuine guarantees of their application in practice.

Discussions between representatives of the two different systems and the criticisms they levelled at each other could be constructive only if each side bore in mind the basic differences between them. The representatives of socialist countries had to realize that the capitalist system restricted the actual implementation of certain human rights for broad sections of the community, while the representatives of the western countries had to realize that under the socialist system there were no opposed classes and exploitation had been eliminated. The socialist State represented the supreme form of public organization, in which the interests of society and the individual were united and harmonized. Whichever system was preferred, it was useless to try and impose the principles applicable to one upon the other.

The main task of the Conference was to draw the attention of public opinion to the worst violations of human rights. In Viet-Nam the most fundamental rights were being being trampled underfoot and no civilized man could close his eyes to the acts of barbarism which were being committed upon the heroic Vietnamese people. The second black spot in the list of violations of human rights was racial discrimination and its most degenerate form - apartheid. The United Nations had condemned racial discrimination as a crime against humanity and had denounced apartheid as an international crime and a threat to peace. Nevertheless, racial discrimination was still rampant in certain former colonial territories and was becoming an increasingly serious problem in some civilized countries. The weak point in the struggle against apartheid was the failure to apply the sanctions that had been decided. It was to be regretted that certain western Powers were blatantly violating the resolutions of the United Nations, thus robbing sanctions of their effectiveness. The Smith regime in Southern Rhodesia and the racialist Government of South Africa had managed to stay in power only as a result of the political, economic and military aid given by certain western countries. In addition, the most shameful form of colonialism was still practised in such countries as Angola, Mozambique and so-called Portuguese Guinea. A further problem arising from the violation of human rights was that of the Arab refugees, who were obliged to live in conditions unworthy of human beings. The most astonishing fact for the present generation, which had witnessed the barbaric treatment of the Jews

by Hitler, was that the Jews themselves had become the agents of racism and aggression. It was high time to put an end to the intolerable situation created by Israel's aggression in the Near East. Lastly, neo-Nazism was a further danger now threatening human rights and freedoms.

The Bulgarian delegation considered that the Conference should make an appeal to all countries which had not yet signed or ratified the United Nations instruments and texts on human rights to do so as soon as possible. It was absolutely essential to take effective steps to ensure compliance with the resolutions concerning racial discrimination and apartheid, the liquidation of the aftermath of colonialism and the application of economic sanctions, and to adopt new measures to that end. The Bulgarian delegation hoped that the Conference would find a way of overcoming the obstacles to the application of the principles of human rights so that the present meeting would be known as the historic Conference of Teheran.

The PRESIDENT invited the Observer for the Council of Europe to address the Conference.

Mr. MODINOS (Council of Europe) said that from its inception and in accordance with its Statute the Council of Europe had been associated with the United Nations. Furthermore, when the General Assembly had adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Council of Europe had been the first to respond by drawing up the European Convention on Human Rights. Signed on 4 November 1950, the European Convention had for the first time in the history of law provided for collective enforcement and set up international organs to ensure the observance of the engagements undertaken by States. It had been followed on 18 October 1961 by the European Social Charter. For their part, the United Nations and the specialized agencies had produced a series of agreements and conventions which formed an impressive corpus of human and social law, supplemented by the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It was clear that the same spirit inspired all those instruments, which were inter-related and complementary. Any rivalry between them was unthinkable.

The Council of Europe considered that the regional protection of human rights was bound to further the purposes of the United Nations covenants, since what could not be achieved at world level might be accepted by a group of States. Having the same customs, usages and interests, countries of a single region could more easily

bind themselves together by treaty obligations. A comparison of the enforcement system established by the European instrument with that provided for in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights would demonstrate that fact. At Strasbourg any application lodged by a contracting party or an individual person led to an "opinion" of the European Commission, followed by a "judgment" of the European Court or a "decision" of the Committee of Ministers. Under the European system each complaint was investigated and judged. That action at the regional level could not but further the efforts made at the world level.

It was of vital importance to avoid any conflict which might arise between the various instruments designed for the protection of human rights and freedoms. Conflicts of jurisdiction or discrepancies in the definition, interpretation or application of the same right could only bring confusion into a subject which ought to be clear and precise. He therefore thought that the time had come to set up an international centre for documentation and information on the whole question of instruments and bodies concerned with human rights.

The Council of Europe's report (A/CONF.32/L.9) explained at length the workings of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. Those two instruments were timely reminders that political democracy could not exist without social democracy. They had led to an innovation in international law inasmuch as certain countries had brought their Constitutions and laws into line with them. The whole concept of national sovereignty was modified if the jurisdiction of the European Court was accepted. By 30 March 1968 the Secretariat of the European Commission had registered 3,570 applications from individuals and seven applications by States. The Commission had already given more than 3,000 decisions on the admissibility of those applications and after investigation had formulated fifty opinions on whether or not there had been a violation of the Convention. So far, the European Court had given two judgments, while there were five other cases pending. The Committee of Ministers had taken nine decisions to date. Although some delays and shortcomings had arisen in the operation of the Convention, nobody could deny its effectiveness. It could even be affirmed that among European States, human rights and freedoms now had the force and quality of international constitutional rules. What was being done at the Council of Europe must necessarily serve the protection of the same rights and freedoms at world level. In that connexion, he wished to stress

the importance of the right of individual appeal. After all national sources of redress had been exhausted, the individual should have the right to appeal to an international body and, in his opinion, a judicial organ was better placed to judge such issues than a political one.

The participation of the Council of Europe in the International Year for Human Rights was a further token of its loyalty to the United Nations, which had been officially recorded in resolution 314 of the parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and in resolution (67) 15 of the Committee of Ministers. The Council of Europe considered that a common respect for social and political rights was the best, indeed the only, way of securing peace within and between States.

Mr. NÚÑEZ ARISTIMÚÑO (Venezuela) said that his Government welcomed the holding of the present Conference on Human Rights, for it considered that discussion of human rights would further friendly relations between States.

The individual had for a long time been ignored in international law. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, there had been certain pronouncements in which the rights of the individual as a citizen of the world, independently of his status as a citizen of a State, had been recognized. Slowly but surely that idea had gained ground and had been expressed in various declarations, beginning with the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. Later the constitutions of the South American nations had incorporated the same ideas.

The rights of citizens were expressed in most constitutions of the present day, but they were not guaranteed because of a lack of adequate instruments to provide for their effective implementation. The provisions were usually unilateral and had no backing in sanctions if the rights of the individual were violated, especially by the State itself.

The adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been a great step forward in fulfilment of the determination expressed in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women. The Declaration had its sole foundation in the belief that the contracting States would not confine themselves to statements. It was true that some international jurists of repute held the Declaration to be a text of international law, but some States maintained that it had only moral force. In practice, States had done little

to advance the cause of human rights since 1948 and it was for that reason that, in 1965, the General Assembly had decided to convene the present Conference to evaluate the effectiveness of United Nations methods in the field of human rights and to prepare a programme to be undertaken subsequent to the celebrations of the International Year for Human Rights.

His country hoped to co-operate in providing firmer foundations for human rights by formulating guarantees which would make those rights a reality. As a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), Venezuela had agreed to promote human rights. Moreover, since the beginning of the nineteenth century the Venezuelan Constitution had contained express provisions for the maintenance of the rights of the individual. In particular, the present Constitution included a promise to co-operate with other nations in securing the rights of the individual. Moreover, it stated that the enumeration of certain rights did not mean that others which, being inherent in the human person, were not explicitly mentioned could be disregarded.

The aim of the present Conference was to make the promises in that Constitution, and in those like it, become realities. There were, however, obstacles to such realization in the preeminence given in national law to the interests of the State. Many countries had no legal statute providing for the protection of human rights, while in others practice was in flagrant contradiction with precept. At the international level, when States were questioned about their protection of human rights they tended to invoke Article 2 (7) of the Charter, claiming that their conduct in the matter was within their domestic jurisdiction. Even when the protection of human rights was provided for in domestic jurisdiction, there were ample possibilities of evasion which could only be overcome by international rules, for the right of the individual was derived not from his status as the citizen of a State, but from his position as a human being.

His country was participating in the Conference in the firm conviction that means would be found for the protection of human rights at both the national and the international level. In particular, it hoped that there would be a better balance in the trade between developed and developing countries, so that the latter might obtain a fair price for their raw materials which would enable them to raise the level of living of their people and thus promote the exercise of their rights.

Mr. BOWEN (Australia) said that the present Conference was of historic significance in that it denoted greater recognition of the importance of human rights. Moreover, contemporary history had shown that disregard of human rights was a source of potential instability and conflict.

His country was proud that an Australian, Dr. Herbert Evatt, had presided over the third session of the General Assembly at which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been adopted. The Universal Declaration might be regarded as a turning point in history, as for the first time an international declaration had concerned itself not simply with the relations between States, but with the position of individual human beings.

Now, twenty years later, representatives of the world community had come together to reappraise objectives and reconsider methods and techniques. His country hoped that the Conference would make a further contribution towards securing human rights and fundamental freedoms for individuals and towards establishing the pre-conditions for the peace of mankind. The period which had elapsed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration had seen the formulation of many declarations and instruments. It might be described as the stage of definition. Common standards of rights for persons of all countries had been defined, notwithstanding their different political, social, religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Technical assistance programmes had in many cases enabled the principles established to be translated into practice.

Much had been done in the field of implementation, but much remained to be done. One of the most important tasks facing the Conference must be consideration of the techniques for implementing human rights. Greater uniformity of procedure might be desirable, yet the capacity to experiment must not be lost. Were nations ready to accept the idea embodied in the optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, under which private citizens might lodge a complaint direct to an international body? His delegation supported the proposal for the appointment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights in principle, but considered that further consideration should be given to the adequacy of existing machinery. It doubted whether Members were yet ready to accept an international court of human rights.

Until the world accepted the authority of supra-national bodies, the protection of human rights would depend mainly on the degree of enforceability in the domestic courts of Member States. It might be necessary to incorporate the Human Rights Covenants in domestic law and to give the individual the right to invoke them in securing or defending his rights. The feasibility of such changes should be examined.

Thus, the next twenty years might prove to be the stage of implementation. In view of the natural reluctance of Member States to accept supra-national authority, twenty years might not be long enough. One difficulty lay in the present state of education in the world; priority should therefore be given to raising the levels of education throughout the world. The problem was not only one of illiteracy, but of increasing awareness of the content and purpose of the Universal Declaration and other instruments. As Mr. Brohi had stated in his study on "United Nations and Human Rights" (A/CONF.32/L.4), there should be specific teaching aimed at making an international concern for human rights and freedoms an essential part of the general culture of the whole of mankind. Member States might be encouraged to develop such education and to examine State laws and institutions to see how far they met the requirements of United Nations texts. The United Nations could provide information to appropriate national bodies and the legal profession was well-placed for playing an active role in the field of human rights. Thus the next twenty years might become the stage of education instead of the stage of implementation - or perhaps both.

He did not consider that economic, social and cultural rights were of more importance than civil and political rights, for while the latter were of little use to a hungry man it was equally true that it was of little satisfaction to a man to be well fed if he was subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention or to execution without trial. Member States were becoming more conscious of the need to help each other in the economic and social field. The developing countries required technical assistance as well as economic aid, but the development of trade was an even more important requirement.

His delegation was ready to participate in discussion of practical solutions to the enormous problems confronting the world. By acting in the spirit of brotherly love so eloquently expressed by the representative of Afghanistan, the Conference would have some prospect of discharging its duty to mankind.

Mr. SZABÓ (Hungary) said that his country attached great importance to human rights and fundamental freedoms, insisted on their implementation in its own State and strove to see them implemented throughout the world. The present Conference would provide the occasion for a review of the human rights situation.

There had been general progress in human rights as a whole, but they must be considered in their social context, for it was the prevailing social conditions and the state of peace or war in the world that determined which human rights needed particular attention at any stage in history. Peace favoured, war hindered their implementation. The unjust aggression against the Viet-Nameese people had not only retarded the cause of human rights in Viet-Nam but had had unfavourable results in the aggressor country. Similarly the aggression in the Middle East had aggravated the problem of the Palestinian refugees and had liquidated the human rights of those living in occupied territory.

A second factor influencing human rights at the present day was the massive liberation of oppressed peoples from colonialism. Peoples who had recently gained independence were clamouring for human rights, while certain States endeavoured to hold them back by various economic and political methods which conjured up the spectre of neo-colonialism. The struggle for human rights must be fought side by side with the fight against colonialism, especially in regions where the policy of apartheid affected millions of men.

The need to implement human rights was felt with equal urgency in countries having different social systems, although they did not attach the same importance to the different categories of rights. For instance, while agreeing that civil and political rights were fundamental, the socialist countries attached special importance to economic, social and cultural rights. Such disparities of emphasis complicated efforts to safeguard human rights at the international level, particularly as changing circumstances were continually producing new problems calling for international action.

The United Nations had from its very inception concerned itself with human rights. While his delegation appreciated what had been done in that respect, it could not but draw attention to certain deficiencies in those activities. For example, it was to be regretted that in the most recent instruments civil and political rights had been separated from economic, social and cultural rights.

Moreover, those rights should not only have been set forth in covenants, but steps should have been taken to ensure their being put into effect in the internal jurisdiction of States. It was time to take stock and to consider whether the United Nations was proceeding in the right direction.

The Hungarian People's Republic had proceeded from the principle that all categories of human rights were of equal importance and had endeavoured to develop them equally. The socialist States admittedly placed greater emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights at international gatherings, but that was because of the backward state of those rights and was designed to compensate the citizens of non-socialist countries to some degree for the disadvantages they suffered in connexion with those rights.

His delegation hoped that the Conference would make a detailed study of the results attained so far and would carefully examine the possibilities of future action, with particular emphasis on those parts of the world where such action was urgently needed. It would thus be laying the foundations of further constructive work by the various United Nations bodies concerned with human rights.

Mr. MARTINEZ BAEZ (Mexico) said that, although his delegation agreed with the statements made by other delegations on the gravity of the situation in the Middle East and the effect of that conflict on human rights, he considered that an account of the experience of his country in the juridical, political, economic and social spheres and its dogmatic formulation of individual liberties might be more useful to the work of the Conference and appropriate to the human rights programme.

His country had not only had to fight for its independence from a European colonial Power but had been obliged to remedy the effects of a social organization based on inequalities of classes and castes, the effects of which were felt in all aspects of human life. The political Constitution of Mexico of 5 February 1857 had not only included in its first chapter a declaration of individual freedoms and human rights, but had established a simple, rapid and effective judicial procedure to enable the inhabitants of the country to defend themselves against any violation of the Constitution by the authorities. His country was therefore pleased to recognize in article 8 of the Universal Declaration a formulation which directly evoked that adopted over ninety years earlier in its own Constitution.

Mexico was also the country which for the first time in constitutional history had inserted in its basic law various human rights in the economic and social fields. The Federal Constitution of 5 February 1917 had instituted a new regime of nationalization of the most important natural resources, laid down the principles of agricultural reform in favour of the peasants and the fundamental rights of workers and established the basis of education at various grades. Those contributions to human rights and individual freedoms made by his country so many years before might serve as an example to countries which had recently achieved independence.

His country had followed with deep interest the successive steps towards the achievement of human rights made since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. To celebrate the International Year for Human Rights it had set up a national committee to promulgate the principles of the Declaration and of the United Nations Covenants.

At the twenty-second session of the General Assembly, Mexico had voted in favour of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in accordance with its policy of granting complete equality to women in the legal, economic and social spheres. In December 1967, the Federal Senate had introduced legislation to remove the remaining discrimination against women, who between 1947 and 1953 had obtained full citizenship and the right to vote. His country considered that legal, political and social equality for women was a goal which should be attained as soon as possible throughout the world and that all countries should make an effort to eliminate prejudices, which were unacceptable at the present day.

Since 1967 his country, using modern communication media such as television, had intensified its campaign against illiteracy, which was one of the most serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of the essential attributes of human dignity.

From the moment that it had become independent, his country had supported the human rights movement to protect all people against the consequences of social injustice, ignorance and disease, to defend workers against their employers and to give land to peasants and free them from out-of-date slavery.

Mr. DAUDY (Syria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his answer to the accusations of the Israel representative was directly connected with violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, a subject which several delegations were going to submit for inclusion in the agenda of the Conference.

The Arab countries sought justice for their people and for others. Their condemnation of acts of injustice was in no way chauvinistic, nor could their denunciation of persecution be limited to their own region or to their Palestinian brothers.

The Israel representative had said that none of his delegation had heard of the bulletin Israel Imperial News, March 1968, which the Syrian delegation had quoted. That bulletin, as its publishers described it, was an information bulletin about the Middle East in general and about Israel with its newly created colonies in particular. It was edited and published by Israelis, the majority of them natives, living temporarily abroad. As he knew no Hebrew he was obliged to rely on foreign publications which reproduced statements and articles appearing in the Israel Press. He would in future quote from magazines and documents which could not be unknown to the Israel delegation.

The Israel representative had attempted to refute statements on the persecution of Arab inhabitants in the occupied areas and had boasted of the so-called glorious record of the Israel army, its composition, discipline and code of conduct with regard to human rights. As deeds spoke louder than words, he proposed to review what was true in the statement by the Israel representative and what was not.

In a letter to the New York Times published on 17 July 1967, a senior minister of the Methodist Christian Church, the Rev. H.A. Bosleyn, had said that Israel's present territorial claims and policies towards peoples in occupied territories should not expect and would not receive general support from Christian groups in the United States. In a letter to the Los Gatos Times on 31 August 1967, the Jewish author, Moshe Menuhin, the father of the famous violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, had said that the Jewish nationalists were not Jews as far as he was concerned but Jewish Nazis who had lost all sense of Jewish morality and humanity and that anti-Zionism was not anti-Semitism. Although ill and aging, he had refused what was perhaps the last opportunity of attending one of his son's concerts because he was appearing with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra for the benefit of the Israel Emergency Fund, under the patronage of the Foreign Minister of Israel. Mr. Menuhin had quoted the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber who, not long after the first Sinai-Suez war, had said "The majority of the Jewish people preferred to learn from Hitler rather than from us. Hitler showed that history does not go the way of the spirit but the way of power and, if a people is powerful enough, it can kill with immunity".

The Iranian paper Kayhan International in its issue of 23 April 1968 had quoted an article from a Polish paper Sztandar Mlodych charging Israel with treating its Arab population as Jews were treated under Hitler.

Israel's so-called respect for the United Nations was refuted by an article written by S.Z. Abramov in the June issue of the American Zionist, which said that the United Nations should be eliminated as an active factor in the Israel-Arab controversy, since it had proved to be a peace-preventing instrument.

In the context of human rights, he thought it appropriate to quote the United Nations Commission on Human Rights press release dated 8 March 1968 entitled "Human Rights Commission approves telegram to Israel on destruction of Arab houses; adopts resolution against Nazism and apartheid", and read out the text of the telegram.

An Agence France Presse despatch quoted a declaration protesting against repression in the Arab areas occupied by the Israel army, signed by 87 Israeli citizens on 23 March 1968 and sent to the Italian Communist weekly Rinascita.

Lastly, he quoted a speech made by Professor Vincent Monteil of Dakar University which referred to diaries kept by two French missionaries who had lived for ten years in Palestine, working with both Jews and Arabs. The diaries had been published in the French newspaper Témoignage chrétien of 27 July 1967. In June 1967 the two missionaries had been afraid that the Jews would be exterminated by the Arabs but what they had seen was that the Israel army acted in the Arab areas like an army of occupation. He read out several passages from the two diaries testifying to the atrocities committed against the Arab population by the occupying forces which had been witnessed by the missionaries.

Mr. COMAY (Israel) said that he did not propose to exercise his right of reply since he considered a general debate on the Middle East would not be in the interests of the work of the Conference. He also strongly opposed the inclusion of a separate item on the Middle East in the agenda; it would simply reopen an acrimonious debate and serve no constructive purpose. It would give representatives no opportunity of ascertaining the real facts of the situation and would cut across the action being taken by the Secretary-General.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS (item 5 of the provisional agenda)

The PRESIDENT announced that agreement had been reached on the composition of the General Committee. She thanked all concerned for the co-operative spirit in which they had approached the discussions. It had been proposed that the General

Committee should be composed of five members from the African countries - Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Nigeria, United Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania; four from the Asian countries - India, Iraq, Pakistan, Philippines; three from the Latin American countries - Argentina, Brazil, Jamaica; two from the socialist countries of Eastern Europe - Poland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and four from the western European and other countries - Australia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Those countries would therefore be asked to provide Vice-Presidents. That recommendation had been made in view of the special nature of the present Conference and on condition that it did not create a precedent for other conferences. Although it would involve amendment of rule 6 of the draft rules of procedure, in the absence of any objection she would take it that the Conference agreed to the proposal.

It was so decided.

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS, AS NECESSARY (item 7 of the provisional agenda)

The PRESIDENT said that, since there was a general consensus in favour of the creation of two main committees, in the absence of any objection she would take it that that proposal was accepted.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that it would be necessary to revise rules 13 and 45 of the draft rules of procedure in consequence.

ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE (item 4 of the provisional agenda) (A/CONF.32/2)

The PRESIDENT said that, in the absence of any objection, she would take it that the Conference agreed to the adoption of the draft rules of procedure (A/CONF.32/2), with the accepted amendments to rules 6, 13 and 45.

The draft rules of procedure, as amended, were adopted.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.