



Chairman: Miss Maria GROZA (Romania).

AGENDA ITEMS 53 AND 60

Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (continued) (A/8003, chap. IX, sect. A; A/8027, A/8057, A/8061, A/8062 and Add.1 and 2, A/8117, A/C.3/L.1765):

- (a) **International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General;**
- (b) **Measures for effectively combating racial discrimination and the policies of *apartheid* and segregation in southern Africa: report of the Secretary-General;**
- (c) **Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, submitted under article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;**
- (d) **Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General**

The importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights (continued) (A/7998)

GENERAL DEBATE

1. Miss AGUIRRE (Mexico) said that the subject of racial discrimination had been under consideration since the very inception of the United Nations twenty-five years earlier and that, so far, it had not been possible to resolve the problems which it posed. Throughout that period her delegation had on many occasions stated, in various committees, that it was opposed to all racist policies, particularly *apartheid*. At the 693rd meeting of the Special Political Committee, on 6 October 1970, the Mexican representative had suggested the application of very severe measures against South Africa so long as that country failed to renounce its policy of discrimination. In addition, Mexico was a signatory to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the equality of all people in Mexico, including foreign residents, without distinction of any kind, was guaranteed by provisions of the Constitution.

2. The United Nations, under whose auspices the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, now signed by seventy-two countries and ratified by forty-four, had been concluded, had not

relaxed its efforts to put an end to the evil policy of racial discrimination, despite the resistance it had encountered in South Africa and other parts of the world.

3. Her delegation hailed the proclamation of 1971 as the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and had learned with satisfaction of the activities undertaken or contemplated by Governments, the United Nations, the specialized agencies, regional inter-governmental organizations and national and international non-governmental organizations for the observance of the International Year, which were set forth in the report of the Secretary-General (A/8061). The work of UNITAR in that field (*ibid.*, paras. 31-35) and its intention to encourage academic and research institutions, both national and international, to undertake comparative research of an inter-disciplinary character in selected subjects in the field of race relations were particularly commendable. In that connexion, the studies prepared for UNITAR by the Institute of Race Relations in London and the *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos* at Lima would certainly be of considerable value.

4. Similarly, she attached great importance to the part to be played by UNESCO (*ibid.*, paras. 41 and 42), which intended to organize a series of public lectures to give a wider currency to the present state of knowledge on questions of race and culture and to distribute publications underlining the effect of *apartheid* on education, science, culture and communication. In addition, UNESCO intended to include racial problems among the themes for study by UNESCO grantees and to seek the co-operation of youth organizations and national committees in its over-all programme.

5. The activities undertaken by regional intergovernmental organizations and national and international non-governmental organizations in connexion with the celebration of the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (*ibid.*, paras. 46 to 67) were also worth noting.

6. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that the combined efforts of Governments, the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the other organizations concerned would result in the elimination of racial discrimination in those countries in which it was still practised, although she recognized that such a happy outcome could only be the culmination of what was a protracted process.

7. Mr. LORCH (Israel) said that his country's unequivocal opposition to all forms of discrimination, particularly discrimination based on race, had made its mark on the history of mankind long before nations had thought of embodying their condemnation of the denial of human

rights in charters, declarations and resolutions. The achievement of a just order governing relations between men and nations, regardless of differences of colour and creed, had been one of the objectives of the Jewish people since its emergence into nationhood. Many of the members of the Committee had doubtless experienced oppression and discrimination, as had he. However, the peoples of their countries had been spared the agony which Nazi persecution had inflicted upon the Jewish people in the name of racial superiority. History recorded no more cruel and abhorrent example of man's inhumanity to man than that generated by the ideology of nazism. In the struggle for national liberation, which had culminated in independence for Israel, the victims of that holocaust had at long last been vindicated.

8. The struggle of the Jewish people must be viewed in the light of that historical experience rather than solely in the context of anti-Semitism, which had again appeared in a different form and was aimed at the destruction of the Jews as a religious, ethnic and historical group. He need not remind the Committee that anti-Semitism had always been directed exclusively against the Jews and not against any other people of Semitic origin. The Jews had experienced untold suffering and had achieved redemption through their own efforts and sacrifices. Consequently, they fully understood the just demand that racial discrimination and colonialism in the African continent should be eliminated once and for all. Israel had consistently supported all initiatives undertaken by the United Nations to that end. For example, it had warmly welcomed the Manifesto on Southern Africa¹ adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its sixth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa in September 1969, and would continue to support all those who had not yet achieved political equality and human dignity, for it felt deep concern for the fate of peoples who were still oppressed and deprived of their fundamental rights.

9. Until recently the Jewish people had been the victims of systematic segregation and discrimination in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, in Christian and in Moslem countries. In the latter, although persecution had never reached the same proportions as in Europe, the vaunted coexistence between Jew and Arab had been predicated on the notion not of the equality but of the inferiority of the Jews, who had always had to remember their place and to live in the poverty and humiliation of over-crowded ghettos and *mellahs*. The Jewish communities in certain Arab countries were once again being subjected to harassment and persecution. In one of those countries, a community of 4,000 Jews was living in constant fear, the scapegoat for all the errors and failures of the Government. Virulent hostility on the part of the population was a permanent threat. Even before the war of June 1967, Jews there had been subjected to discriminatory measures, which had now become draconian. For example, Jews must at all times carry a special document identifying them as Jews; they could not leave the city or even the quarter in which they lived; they could not hold posts in the civil service or in the nationalized sectors of the economy. Each and every one of

the acts of the Jewish community had to be approved by the Government. The Hebrew language had been forbidden, which made it impossible to teach the Jewish holy scriptures. In one town, the Jews were being subjected to daily interrogations, usually accompanied by beatings and tortures. They were forbidden to enter cinemas or public parks, to hold family visits or to talk to other Jews in the street. For a decade, the Government had flatly refused to permit emigration and Jews caught attempting to leave the country had received lengthy prison sentences. Recently, the authorities of another country had prohibited the departure of Jews and had confiscated all their property.

10. For all those reasons, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's reiteration of his call for the evacuation of Jews from Arab countries and of his conviction that the United Nations had a moral obligation to intercede on their behalf. Although in the present case only a few thousand persons were involved, it should be remembered that they were human beings who were hoping for a firm expression of concern on the part of the family of nations. To succour those unfortunate victims would in no way weaken the United Nations efforts on behalf of other victims of racial discrimination. On the contrary, the universality of the struggle would emphasize the fact that human rights were indivisible.

11. His country had welcomed the decision to celebrate 1971 as the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and was preparing its programme of activities, which would be communicated to the Secretary-General in due course.

12. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that discrimination was as old as mankind itself. It was essential, however, to distinguish between prejudice and discrimination. The predilection a father felt for a son who was like him, both physically and mentally, could be regarded as prejudice, for it was a preference based on purely subjective factors. Prejudice existed everywhere—in families, peoples and nations. Discrimination, on the other hand, consisted in giving preferential treatment to some at the expense of others, for reasons of a different nature.

13. With regard to racial discrimination, it was first necessary to define the concept of race. But the idea that racial differences were based on differences in blood, and the very concept of the existence of different races, had been rejected by modern anthropologists and physiologists. Nor was race determined by religion. It was worth noting, however, that the first manifestations of discrimination had frequently been of a religious nature and had appeared not only among groups of different faiths but also among those professing the same faith but disagreeing, for example, on questions of ritual or the interpretation of dogma.

14. Originally there had been no differences based on race but, as man had evolved and acquired wealth and power, the differences between different groups of human beings had become more marked. The powerful had begun to consider the weak inferior to themselves and that had given rise to the differences associated with racial characteristics. It might be said, therefore, that power and wealth had helped to foster racial discrimination. The conflict between the rich and powerful and the poor and weak had existed

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes, agenda item 106, document A/7754.

since the beginning of time. Although the pejorative terms formerly applied to peoples regarded as inferior were no longer used, attitudes had not changed; it was necessary to go back to the origin of such attitudes in order to combat them.

15. On many occasions throughout history, religion had been used as a pretext for waging wars which had actually been fought for quite different reasons, reasons linked with the struggle for the wealth and power that made peoples consider themselves superior. The Crusades were a good example of wars in which religion had fostered racial discrimination: the enemy was the person who professed another faith and who therefore belonged to another race. In modern times, however, it was recognized that there were no races, but only peoples and traditions, and that was why the Charter of the United Nations spoke of the peoples rather than the races of the world.

16. Racial discrimination and prejudice were difficult to eradicate. It had been said, for example, that the United States of America was a melting pot of races, and yet there were certain groups in that country too which were subjected to discrimination because of their origin or the origin of their forebears.

17. The Committee could, of course, draft a resolution on the matter, but the problem would not be solved by resolutions. Racial discrimination could be ended only through education and cultural exchange. UNESCO was making a great contribution in that connexion and it should be encouraged to continue its efforts to disseminate information on the cultural heritage and traditions of all peoples, for it was only by such means that greater understanding among them could be developed.

18. With regard to Zionism, it must be pointed out that that movement had originated not in the Middle East but in Central and Eastern Europe. The Zionists were Europeans, who spoke Yiddish, not Hebrew, and who had made of religion an instrument with which to impose their will in a land which did not belong to them. It was easy, therefore, to refute the Israeli representative's reference to a "Jewish race": religion could not serve as the basis for distinguishing between different racial groups, since all men, regardless of their faith, were members of the human race. Furthermore, different peoples could share the same religion, as was the case, for example, of Islam, which was the faith of the majority of Pakistanis, Turks, Arabs and others in spite of the fact that they spoke different languages and had different customs.

19. Nevertheless, the Zionists, who had nothing to do with Palestine and the Middle East, were trying to make of the Jewish religion a race and a nationality, and to that end they had taken over the mass information media in order to inculcate in Jews throughout the world their false ideology and create an artificial problem of global proportions. At the same time, they asked for preferential and exclusive treatment which would, in practice, be tantamount to discrimination on grounds not of race but of religion. Yet it was obvious that a religious faith could not be converted into a nationality; if it could, then the 800 million Christians of the world would be citizens of a single State, and the 600 million Moslems would also belong to a single nation.

20. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the Committee's debate on the item would lead to increased efforts to intensify and expand the dissemination of information and teaching on the traditions, cultures and ways of life of peoples, for the only way to end discrimination was through understanding.

21. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syria), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said that the Israeli delegation was deliberately trying to confuse the issues being dealt with by the Committee in an attempt to divert attention from the fact that the Israeli authorities maintained relations of every kind with the racist régimes of Pretoria, Salisbury and the African Territories under Portuguese domination. Therefore, instead of concentrating on the problems of racial discrimination in all its forms, and explaining any measures that Israel might have taken to combat racism in southern Africa, he had been carried away by propagandistic zeal, forgetting that there were South Africans fighting in the Israeli army and that Israel was actively co-operating with South Africa in military and nuclear matters.

22. That there was no difference between the present practices of Zionism and the practices of nazism in former times had been clearly shown in an article published on 11 October 1970 in *The Sunday Times* of London, which was quoted in the letter dated 15 October 1970 from the representative of Syria to the Secretary-General (A/8123) concerning Israel's violation of the Geneva Conventions in the occupied Arab territories. Both ideologies were racist and exclusive and one of their goals was the destruction of other peoples, as shown by the fact that the Israeli authorities were now occupying a territory six times greater than that which they had controlled before 1967 and that, as in the case of Nazi Germany, Israel had been accused of committing crimes against humanity. The Nazis of today were certainly in no position to condemn the Nazis of yesterday.

23. Finally, Israel's concern for the Jewish communities in Arab countries was nothing but an attempt to apply the totalitarian ideology of Zionism to Arab citizens who professed the Jewish faith.

24. Mr. LORCH (Israel), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said he saw no relationship between the Syrian representative's intervention and the agenda item or even his own statement, in which Israel's attitude toward racial discrimination had been very clearly set forth. When referring to the situation of Jewish communities in some Arab countries, his delegation had not made express mention of any particular State; the Syrian representative's haste in replying to those comments was thus revealing. In that regard, he wished to ask the Syrian representative whether the latter's Government was willing to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal by permitting the Jews at present imprisoned in Syria to leave the country freely.

25. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syria) said he wished to ask whether Israel, for its part, had agreed to the sending of a second mission by the Secretary-General to investigate the situation of the Arab population in the occupied territories and whether it had admitted into Israel the Special Working Group of Experts established by the Commission on Human Rights under its resolution 6 (XXV) to investigate

allegations concerning Israel's violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

26. Mr. LORCH (Israel) said that Israel had accepted the Secretary-General's first mission, the Gussing Mission, because it had considered that its mandate to investigate the conditions of the entire civil population involved in the conflict, both Jewish and Arab, was not discriminatory. The mandates of the second mission and of the Special Working Group of Experts and the Special Committee mentioned by the Syrian representative, on the other hand, were discriminatory, since they did not take into account the situation of the Jewish communities in Arab countries. Furthermore, the conditions prevailing in Israel and the territories under its administration were well known, and had been observed by many visitors from other countries, including Arab countries. It was quite significant that the Syrian representative had neglected to answer his question.

27. Mr. MOUSSA (United Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said the Israeli representative had twisted the facts when alleging that the mandates of the working groups and the committees set up to investi-

gate the violations of human rights in the territories occupied by Israel were discriminatory. The situation that prevailed in those territories was common knowledge and that was why it had been decided to send special missions to make investigations. Israel had repeatedly refused to permit them to enter the country and to co-operate with them because it knew that if they were allowed to enter the territories they would only verify the fact that large-scale violations of human rights were being committed. That fact must be kept in mind, since the item that was before the Committee concerned racial discrimination, which was a violation of human rights and was precisely one of the violations which should be investigated by the missions in question.

28. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syria), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said it was a well-known fact that the totalitarian State of Israel was attempting to extend its jurisdiction to Jews living outside its boundaries. Syrian citizens of the Jewish faith, who lived in an atmosphere of complete freedom and equality with Moslem Syrians, did not wish to be subjected to Zionist propaganda and oppression.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.