

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

held on Wednesday, 24 April 1968, at 5.25 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/L.4, A/CONF.32/5 and Add.1, A/CONF.32/7 and Add.1 and 2, A/CONF.32/8 and A/CONF.32/10 and Corr.1, A/CONF.32/12, A/CONF.32/13 and Corr.1, A/CONF.32/16; A/CONF.32/L.9-L.11) (continued)

General debate (continued)

Mr. TEKLE (Ethiopia) expressed his pleasure that the Conference had met to observe the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a land which had seen the flourishing of one of the most ancient civilizations. Article 1 of the Declaration, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, was the culmination of thousands of years of speculation when it proclaimed that all human beings were born free and equal in dignity and rights and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

However, the recent assassination of Martin Luther King, who had espoused non-violence to secure for his fellow men the dignity to which they were entitled, the murder in Rhodesia of men fighting for an ideal of justice, and the existence of the abhorrent theory of racial superiority, were brutal expressions of racial discrimination that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had inexorably stamped with infamy, and racism, segregation, xenophobia and religious intolerance were still very prevalent in the world today.

The various rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constituted the most noble conquests of humanity in its long struggle towards a more just world. In the twenty years that had elapsed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, great progress had been made, hundreds of millions of human beings had regained their freedom and most of the African Continent was independent and free. However, despite the opposition of the whole world, an illegal régime still existed in Rhodesia, tens of thousands of Africans had been slain in Angola and Mozambique merely because they wanted to be free, and in South Africa the repulsive theory of apartheid was codified as the law of the land.

In addition to those problems, which seemed to be a standing challenge to the Declaration which the Conference was commemorating, attention should be drawn to the profound gap between rich and poor nations and to the fact that almost two-thirds of the population of the globe was hungry.

To put matters bluntly, too little had been done in that field, and it was difficult to see how the thirty articles of the Universal Declaration could be effective so long as that imbalance continued.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it was fitting not only to remember the progress made in the past but also to determine the objectives for the future. Much had been done but much more remained to be done. The validity of the historic document adopted twenty years ago by the General Assembly of the United Nations would depend on what was done to put all men on a level of equality in conformity with the principle that all human beings were born free.

His country had always supported all constructive measures aimed at the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It believed that the Conference, which was the most important event of the International Year for Human Rights, could contribute to the development of the ideas and principles set out in the Declaration and other United Nations documents. He expressed the hope that the Conference would give due attention to the burning issues of the time: apartheid, colonialism and the economic, cultural and social rights which formed the basis for all other human rights, as the promotion of human rights was an essential condition for the preservation of world peace.

The PRESIDENT invited the representative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to address the Conference.

Mr. ALEMAYEHOU (Organization of African Unity) said that OAU attached great importance to the Conference, which marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, over thirty-five African States, with a total population of over 150 million people, had attained independence and joined the United Nations. Nevertheless, 30 million Africans were still languishing under the yoke of colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid. Recalling the various rights proclaimed in the Declaration, he drew attention to the mass violations of those rights by the colonial, illegal and racist régimes of Lisbon, Salisbury and Pretoria.

Apartheid was a perverted form of socio-economic-political philosophy which denied to the overwhelming majority of non-whites in South Africa the most elementary human rights and fundamental freedoms. It openly violated the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration. The apartheid policy of Pretoria was a crude form of colonialism by which white men, by means of armed repression, imposed racial discrimination and segregation exclusively to their own advantage and wholly to the disadvantage of the vast majority of the population. It was a racial policy for political oppression, economic exploitation and social degradation of the overwhelming majority of Africans by the European minority.

Politically, the 14 million Africans representing 80 per cent of the total population of South Africa had no right whatsoever to express their political views through the ballot and could not participate in the government of their own country. They either had to accept their inferior lot or risk life imprisonment. The number of political prisoners was steadily increasing, and the cruel treatment they received was common knowledge. Arbitrary arrest and detention with no means of recourse to the courts were common practice. He listed the numerous laws enacted against the African population in South Africa, the number of which was swelling constantly.

Economically, the 4 million Europeans who constituted only 20 per cent of the population held over 87 per cent of the fertile land in South Africa, whilst the African population - 80 per cent - owned only 13 per cent of the land, which was mainly barren, and derived practically nothing from their country's wealth. In fact, it was statistically established that the African had less than a tenth of the income of the white. As a result, the death rate for African children was 25 times higher than for white children and life expectancy was much lower for Africans than for whites.

The African masses, deprived of their political and economic rights, were forced to supply cheap labour, particularly in the mining industry, for the benefit of the white minority and international capitalist monopolies. Africans were thus ruthlessly exploited in their own country. He believed that those few facts would be sufficient to demonstrate the extent to which the Pretoria regime had flouted the human rights proclaimed in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Support given to the apartheid régime of Pretoria by certain Western countries had enabled it to build a mighty military machine for keeping the African population subjugated and to create a tripartite political-military-economic alliance on the Pretoria-Lisbon-Salisbury axis. The OAU for its part considered that the massive investments in South Africa and the ever-expanding commercial relations between that country and the West should be interpreted as Western approval of the obnoxious policies of apartheid. The attitude of three permanent members of the Security Council had helped to strengthen the Pretoria government's belief that it could continue to defy the United Nations and world public opinion with impunity.

He recalled the various resolutions condemning apartheid which the United Nations had adopted since 1946 and particularly since 1952, quoting extracts from the General Assembly resolution adopted in November 1962.

He deplored the fact that several Members of the United Nations had disregarded important resolutions recommending an embargo on arms shipments to South Africa.

The OAU therefore considered the position of the Western Powers with regard to the problem of apartheid inconsistent, to say the least. They declared their abhorrence of apartheid and racial discrimination, while reinforcing the fascist white minority régimes with which they shared economic, financial and other interests. In other words, most Western nations were accomplices in the ruthless exploitation of the African masses, and by their compromising relations with the Pretoria régime they continued to strengthen the status quo.

The OAU wished to take that opportunity to appeal again to South Africa's trading partners to change their inconsistent attitude and to prohibit the economic and financial interests in their countries from trading with South Africa and thereby directly and indirectly helping to strengthen the régime. It also appealed to all Governments and peoples opposed to racism and dedicated to the ideals of human dignity and justice to increase their political, moral and material assistance to the cause of the legitimate struggle of the people of South Africa against apartheid, racial discrimination and colonialism.

The OAU was totally and unconditionally committed to ridding the African continent of all forms of colonialism and racism. It was optimistic and was convinced that it would finally prevail against those scourges and against apartheid, as its position was strong and its cause legitimate.

Mr. DAUDY (Syria) first spoke of the calamities experienced by many peoples of the world during the 1930's and during the Second World War as a result of the Nazi and Fascist régimes which, based on racism and the cult of personality, had caused the collapse of the League of Nations.

An era of hope had dawned with the creation of the United Nations and the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He was gratified that the twentieth anniversary of that proclamation was being observed in an Asian capital only a few weeks after the second session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development held in New Delhi. It showed that the countries of the ~~Third~~ World were conscious of their responsibilities and were determined to play their part in the development of international society and to contribute to the progress of modern civilization. It also showed that the United Nations was aware of the awakening of developing countries and of the fact that international problems could no longer be dealt with exclusively in the capitals of the colonial powers.

In that connexion it was also appropriate to mention the Bandung Conference, held exactly thirteen years ago, at which twenty-nine Afro-Asian countries had expressed the will and aspirations of their peoples and had endorsed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly its articles C and E. He quoted from the text in which the Bandung Conference had declared its full support for human rights and the principle of self-determination, had deplored the policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination in Africa and other parts of the world, and had upheld the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, calling for the implementation of the United Nations resolution on Palestine in order to obtain a peaceful settlement of the Palestine question. Unfortunately, the hopes raised at the Bandung Conference had not been fulfilled and events since then had belied the hopes of the peoples of Asia, Africa and the rest of the world.

It was true that a number of Afro-Asian peoples had won independence and joined the ranks of the free States which were endeavouring to implement the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the resolutions of the Bandung Conference. Notable results had been achieved, thanks to the efforts of the peoples of the Third World and other peace-loving nations. On the whole, however, the past twenty years had been marked by tragic events for humanity. In that connexion, he mentioned the policy of racial discrimination practised by the white minority in South Africa against the African majority and the oppression and persecution suffered by millions of black South Africans whose already limited rights had been narrowed down still more. Moreover, racial discrimination had been extended to South West Africa, although South African trusteeship of the Territory had now been terminated by the United Nations.

Since its inception, the United Nations had adopted many resolutions against the racist régime of Pretoria; his delegation had participated in the drafting of those resolutions and his Government had put them into effect.

Responsibility for the continued existence of the colonial racist régime and of discrimination in South Africa, despite universal condemnation, lay partly with the colonial Powers, which had continued to aid the white minority in those countries, thereby enabling it to continue its persecution of inhabitants of African, Indian and Pakistani origin. Recent statistics published during the last session of the General Assembly had revealed that a number of colonial Powers were providing South Africa with arms and co-operating with it in defiance of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

It was also a fact that without the assistance given by the imperialist and colonial forces to the racist white minority in Africa, Portuguese colonialism would have come to an end. However, it continued in defiance of United Nations resolutions and the Special Committee on Decolonization. His country was convinced that the benevolent attitude towards the white minority in South Africa and the aid given to Portugal within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had been responsible for the establishment of a new racist régime in Southern Rhodesia.

It was high time that Africans and the Third World became aware of the existence of the unholy alliance between world imperialism, European colonialism and the racist Western entities established in Asian and African countries. Members of the alliance had common interests, followed the same strategy and pursued a common purpose: to dominate the peoples of the Third World and thwart their aspirations to political and economic independence and the restoration of their dignity, free from pressures or discrimination of any kind.

He then spoke of United States aggression in Asia against North Korea and Viet-Nam and of the savage aggression in Western Asia by the conspiracy of Zionism, British colonialism and American imperialism.

After summarizing the history of the Palestine question from the 1917 Balfour Declaration to the 1947 Partition, he described the tragic fate of the Arab people of Palestine who were expelled or massacred when Israel occupied their territory and again during the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956 and the Zionist and imperialist action of 5 June 1967. The last aggression resulted in the occupation by Israel of an area five times that allotted to it under the Palestine partition resolution and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Arabs, whose properties were plundered and whose lands were given to foreign settlers. The Arab people of Palestine, living on international charity, received only \$1.25 per person per month, whereas the Zionists occupying their country enjoyed an income of more than \$173 million per year from refugee property. Attention should also be drawn to the atrocities committed by the Zionists in occupied Arab territories. Those crimes, which had been described in United Nations documents and in the international press, were in defiance of resolutions adopted by the Security Council immediately before and after the aggression, calling upon the Israel authorities to return to their homes the people displaced by the aggression and in their treatment of them to observe the provisions of the Geneva Convention. Israel had not implemented any of the relevant resolutions of the special

or regular sessions of the General Assembly, nor the resolution denying recognition to Israel's unlawful annexation of Jerusalem. Israel's prisons were full of Arabs arrested on the pretext that they had resisted Zionist occupation, although their attitude was hardly surprising and was reminiscent of that of the Europeans under Nazi occupation, also marked by arrest, torture, plunder, massacre, the destruction of places of worship and the establishment of settlers and adventurers on occupied land. Like the Nazis, Israel had used prohibited weapons such as napalm bombs, in defiance of all humanitarian conventions.

The racist colonial system in occupied Palestine could not survive without the full support of American imperialism. A parallel could be drawn with Viet-Nam, and the people of the Third World should realize that they had to stand united in the face of imperialism if they were to put an end to it.

The evils suffered in Africa and Asia were also threatening other regions, particularly with the emergence of neo-nazism in other parts of the world. Colonialism was returning to the attack in a new garb, taking advantage of the needs of newly independent countries in an attempt to control their economy and resources, to interfere in their internal affairs and to impose on them a system of government suiting its own interests.

The second session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at New Delhi had clearly revealed the part played today by neo-colonialism. In its attempt to keep control over the Third World, it adopted a particularly fierce attitude towards progressive peoples and systems that refused to be dominated. Governments which violated the fundamental freedoms of other peoples would certainly end by persecuting their own countrymen on grounds of colour, creed or race.

During the past twenty years the United Nations, its specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with social and human progress had made creditable efforts to ensure that human rights were observed and their value recognized. The awakening of the peoples of the Third World, their unfailing observance of the Universal Declaration and their opposition to tyranny in all its forms, in co-operation with the peace-loving socialist countries and the liberal elements within the colonial societies themselves, had helped to create a considerable body of international opinion on the subject. The stand against American aggression in Viet-Nam, the continuous denunciation of racial discrimination in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia and the numerous voices raised in the world against the atrocities committed by Israel in occupied Arab territories were encouraging signs.

His country was ready to participate, as it had in the past, in any action aimed at the full implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principles of the United Nations Charter, with a view to liberating the peoples from the domination of imperialist and colonial Powers and racist régimes.

It was to be hoped that the experience of the past twenty years had opened the eyes of those who had become drunk with the arrogance of power. The struggle of the peoples of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Viet-Nam and the Arab people of Palestine should serve as a lesson to those who thought that they could impose their will and interests at gunpoint. Until such time as the forces of peace and democracy co-operated to put an end to racial discrimination, colonialism and the Zionist occupation of Arab territories, the Universal Declaration would not be a really effective instrument, since freedom - political, economic, social and intellectual - was a prerequisite for the exercise of human rights.

Mr. ABU GHAZALEH (Jordan) said that his country supported the action of the United Nations and its organizations in the human rights field and hailed those who had for twenty years been striving to make peace, progress and freedom realities. He regretted that, despite those efforts, racist movements, the foremost of which was Zionism, continued to exist. The Zionist movement, which had given rise to the State of Israel, was both in theory and in practice a cult of force; it defied the basic principles of humanity, and even those of Judaism.

The Zionist leaders of Israel were violating the right of the Arabs, and particularly of the Palestinian Arabs, to self-determination, freedom and security; they systematically endeavoured to disperse and displace them and to annihilate them as a nation. As early as 1948, they had refused self-determination to the Palestinian Arabs, despite the fact that they were the owners of most of the territory and represented a majority of the population. The creation of the State of Israel had made nearly a million Arab refugees. In 1967 the same scene had been re-enacted; force, prejudice and racism had again prevailed. That time, two and a half million Palestinian Arabs had been obliged to suffer occupation or to become refugees. Not only that, but the aggression had been extended to peaceful Jordan and other Arab territories, thus displacing more and more Arab inhabitants.

The United Nations had each time reacted by adopting a series of resolutions designed to restore dignity and freedom to the victims of injustice, but Israel, defying world opinion, had always refused to respect them; it was continuing its

systematic aggression by subjecting Jerusalem, the city of peace, to an unlawful régime. Measures of arbitrary arrest, detention and deportation were proliferating. The civilian populations of the cities, villages and concentration camps on both banks of the Jordan were being bombed.

Zionism was a threat to world peace. The Israelis would agree to peace only if the Arabs presented them Palestine - and other territories as well - on a silver platter as a Christmas gift. If the Arabs presumed to defend their right to existence and to resist occupation, they were branded as guerillas, saboteurs and enemies of peace.

The Zionist movement, as a form of neo-colonialism, was a threat to world peace. The Conference should censure and stigmatize Israel for its action infringing humanitarian principles and United Nations resolutions. That gesture was necessary if human rights were to be safeguarded and hope rekindled in the victims of aggression.

Mr. COMAY (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that world opinion was weary of the recitals of atrocities with which Arab propaganda plied it. It was a fact that war entailed the displacement of persons and destruction, and the Near East had been stricken by war three times in less than twenty years. The peoples of that troubled area aspired to an honourable peace which would enable them to work together to build a better future for themselves and their children.

Israel, for its part, had seen enough bloodshed and wished to meet the Arab States at a round table where there would be neither victors nor vanquished, where Israel and Ishmael would co-operate honourably in establishing peaceful co-existence on solid and lasting foundations.

Some, however, did not share that view. He had found no trace of similar peaceful aspirations in his Syrian colleague's long statement. That was not in the least surprising if it was recalled that the Syrian Government alone had refused to receive Mr. Jarring, the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in carrying out the peace mission which he had undertaken in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 22 November 1967. That attitude meant that the Syrian Government was hostile to any peaceful solution of the conflict and that it intended to prolong the war, bloodshed and human suffering.

The Jewish minority in Syria was one of the first victims of that suffering. The Damascus Government vented its wrath on that ancient community because it was aware of its inability to blot Israel from the map of the world.

Turning to the matter of the Palestinian Arab resistance, he said that the Syrian representative was engaging in wishful thinking. He affirmed that the Arab population of the former mandated territory, weary of paying the price of the Arab States' bellicose attitude towards Israel, and tired of violence and terrorism, aspired only to peace. The comforting fact that two and a half million Jews and one and a half million Arabs were living side by side in the Israel-held area without undue friction was proof enough of that.

Before concluding, he wished to assure the Jordanian representative that he was convinced of the sincere aspirations of the Jordanian people and its leaders to a peaceful settlement of the conflict; the main obstacle was elsewhere in the area. He guaranteed that Jordan would have no cause to regret making a bold gesture in favour of peace. With respect to the Arab refugees, Israel, a people of exiles, could not fail to be sensitive to their fate and its Government would do its utmost to ensure them a constructive and decent future in the context of a peaceful settlement.

Mr. DAOUDY (Syria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, described newspaper articles written by Israel citizens and sometimes even published in Israel, which stated that Israel soldiers had orders to fire at sight on anyone attempting to cross the Jordan at night. Eye-witness accounts were appalling. At dawn, the banks of the Jordan were strewn with the corpses of men, women and children. The Israel soldiers dispatched the wounded, who begged to be spared. Sometimes the corpses were buried; sometimes they were bulldozed under or cremated en masse. Those accounts showed that talk of Israel's atrocities was not empty verbiage. Such action, which was reminiscent of the Nazis, was incompatible with respect for human rights. He hoped that recalling them would give food for thought to the representative who on the previous day had made what he had termed personal remarks to the Conference, and whose objectivity he (Mr. Daoudy) did not impugn.

Turning to the atrocities to which, according to the Israel representative, the Jewish community in Syria was subjected, he pointed out that a personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Gussing, had visited Damascus in 1967, that the Minister of the Interior had invited him to visit the Jewish quarter incognito and unannounced and that following that visit the Secretary-General's representative had stated that he had found no sign of discrimination against the Jews. He proposed to read out excerpts of the Gussing report at the following meeting.

He was surprised that the Israel representative should persist in denying the existence of Arab resistance in the occupied territories. General de Gaulle, for example, had mentioned that resistance in one of his press conferences. Even Israel had mentioned it in an official statement in which it had stated that Israel soldiers had had to cross the Jordan with tanks and aircraft to scotch Palestinian resistance.

In conclusion, he read out excerpts from an article entitled "The Aggravated Middle East Problem" which had appeared in Issues, a publication of the American Council for Judaism, whose director and the majority of whose collaborators were rabbis. That article stigmatized Israel's attitude, which consisted in advocating the use of force against Arabs and then maintaining its own innocence.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.