

"Right of Reply" (8 February, p.m.) by the Syrian representative (Miss Nabila Chaalan) to the Statement delivered (8 February, a.m.) by the representative of the WUPJ, under item 16. [Exact UN verbatim interpretation from Arabic into English]"

Mr Chairman, at this morning's meeting, the representative of what has been called the "International League of Progressive Judaism" expressed certain ideas, which are not consistent with the truth and diverted attention from what is going on in the occupied Arab territories, and the barbarous policies pursued by the Zionist occupiers. (...) The basis of that movement was to establish an entity which would be based on pure discrimination, on the colonialist mould, just as the racist regimes set up in Africa, particularly in South Africa and Rhodesia. And we can see it clearly happening now in the Arab occupied territories, in the [Syrian] Arab Golan and in Southern Lebanon, as well. There was an appeal of the international community, that is to say after the adoption of Resolution 3378 [3379]. It was acknowledged that Zionism was a form of racism. This is a resolution that very clearly demonstrates the opinion of the international community. Those who seek the elimination of this resolution and those who protect and defend racism can be identified clearly.

* * *

[...] Mr Chairman, regardless of the force of the speaker and his or her organisation, historical realities cannot be effaced. They are clearly evident in the legal files of France and in the book by [?] *Fatir Sahyün* ["The Unleavened Bread of Zion" – *Fatir Sahyün* is the name of the book – the interpreter misunderstood] which demonstrates historical reality. We should like to launch an appeal to all members of this Commission to read this very important work that demonstrates unequivocally the historical reality of Zionist racism.

With your permission, Mr Chairman, at the end of my comments, I should like to draw the Commission's attention to another fact. The victim referred to in the book is Father Abadre Tuma, who was born in Callangria on the island of Sardinia. France received him as a Catholic and sent him to Damascus in 1967 [1807 – probably, the interpreter's mistake], and when he was killed he was thirty-three years old [in fact, he had been in Damascus for 33 years] and he was very well known in Damascus, because he was a physician and because he would visit all persons regardless of their religion to vaccinate them against smallpox. It should be underscored that the enquiry that was conducted at the time when he was killed was brought to the attention of the French Consul in Damascus, Count "Derechimento" [de Ratti-Menton] and his colleague, Mr Baudin. And those who read the book can understand the reasons underlying the death of Father Tuma and those unmasked realities in Zionism.

I do not wish to speak at any greater length, because time is short, but I did wish to underscore that the role of certain NGOs in this Commission seems to be to delay the Commission's work, and I wish to draw attention to the fact that we must not accept the participation of such organisations in this very important humanitarian body, whose objective is to promote and encourage human rights across the board.

* For the full text, according to the Syrian version, see UN document below, p. 55.

Monday, 11:30 a.m. 11 February 1991 (by fax)

NOTE

1840 "DAMASCUS AFFAIR" BLOOD-LIBEL ACCUSATION (Scandalous Revival on Sabbath eve, 8 February 1991)

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

This Note is addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights and to several Ambassadors and/or Heads of Delegations of the 43 States that are members of the Commission – as well as to some that are Observer States.

I am faxing for information (or will circulate this afternoon at the Commission) the following documentation:

- Main page article [*"Genève ONU / Un Scandale à la Commission des Droits de l'Homme: Déclaration antisémite pure et dure"*] in the *Tribune de Genève*, this morning, 11 February 1991 (other articles will undoubtedly appear in the international media on this extraordinary event.)*
- Professional translation into English and French of the "right of reply" made by the Syrian representative (Mme Nabila Chaalan) on Friday evening, 8 February.
- Statement by the representative of the WUPJ (David Littman) on Friday morning, 8 February, in the retyped integral version, exactly as pronounced.

In view of the seriousness of this matter – the notorious Blood-Libel Accusation, used from Medieval till Nazi times in order to defame, persecute and kill Jews – my organisation officially asks members of the Commission to request the Chairman to make a declaration soon, strongly condemning this incitement to racial and religious hatred, made by the Syrian representative in a "right of reply" at the close of the afternoon meeting on Friday, 8 February. Her Statement is in total contradiction with all the international instruments!

The credibility and the dignity of the Commission is at stake! International opinion is awaiting this declaration.

Respectfully,
David Littman

* *Le Monde*, 12 Feb.; *International Herald Tribune* (AP/Reuters), 14 Feb.; *Tribune de Genève* (AFP), 15 Feb.; etc., including over 50 articles in the North American Jewish press. The "event" was picked up by many of the main press agencies at the UN – in some cases twice – and relayed worldwide.

LETTERS OF PROTESTATION FROM STATES

Ambassador and/or leaders of 29 States delegations accredited to the Commission (14 members and 15 observers) sent letters of protest to the Chairman and/or to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights. Eight of them requested that their letter be circulated as an official UN document; these are indicated with an asterisk and are reprinted below. The list of States is in the approximate chronological order of their dated letters, copies of which were made available, with the exception of the personal letter sent by the Ambassador of Yugoslavia to Mr Jan Martenson.

Israel* United States of America*; Australia*; Canada; The Twelve Members of the European Community; Switzerland; The Five Members of the Nordic Countries*; Austria; New Zealand; Japan; Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland (in a joint letter); Yugoslavia.

His Excellency
Mr Jan Martenson
Under-Secretary-General
for Human Rights
Palais des Nations, Geneva

His Excellency
Sr Enrique Bernales Ballesteros
Chairman of the 47th session
UN Commission on Human Rights
Palais des Nations, Geneva

The original letter was signed by the WUPJ and delivered by hand on 14 February 1991
(This list was delivered on Thursday, 28 February 1991)

Sirs,

We, the undersigned NGOs, deplore any Statement made at the Commission on Human Rights by a representative of a Member State, an Observer State or a Non-Governmental Organisation, which contains racist calumnies against any religion and is an incitement to religious or ethnic hatred. Such declarations are condemned under all the relevant international instruments and are inadmissible at the Commission on Human Rights.

We are particularly concerned by the historic Blood-Libel Accusation against Jews and the Jewish religion, which was revived on 8 February by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. On that occasion, she launched an appeal for Members of the Commission to read an Arabic book, published in 1985, that purports to prove "the historical reality" of a medieval allegation, that was again used in 1840 against the Jews of Damascus, [in an incident] known to historians as "The Damascus Affair".

It is our opinion that if the Commission does not condemn publicly this vicious libel which is a clear incitement to hatred, this omission will be seen as a stigma and the Commission will have accepted a dangerous precedent that could be followed by similar libels at a future date against any religion, or ethnic group. The Commission on Human Rights is a body, whose role is to uphold fundamental human rights and to denounce (*inter alia*, under art.20 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights):

"Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence..."

We look to you, Sirs, to find a suitable way to exert the necessary moral authority, so that the credibility of the Commission will be upheld and this blemish removed.

Respectfully,

World Union for Progressive Judaism; World Conference on Religion and Peace; World Federation of Methodist Women; Zonta International; International Fellowship of Reconciliation; International Committee for Peace and Human Rights; World Federation of Trade Unions; International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty

NB. Some NGOs expressed a preference to send their own personal letters on this subject. As of today, we are aware of two such letters: one sent by the **International Commission of Jurists**; another, on its way, from the **International League for Human Rights** [and received. No other letters are known to have been sent other than from three NGOs].*

* Letters of protest were also sent by the International Jewish Council of Women and the World Jewish Congress & The Coordinating Board of Jewish Organisations.



Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/90
19 March 1991

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 16

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE
TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 11 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative
of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to
the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I wish to draw your attention to an unprecedented statement made in the Commission by a member of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic on Friday, 8 February 1991.

In the course of exercising a right of reply, the Syrian representative Ms. Nabila Chaalan claimed that the contents of a virulently anti-Semitic book entitled The Unleavened Bread (Matzah) of Zion, written by the Syrian Minister of Defence, Mustapha Tlas, is entirely true. The book in question is a reaffirmation of the notorious Damascus blood libel of 1840, in which it was alleged that Jews had murdered one Father Thomas and used his blood in order to manufacture the unleavened bread (matzah) which is used in Jewish tradition as part of the celebration of Passover.

Ms. Chaalan's diatribe is thus a modern reincarnation of these infamous allegations which have been rife since medieval times, and raised by anti-Semites throughout the generations against Jews and the Jewish religion.

It would be astonishing, Mr. Chairman, if such a deliberate incitement to racial and religious hatred, in contravention of all international instruments of human rights, were to be uttered with impunity in any United Nations forum. It passes belief, however, that it should be made in the Commission on Human Rights, the very organ entrusted with the task of combating all manifestations of discrimination and bigotry.

I feel that it is incumbent on you, Mr. Chairman, to denounce this statement publicly and unequivocally, in order to preserve the credibility and honour of the Commission.

(Signed): Itzhak Lior
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

GE.91-11834/5897a



Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/75
14 February 1991

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 16

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE
TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 13 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of
the United States of America to the United Nations Office at Geneva,
addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

On 8 February 1991, during the afternoon session of the Commission, the representative of Syria made repeated approving references to the profoundly racist, anti-Semitic, and calumnious allegation that members of the Jewish faith have engaged in the ritual murder of Christians, including children, to use their blood in the preparation of the unleavened bread of the Passover feast.

Such statements, absurd and patently false, are historical incitements to prejudice and violence. We had thought that they had been relegated to the ashcan of history. They have no place in this Commission. They offend the decorum of this body and damage the credibility of its work. We deeply regret that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which is dedicated to ending intolerance toward any religious, racial, or ethnic group, was the venue for the expression of such crude and hateful allegations.

We assume that the statements made by the Representative of Syria do not reflect the views of the Government of Syria.

J. Kenneth Blackwell
U.S. Representative

(Signed)

Morris B. Abram
Ambassador

GE.91-10569/9168A



Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/78
18 February 1991

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 16

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE
TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 14 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of
Australia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the
Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

On behalf of the Australian delegation, I wish to reiterate the
Australian Government's condemnation of all incitements to racial or religious
hatred.

For this reason the Australian delegation deplores and rejects the
statement by a Syrian delegate on Friday, 8 February 1991 in which she
commended to the Commission a book which promotes outrageous and mendacious
allegations against Jewish people and their religion. In the view of the
Australian delegation such statements are unacceptable in the Commission on
Human Rights or anywhere else.

I would be grateful if you could arrange to have this letter circulated
as an official document of the Commission under item 16 of its agenda.

(signed): R.A. WALKER
Leader, Australian Delegation



Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/79
18 February 1991

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 16

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE
TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 18 February 1991 from the Permanent Representatives of
Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to the United Nations
Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on
Human Rights

The Nordic countries deplore the statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in exercising her right of reply in the meeting of the Commission on Friday, 8 February 1991, in which she at least indirectly made approving references to false and groundless allegations against Jews and their religion.

It is the firm conviction of the Nordic countries that all incitements to racial and religious prejudice and hatred should be vigorously condemned. Indeed, one of the main objectives of the work of the Commission on Human Rights is to promote religious, racial and political tolerance. This makes it all the more regrettable when the Commission is used as a forum to make statements in contradiction of this important objective.

The Nordic countries would be grateful if you could arrange for this letter to be circulated as an official document of the Commission under item 16 of the agenda.

(Signed)	Jacob Esper Larsen	Veijo Sampovaara	Kristinn F. Arnason
	Ambassador	Ambassador	Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
	Danish Delegation	Finnish Delegation	Icelandic Delegation

Haakon B. Hjelde	Jan Romare
Ambassador	Ambassador
Norwegian Delegation	Swedish Delegation

GE.91-10692/5483a



Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/80
20 February 1991

ENGLISH
Original: ARABIC

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 16

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE
TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 19 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative
of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at
Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights

Geneva, 19 February 1991

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the statement made by the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic on 8 February 1991 in exercise of its right of reply to the statement made by the representative of the World Union of Progressive Judaism.

The reply, made in Arabic (enclosed is an unofficial translation), did not in the least refer to Jews or Judaism and did not mention anything related to Judaic rituals. All remarks attributed to this reply are unfounded accusations and the campaign on which they are based is baseless and unjustified.

The head of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic had provided the Under-Secretary-General and Director of the Centre for Human Rights, Mr. J. Martenson, with an official copy in Arabic of the reply with an English translation. He emphasized that the Syrian Arab Republic respects Judaism as it respects other religions and reaffirmed that, in Syria, there is no discrimination or differentiation in treatment between citizens, regardless of the religion, sect or creed they belong to; the Constitution guarantees all this. It should be noted that foreign officials such as members of the American Congress and envoys of other States, who have visited Syria and have met with a number of Syrian citizens of the Jewish faith, have confirmed and expressed in their conversations and reports that Syria is well known for its tolerance. They referred to the absence of any kind of discrimination against Jews in Syria. Most of them stressed that Syrian citizens of the Jewish faith enjoy good economic and living standards and that employment and economic activity opportunities are freely available to all of them; they have their own schools and synagogues. Also, State schools and universities are open to them on an equal footing with other citizens. Thus, the reply did not at all refer to Jews or Judaism, but rather to the discriminatory nature of the Zionist movement, which comprises an ideology based on expelling the Arab population from Palestine, replacing it with foreigners and establishing Israel, which embraces this doctrine and considers it its characteristic feature and principal foundation. Israel applies the law of return, under which a Jew who has never been to Palestine is allowed to return there, while Palestinian Arabs are expelled and prevented from returning to their homeland where they have lived continuously for many centuries together with their fathers and grandfathers. The Israeli Government does not conceal its belief in this ideology. We have recently witnessed that the Mokedet Party, which calls for expelling the Arab population from the occupied territories and is led by retired General Rehavam Zeevi, has been rewarded with the appointment of Mr. Zeevi as Minister. It should be noted that in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly, in view of this practice and such discrimination, adopted resolution 3379 (XXX) in which it determined that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination. Repressive Israeli practices against Palestinians, which have been going on for several years in the West Bank and Gaza, confirm now more than ever the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic expresses its strongest indignation at the distorted information that appeared in a number of newspapers and communications which took this distortion as their basis and attributed it to the Syrian reply, which did not include such remarks, as well as against the campaign that followed these articles, and requests that this note be circulated as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. Chairman,

At this morning's meeting the representative of the so-called World Union for Progressive Judaism expressed certain ideas which aim at distorting the truth and diverting attention from what is going on in the occupied territories and the barbarous Nazi practices committed by the occupying Zionist authorities. It is clear that such attempts shall have the same fate as previous ones which fail to conceal the racist nature of the Zionist movement which emerged at the end of the last century in the context of racist and colonial policies practised by the then colonial countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The basis of that movement was to establish an entity based on pure discrimination supported by colonialists just as racist régimes were set up in Africa, particularly in South Africa and Rhodesia. History has clearly demonstrated this and we can see this clearly happening now in the occupied Palestinian territories, in the Syrian Arab Golan and in southern Lebanon as well. This has led the international community to recognize this fact through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) of 1975 which acknowledged that Zionism was a form of racism. This resolution reflects the opinion of the international community, not the other way round. Those who seek the elimination of this resolution are undoubtedly protectors and promoters of racism.

Mr. Chairman, regardless of the ability of the speaker and his organization to distort facts, he cannot change historical realities recorded in the legal investigation files of France and included in the factual historical book, "The Matsa of Sion". We should like to urge all members of the Commission to read this very important work that demonstrates unequivocally the historical reality of Zionist racism.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to draw the Commission's attention to another fact. The victim referred to in the book is Father Abadri Tuma who was born in Colongia on the island of Sardinia. France accepted him as a Catholic missionary and sent him to Damascus in 1807 and when he was killed he had spent 33 years there. He was very well known in Damascus because he was practising medicine and visiting all members of the population, regardless of their religion, to vaccinate them against smallpox. It is worth mentioning that the investigation which followed his murder was under the supervision of the French Consul in Damascus, Le Conte De Rattimento, in collaboration with his assistant and the Governors of Damascus at that time, and those who read the book and learn about the reasons for Father Tuma's murder would clearly understand the reality of Zionist racism.

I do not wish to speak at any greater length, because time is valuable, but I did wish to draw the attention of the Commission that the role of certain NGOs at this Commission seems to be to hamper the work of this important Commission. It would be a good idea for the Commission, whose aim is to promote and protect human rights everywhere, to reconsider the criteria of participation of such organizations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GE.91-10775/9255A

1984 BLOOD LIBEL ACCUSATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA

A United Nations Seminar on the Encouragement of Understanding and Respect in Matters Relating to Freedom of Religion or Belief took place in December 1984, organised by the UN Human Rights Centre in Geneva. On 5 December, Mr Ma'aruf al-Dawilibi – President of the World Muslim Congress, representing Saudi Arabia – made a long Statement in which he declared that each year Jews kidnap and slaughter a non-Jewish boy to drain his blood. He asserted that the Talmud teaches: *"If a Jew does not drink every year the blood of a non-Jewish man, then he will be damned for eternity."*

The background to this 1984 Blood-Libel Accusation – made to a UN body in Geneva – including information concerning Mr al-Dawilibi's Nazi past, as personal secretary to the Nazi collaborator and War Criminal al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, Mufti of Jerusalem, may be found in: H.O. Schoenberg, *A Mandate for Terror: The United Nations and the PLO*, New York, 1989, pp. 21 and 325-326. For a recent survey, see: R. Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred*, London, 1991, pp. 234-267.

Letter published in the International Herald Tribune, Friday, May 3, 1991

PLACING BETS ON SYRIA

Regarding "Syria Sees Peace Chance, but Says Israel Must Act" (April 19):

According to the Syrian foreign minister, Farouk Shara, one of the prerequisites for peace between Syria and Israel is "a significant UN role at a peace conference." He also is quoted as declaring that "what we are saying is very convincing for any honest broker."

The proverbial "honest broker" (Uncle Sam) will need to place his bets on Syria with care, bearing in mind that country's reputation as a terrorist state and its contempt for United Nations conventions. As recently as Feb. 8, a Syrian delegate at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva publicly revived a crude blood-libel accusation against the Jews (the 1840 "Damascus Affair"), provoking indignant letters of protest to the chairman from 29 countries, led by Israel and the United States.

An "honest broker" is required to convince Syria to stop these incitements to racial, ethnic and religious hatred at the United Nations, in contradiction to the International Bill of Rights, and join with other countries in rescinding the iniquitous 1975 UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, equating Zionism with racism, which is at the root of so much anti-semitism, disguised as anti-Zionism at UN bodies and elsewhere.

DAVID LITTMAN

UN Representative, World Union for Progressive Judaism, Geneva

INSIDE BACK COVER PHOTOGRAPH

This photograph has been faithfully reproduced – for the sake of authenticity – from the 1983 Arabic edition of "The Unleavened [Matzah] Bread of Zion", published in Syria. Apart from the title, it bears the name of Mustafa Tlass, the Defence Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic since 1972. This "story" – a crude example of ethnic antisemitic pornography – was recently dramatised by the Syrian State radio and beamed to the Arab world. It was heard in Kuwait in early 1990, before Iraq's invasion on 2 August.

It is this book to which the Syrian representative, Miss Nabila Chaalan, referred in her 8 February "right of reply". Holding a copy in her hand, she launched: *"An appeal to all members of this Commission to read this very important work that demonstrates unequivocally the historical reality of Zionism [from which one] will clearly discover the racist reality of Zionism."*

Colour photocopies were made available by the WUPJ representative a fortnight later during the debate on: "Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief" (see page 42). Copies were handed to the Chairman of the Commission (Sr Ballesteros), the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights (Mr Martenson), both on the podium, and to a few ambassadors. It was also shown to many leaders of delegations and about 100 representatives.