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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 8 May 1985, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan)

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Solemn commemorative ceremony in the light of General Assembly resolution 39/114
(Council decision 1985/101, para. 2 (b))

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The meeting was called to order at 10.57 a.m.

SOLEMN COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY IN THE LIGHT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 39/114
(COUNCIL DECISION 1985/101, PARA. 2 (b))

The PRESIDENT said that on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, his thoughts went to all those who had suffered from the consequences of the War, and to all the profound and complex causes of that tragedy. The international community had resolved never to repeat those errors, and to that end Member States had undertaken to ensure the full exercise of basic human rights, to settle their international disputes by peaceful means, to control and reduce nuclear and conventional weapons, and to promote the economic and social development of the developing countries.

In the past 40 years, noticeable progress had been made: per capita income, life expectancy and literacy had increased. Many peoples had obtained their independence, and a third world war had been avoided. However, the realities of the world were not yet in keeping with the hopes placed in the United Nations by its founders, as demonstrated by the many armed conflicts, the violations of human rights in some parts of the world, the arms race, and the vast regions of poverty and misery, for example in Africa. Faced with that situation, the international community had the responsibility to maintain international peace and security, and the major Powers had to activate their dialogue in order to overcome their differences.

The United Nations, of which the Economic and Social Council was one of the most important components, had been born out of the ruins and devastation of the Second World War, and was an indispensable instrument of international co-operation which should seek to bequeath to coming generations a better world.

On the proposal of the President, the members of the Economic and Social Council observed a minute of silence as part of the solemn commemorative ceremony in the light of General Assembly resolution 39/114.

Statement by the Secretary-General

The SECRETARY-GENERAL paid a tribute to the millions who had participated heroically 40 years earlier in the struggle against nazism and fascism and had contributed to the restoration of human dignity. He said that the best way to honour their memory was to renew the determination that such atrocities would never occur again.

There were notable differences between the world of 1945 and the contemporary world. The continent of Europe, which had been a spectacle of ruin and devastation, was now a monument to the resilience of the human spirit and the blessings of peace. The countries of Asia and Africa, most of which had then been in colonial bondage, were now sovereign members of the international community. The hopes of the world after the Second World War had culminated in the United Nations, and a truly global civilization had been born.

On the other hand, mistrust and suspicion now separated the great Powers, which had been allies 40 years earlier, and the prospects of peace in 1945 had given way to disillusion. The fear of nuclear Armageddon had been unknown 40 years earlier; it was now a pervasive burden on the human mind.

After the Second World War, the founders of the United Nations had formulated the essentials of peace in the Preamble to the Charter and in Article 1. To the framers of the Charter, justice and international law, the self-determination of peoples, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all had appeared not as abstractions, but as the prerequisites for an international order that could ensure peace and promote economic and social advancement.

The process of the past 40 years had confirmed the importance of the spirit of co-operation, especially among the permanent members of the Security Council, if the system of collective security was to become a political reality. Violations of human rights had the inevitable effect of destabilizing the political order. Only the universal protection of human rights could lead to the realization of the full meaning and purpose of the victory over nazism and fascism. In order to demonstrate their appreciation of that immutable truth, all States that had not yet done so should ratify or accede to or consider acceding to the covenants and conventions in the area of human rights, as proposed in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 39/114.

(The Secretary-General)

In the past 40 years, there had been considerable achievements: the world had been spared another global war, and, in contrast to the attitudes of the past, there now existed a far more widespread revulsion against war. That represented a positive and encouraging advance in the world's political culture. It was for the United Nations to translate that from the plane of spiritual conviction to that of the actual conduct of international affairs.

Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique) said that the defeat of nazism and fascism was the best testimony of what men and women could accomplish when they pooled their sacrifices, resources and determination to defend the best of what they had in common. It was that philosophy that had inspired the establishment of the United Nations, which was a vivid expression of the victory over nazism and the best instrument to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and promote social progress.

The African continent had been one of the arenas of the Second World War. The African peoples had contributed to the downfall of the Axis Powers. There had been African soldiers in the contingents of the Allied Forces in Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia. About 3 million people had been recruited in Africa. Thousands of others had constructed fortifications, roads and airports. Their courage and endurance had made a valuable contribution to the liberation of Europe.

One would have thought that, at the end of the Second World War, all those who had participated in the struggle against nazism and fascism would have benefited from the victory. That, however, had not been the case. At the outbreak of the Second World War, most of the African countries had been in colonial bondage. At the end of the War, those with whom the African peoples had fought side by side had become enemies, impeding self-determination, freedom and independence. Africa had had to struggle to regain every inch from the colonial claws. The economic strategies and plans for the reconstruction of Europe and Japan had not been extended to Africa, which was now reaping the fruits of neglect: illiteracy, disease, malnutrition and hunger.

The international community had certainly come to the aid of Africa during the latest economic and food crisis. However, much remained to be done with respect to the development of the African continent and the developing world at large, and with respect to the establishment of an equitable basis for international economic relations.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

The creation in 1963 of the Organization of African Unity, which had scored important victories in the struggle against all forms of colonialism, had represented the highest point in the patriotic conscience of Africa.

In celebrating the important anniversary of the victory over fascism and nazism, his delegation had in mind the peoples of Africa, Asia and other continents who had fought for freedom and still remained unfree. In particular, there were the Palestinians, who were being denied their legitimate national rights, and the people of Namibia, who were the victims of apartheid.

The celebration of the end of the Second World War should constitute an opportunity to draw lessons for the present and the future, and to face honestly the fundamental challenges to the international community, one of which was the elimination of apartheid and all forms of racial discrimination and colonialism. Among the objectives of the United Nations Charter were the securing of dignity, equality and justice among human beings, and the promotion of peace, security and stability through independence and economic development for all nations. Time would tell whether OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations had been able to observe and fulfil those principles and objectives.

Mr. AL-ANSI (Observer for Oman), speaking on behalf of the Group of Asian States, said that throughout its history, the United Nations had adopted many resolutions aimed at protecting international peace and security. Since December 1971, when the General Assembly had adopted resolution 2839 (XXVI) on measures to be taken against nazism and other ideologies and practices based on incitement to hatred and racial intolerance, that item had been on the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights, a subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council. Since then, the scope of the item had been broadened in other resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 36/162 of 16 December 1981. The Commission on Human Rights had been dealing with the item since its thirty-eighth session, and, at its forty-first session, in 1985, it had adopted resolution 1985/31, some paragraphs of which were contained in the agenda of the Council's current session.

The Council was meeting that day specifically in pursuance of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 39/114, to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the victory over nazism and to remember that the United Nations had been created to defend the dignity and worth of the human person

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(Mr. Al-Ansi, Observer, Oman)

and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. On such a day, it could only be hoped that those objectives would be achieved.

In some countries of Asia, the Second World War had continued to be felt months after the hostilities had ended in Europe, and Japan in particular had been the victim of atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some peoples of Asia still continued to suffer from the consequences of that War, and a clear example of that was the Middle East, especially Palestine and the occupied Arab territories. The efforts of the United Nations in the struggle against fascism and against all racist practices and ideologies based on racial hatred deserved strong support, and his delegation therefore fully joined in the solemn commemoration of the end of the Second World War.

Mr. MUNIZ (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American States, said that it was customarily reiterated, perhaps automatically, that the United Nations had been born at the end of the War in order to save, as stated in the Preamble to the Charter, "succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold suffering to mankind". The date being commemorated offered an opportunity to re-examine the true meaning of those words and to become aware of the inescapable need to avoid any situation which could endanger international peace and security.

It was gratifying to note that, at the end of the War with the defeat of nazism and fascism, it had been possible to create at San Francisco a system which for 40 years had demonstrated its effectiveness and which had permitted the beginning of the recovery of a devastated world, thus inaugurating a period of international co-operation which had contributed to healing the wounds left by that conflagration. In that connection, it should be borne in mind that only the definitive elimination of the causes of a conflict would permit the development of friendly relations and co-operation between former adversaries. That was the best way of honouring the memory of those who had given their lives to preserve peace and freedom. In that connection, it was worthwhile remembering the words uttered a few days before by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Köhl, who, referring to that great stage of reconstruction, had said that "the supreme goal of our political efforts" was "to make impossible any repetition of that systematic destruction of human life and dignity".

(Mr. Mufiz, Argentina)

In that process, the United Nations had played a fundamental role. Without the system of collective security created by it, the international community would have continued to be exposed to all forms of aggression and it would have been impossible to ensure respect for law in relations between States. Similarly, without the system of international co-operation created at San Francisco, the problems of underdevelopment would have manifested themselves in much more cruel forms. Thus the importance of the purposes and principles of the Charter, the fulfilment of which would give impetus to the establishment of a more just international order, based on the sovereign equality of States, the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, the non-use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and non-intervention in affairs which were essentially within the internal jurisdiction of States.

Latin America had the honour of having participated with great distinction in the setting up and development of the United Nations. Of the 54 original Members, 20 had belonged to the Latin American region and had had the serious responsibility of encouraging a process which was the most important achievement of the United Nations: that of decolonization, a process which it was to be hoped would be finalized in the near future. At the same time, Latin America viewed with deep concern the fact that many of the causes which had led to great inequality in levels of development still remained, and that, despite the efforts made, continued to be manifested in daily situations of social and economic injustice, to the surmounting of which the Council must contribute.

Mr. BIERRING (Observer for Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, said that for those States, united in a firm commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights, social justice and the rule of law, it was an honour to participate in the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the most catastrophic war in the history of mankind. Even though the scars and the memories of that conflict were still with those who had suffered and had survived, its end, in May 1945, had also represented the end of one world and the beginning of a new one, based on co-operation rather than confrontation. Democracy had been reinforced and expanded, and the international community had been tripled with the emergence of new nation States.

Looking back over the past 40 years, one could not fail to recognize that, while there had been confrontations and conflicts, the repetition of a new world

(Mr. Bierring, Observer, Denmark)

war had been avoided. Among the reasons for that achievement, a major one was undoubtedly the new system of international co-operation inaugurated by the United Nations. That raised hopes that the lessons of the past had been learnt, but there should be no room for complacency. The capacity of the human person for good and for bad was without bounds. For that reason, on the present day of commemoration, it was necessary to renew the promise to each other to pool human and material resources in a determined effort to use to the full the opportunities offered by the United Nations to improve the conditions of mankind. It was necessary to put an end to the arms race and to seek the peaceful settlement of disputes which divided peoples. It was necessary to seek the triumph of justice and to use the available international machinery for the economic and social development of all peoples and for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. In that connection, the words written by Franklin D. Roosevelt on the last day of his life for a speech which he had intended to deliver at the San Francisco Conference remained relevant: "The work, my friends, is peace: more than an end of this war - an end to the beginning of all wars. I ask you to keep your faith. The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with a strong and active faith". It was to be hoped that that same spirit would motivate all delegations participating in the current session of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. GOLUB (Yugoslavia) said that the participation of Yugoslavia in the victory over fascism was recalled with pride and that that participation had been the result of the decision of the peoples and nationalities of Yugoslavia to fight against the yoke of foreign domination and to join forces with all allied countries that had been fighting nazism and fascism. Yugoslavia had thus placed itself among the nations of the anti-Hitler coalition and had fought for common goals and principles that had, in the end, been incorporated into the Charter of the United Nations. From the founding of that Organization, Yugoslavia had firmly committed itself to the struggle for human dignity and freedom, for democratization of international economic and political relations and against colonialism, foreign domination and the use of force.

Marshal Tito, one of the outstanding strategists of the Second World War, had imbued Yugoslavs with ideals of brotherhood and unity at home and independence and

(Mr. Golub Yugoslavia)

equality abroad. Those ideals remained the inspiration of Yugoslavs, who had made their independence and sovereignty a shining achievement which they were prepared to defend jealously and ceaselessly.

The war of liberation had cost Yugoslavia 1,700,000 human lives and constituted irrefutable proof that peoples, inspired by the ideals of independence and freedom and determined to defend them, could mould their own destiny and participate in forming the common destiny of mankind.

The victory over the ideology, system and practices of the Axis Powers, which had constituted the major enemy of all peoples and progress, had resulted from the united effort of all nations, without distinction as to their political, ideological or religious beliefs. That victory of the peoples of the world over fascism had made possible the establishment of the United Nations and the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. The new era thus inaugurated had produced the great anti-colonial revolution in which more than 100 countries had gained their independence. The policy of non-alignment was increasingly gaining influence, as were the activities of the Group of 77 developing countries. The right to peace, security, equality and equitable co-operation had been widely recognized, and the concept of the new international economic order and global negotiations had been established. The ideals of the common heritage of mankind and individual and collective human rights had been achieved, the use of force had been rejected, and interventionism and the arms race had been condemned. That period had also seen the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act and the institution of the process of European security and co-operation.

The peoples living under the yoke of foreign domination, oppression and colonialism had seen in the defeat of nazism a victory for the forces of light, independence, peace, right and freedom; but now in reality many of them, on virtually all continents, remained subjected to aggression and domination. Some peoples had not yet achieved independence and self-determination. Apartheid, the identical twin of nazism, was still untouched. Economic and political domination and exploitation were increasing and the division of the world into blocs was being enforced. The power to decide the fate of humanity was increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few, and new forms of warfare were being invented that were making it more and more difficult to contain the arms race.

(Mr. Golub Yugoslavia)

However, as the late President Tito had said, future generations were going to measure countries and statesmen not by the devastating power of their armaments, but by the part they had taken in efforts to turn away from the path of self-annihilation and to channel human energy, wisdom and wealth into the service of security and prosperity for all countries.

Mr. DZIPANOW (Poland) said that he had the honour to address the Council as a representative of Poland and as a soldier of its People's Army and veteran of the most atrocious war known to man.

The Polish people had been the first to offer armed resistance to the German onslaught in September 1939. In May 1945, after a total of 2,078 days of unremitting fighting, the Polish Army had had the honour of raising its white and red flag next to the Soviet flag in the capital of the Third Reich. In the first weeks of the War, close to a million Poles had faced the Germans in battle. The Poles as a people had never been defeated. In 1944 Polish armed combatants, both resistance units and regular army units, had numbered well over 800,000. Another half million Poles had served in the ranks of the Allied armies. By 9 May 1945 the Polish troops encircling the Third Reich had numbered 600,000 men, 400,000 of whom had fought on the eastern front and almost 200,000 on the western front. In April and May 1945, in Europe, the Poles had ranked as the fourth largest fighting force among the Allies. It was a matter of historical record that the Polish resistance in 1939 had offered the Western Allies a better chance to prepare themselves for action in the spring of 1940. On the western front, the Polish Armed Forces had distinguished themselves at Narvik and Tobruk, in the march to Rome through Monte Cassino and in the Normandy encirclement of the German Army at Falaise. On the eastern front, the main battlefront of the War, the People's Army, together with the Red Army of the Soviet Union, had distinguished itself at the Pomeranian ramparts and in the battle for Berlin.

Above all, however, the impact of the armed resistance of Polish guerrillas should not be forgotten. The underground resistance organization, comprising over a million members, had caused the Nazis to lose the equivalent of 12 to 14 combat divisions. In the Warsaw uprising against the Nazis in 1944, the inhabitants had resisted twice as long as had several Allied armies in 1940, despite the fact that every 24 hours of fighting had taken a toll of killed and wounded twice as high as

(Mr. Dzipanow, Poland)

that of a week of combat on the western front in 1944-1945. The Poles had also taken part in guerrilla operations in 17 European countries, with separate Polish units operating in 13 of them.

Over 6 million Poles had perished in the War. Every day of the War had cost 3,000 lives. Millions of Poles and Polish Jews had died in concentration camps. Poland had lost 40 per cent of its national wealth and Warsaw had been razed. Yet the battle to save Poland from Hitler's goal of biological extinction had also been a relentless struggle against absolute evil and a starting-point on the road to a reborn nation. More than 600,000 sons of the Soviet Union had lost their lives on Polish soil, fighting side by side with the Polish people, and the sacrifice of their lives had led to the rebirth of Poland as a socialist nation within historically just frontiers.

The United Nations, which was also celebrating its fortieth anniversary in 1985, owed its existence to the Allied victory; its authority and effectiveness depended upon the allegiance of its Members to the purposes and principles of the Charter and upon the full implementation of its resolutions and declarations. For a number of years the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council, had, with broad international support, been involved in the adoption of effective measures against Nazi, Fascist and neo-Fascist activities and other totalitarian and racist ideologies and practices based on intolerance, hatred and terror. The people of Poland recognized that the questioning of established frontiers and the spreading of racial prejudice and hatred were the modern-day version of the ideologies that had pushed mankind into the abyss of the Second World War, and they consequently stood persuaded that much remained to be done in that respect. Warsaw, levelled to the ground 40 years earlier, had recently been the scene of an appeal by the leaders of States parties to the Warsaw Treaty for peace, mutual tolerance and respect, non-interference and peaceful coexistence. Millions of Polish war veterans had associated themselves with the President of Poland, General Jaruzelski, when he had urged all the peoples of the world, regardless of their beliefs, religion, culture or occupation, to act to dispel the threat of a new war, reach understanding and restore the climate of co-operation and common sense so weakened by the forces of evil and fascism.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic) said that the people of his country were observing the fortieth anniversary of the victory over Hitlerite fascism and, at the same time, their own liberation from Nazi rule. They wished to convey their greetings and thanks to the liberators: to the Soviet people, who had had to bear the brunt of the War and had suffered the greatest losses, and to the peoples of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the other Allied countries. Their struggle had saved world civilization from Fascist barbarity by allowing humanity, freedom and human dignity to triumph, thus ushering in the longest period of peace known in Europe.

The people of the German Democratic Republic paid homage to the 20 million Soviet citizens and the other brave combatants of many other nations; to the heroes of Brest, Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad, the fighters of the Polish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav liberation armies, the French and Italian resistance fighters, all the partisans and resistance fighters in other countries, and the anti-Fascists who had continued the struggle in prisons and concentration camps. Among them from the start there had been Germans - communists and social democrats, trade unionists, Christians and Jews, liberal democrats and patriotic officers, workers and artists - who had fearlessly stood up against Hitler's fascism and had been its first victims.

In recent weeks, the German Democratic Republic had paid tribute to all the anti-Fascists of various political outlooks and religions, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who had died during the War. For their sake and that of all the victims and survivors of the concentration camps at Buchenwald, Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrueck, Brandenburg, Ploetzensee, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Lidice and Oradour, there could be no reconciliation with SS murderers under any pretext whatsoever. Never could those crimes be forgotten or forgiven. The people and State of the German Democratic Republic had made those historical facts a constituent part of their moral position and their policies. Those who in their thinking had remained in the trenches of the Second World War and regarded the day of victory and liberation as a catastrophe, a disgrace and a failure were lost in their delusions. The eighth and ninth days of May symbolized the victory of sanity which had prompted the creation of a common front against fascism at the Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, despite differences of opinion and interests, and had made peace possible in Europe. Those Conferences furnished convincing proof that it was

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

possible for States with different social systems to co-operate and that even the most complicated problems and conflicts could be solved when the legitimate security interests of all sides were taken into account and the necessary political will was brought to bear. Peace, security and co-operation were based upon adherence to the accords concluded by Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, Truman and Attlee, the numerous bilateral treaties and the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. The key issue was the recognition of the inviolability of existing borders and of the principle of equal security for all States.

The most important lesson of the Allied co-operation 40 years earlier was that all peace-loving peoples must unite to prevent war before it started, since any new war would be a nuclear war, as the head of State of the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Honecker had recently pointed out, and would involve mankind's self-destruction. There could thus be no more important task than to secure peace. The triumph of the anti-Hitler coalition, with its broad composition, nourished the hope that a world-wide coalition could be forged of all countries interested in preserving peace and preventing a nuclear catastrophe.

The German Democratic Republic supported all initiatives to promote dialogue and negotiations designed to safeguard peace, and all practical measures for bringing about disarmament. His country, whose position had an anti-Fascist, democratic and socialist basis, had eliminated all forms of militarism and expansionism in order to ensure that war would never again begin on German soil. His Government pursued a policy of peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourliness and constructive dialogue.

The commemoration of the victory must not be only an opportunity to recall historic events, but must also be a reminder of the obligation to oppose any attempt to resurrect fascism and the threat of war. In that regard, the United Nations, which had been established after the triumph of the Allies in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, had a fundamental role to play in the maintenance of peace and the implementation of the right of all peoples to life.

It was hoped that the spirit present at the meeting of the armies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States on the Elbe River, which had

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

recently been commemorated by veterans of the two countries and by anti-Fascist Germans, could serve as a source of inspiration for political action at the current time.

Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) said that the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism in the Second World War was an occasion to reflect on that tragedy in which 50 million persons had lost their lives and in which the peace-loving and democratic forces had entered into combat with the forces of aggression and obscurantism.

His delegation paid homage to all those who had given their lives in order to save the world from fascism and particularly to the Soviet people, who had borne the brunt of the struggle and had played a decisive role in it, to the Allies, who had contributed to the defeat of fascism, and to the Resistance fighters and those who had died in Nazi concentration camps and gas chambers.

The Bulgarian people, who had led the first massive uprising against fascism in 1923, had also contributed to the joint victory through its protracted resistance struggle and the tens of thousands of victims who had fought in the Resistance.

That victory was a landmark in world politics. The War had showed that countries with different social structures could unite to achieve a common objective, and the joint decisions taken at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam in order to avert another military catastrophe and ensure lasting peace for mankind were proof of that.

Since the War, it had been possible to observe the results of that spirit of joint determination during the years of détente, which had opened new horizons for the concept of peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, recently there had arisen dangerous tendencies based on the belief that armed confrontation was the most effective way to safeguard peace. The question of the prevention of nuclear war remained unresolved and the time had come, as had been the case with regard to Fascist aggression, for the good sense and feeling of responsibility on the part of the united peace-loving countries to prevail over the temptation to achieve military supremacy in order to avert a thermonuclear catastrophe, and to devote all energy to solve the innumerable problems which continued to confront mankind and which could be alleviated through constructive co-operation.

(Mr. Tsevtkov, Bulgaria)

It was important not to forget the danger of the alarming resurgence of fascism, which, instigated by the forces of social and political revanchism, took advantage of international tensions in order to achieve its own ends. The commemoration could serve as the starting-point of a United Nations effort to broaden its activities against the dangerous manifestations of fascism and neo-fascism and to orient its work along those lines in political, social, humanitarian and cultural fields.

The international community must combine its efforts in order to create a political atmosphere for preventing a resurgence of fascism and hatred, thus saving current and future generations from the sufferings caused by war.

Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism being celebrated throughout the world and, specifically, in the United Nations, which had been established as a result of that victory, he had the honour to speak not only on behalf of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but also on behalf of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, whose long-suffering peoples had contributed so much to the defeat of fascism.

The Second World War, which had caused 50 million deaths, 20 million of which had been Russian, had been the bloodiest in the history of mankind. His delegation wished to take the opportunity to pay homage to those who had fallen on the battlefield and to those who had died in Nazi concentration camps. It also wished to express gratitude to the armies of the Allied countries and emphasize, in particular, the role played by the troops of the Central European countries which had participated in the conflict, and the valiant struggle of the members of the Resistance. The contribution of the Soviet Union to the victory had without doubt been decisive, as Roosevelt, Churchill, De Gaulle and many others had clearly recognized.

Speaking of the past should serve not only to commemorate the victory and recall to mind the victims of the War, but also to draw from that experience two lessons which were still valid: the need to struggle against war before it began, and the importance of working together to maintain peace, as those who had defeated fascism and laid the foundations for peace through the establishment of the United Nations, which was the culmination of the joint efforts to promote peace, had worked together, although belonging to different social systems.

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(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

The joint victory had been achieved because fascism had been recognized by all as a general danger. At the current time, nuclear war represented a threat to all.

The General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR, Mr. Gorbachev, had recently stated that the Soviet Union would spare no effort to prevent a repetition of the tragedy of the Second World War, halt the arms race and avert the threat of nuclear war. The efforts of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, which were ready to resume the process of détente in order to prevent the division of the world into two blocs and which favoured the simultaneous dissolution of the two major military alliances as a first step towards mutual understanding and co-operation, were oriented along those same lines. Furthermore, the Soviet Union supported the role of the United Nations as an important international forum for uniting the forces which favoured peace and security.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) said that the Romanian people were commemorating on 9 May the fortieth anniversary of the defeat of fascism and, at the same time, the day of their independence, which had been the culmination of their centuries-old struggle for freedom.

The Romanian people had made a decisive contribution to the defeat of fascism. Even before the War, the Communist Party of Romania had organized large-scale activities in the struggle against fascism, and the working class had later fiercely opposed the anti-national policy pursued by certain governmental circles. During the War, the Communist Party of Romania had organized and directed numerous acts of sabotage, which had culminated in the anti-Fascist, anti-imperialist and social and national liberation revolution of August 1944.

Having rid itself of Fascist domination, Romania had joined the coalition of the allied nations and had struggled together with the Soviet Army, demonstrating that the Romanian people had nothing in common with those who had unleashed the war against the Soviet Union and that it shared the aspirations of the peoples who had opposed fascism. The President of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu, had stated that the heroic struggle and the sacrifices on the battlefield together with the Soviet soldiers in order to bring about the liberation of Romania and then Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, culminating in the total defeat of Hitler, had demonstrated the true feelings of the Romanian people.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

The participation of Romania in the struggle had been a great blow to Hitler's strategic plans and had facilitated the rapid advance of Soviet forces in that part of Europe. During the War Romania had lost 170,000 men out of a total of 540,000. It was high on the list of countries that had contributed to the defeat of fascism.

The lack of unity and steadfastness among the anti-Fascist and anti-Hitler forces had permitted the outbreak of the World War, and the defeat of Hitler had, in turn, resulted from a great coalition. The best tribute that could be paid in that regard to those who had fallen in the fight against fascism was a policy of peace and international co-operation. The fundamental lesson of the Second World War was that peoples and countries which had different systems could co-operate among themselves if they subordinated their differences to the interest of preserving peace. At a time when the international situation had deteriorated to an unprecedented degree since the Second World War and when the existence of nuclear weapons threatened civilization and life on the planet, it was necessary for all States to redouble their efforts to halt the advance of the world towards a nuclear cataclysm and to resume the process of détente and co-operation.

Mr. HUANG (China) said that 40 years before, international fascism had started a global war that had devastated Europe, Asia and Africa and had affected 60 countries and nearly four fifths of the entire world population. The victory over fascism had been a victory of peace over war, of democracy over anti-democratic forces, of justice over evil and of civilization over barbarism.

During the Second World War, China had fought side by side with the other allied countries, had suffered heavy losses and had made great sacrifices, thus making indelible contributions to the struggle against fascism. That victory had also helped to put an end to imperialist oppression and to promote the struggle of colonies for their national independence and freedom.

There was a Chinese saying that past experience was a guide for the future. Valuable lessons could be drawn from that period of history. While there had not been a new world war, there had been regional conflicts, unrest in many parts of the world and violations of the United Nations Charter and the basic norms guiding international relations. The arms race between the super-Powers, in particular, posed a grave threat to international peace and security. The peoples of the world were entitled to ask the two super-Powers to carry out arms reductions with sincerity and good sense.

(Mr. Huang, China)

The Government and people of China genuinely desired peace and consistently stood for disarmament, the reduction of conventional arms and the total prohibition and destruction of all nuclear weapons. The Government and people of China welcomed the resumption of the arms control talks between the United States and the Soviet Union and sincerely hoped that those talks would achieve positive results.

The situation in the developing countries, whose population made up three quarters of the world's total, constituted an important global problem with a bearing on the overall situation of the world. Nevertheless, the developed countries had not so far responded positively to that problem. His delegation hoped that there would be a return to the North-South dialogue and that the countries of the South would strengthen their co-operation in an effort to solve their own problems, especially in view of the increasingly obvious fact that the development of the countries of the third world was an important factor for peace throughout the world.

China, a developing socialist country, wished to establish and develop friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the fundamental principles of peaceful coexistence. In today's world, marked by tensions and pernicious conflicts, the international community had the historic duty to endeavour to safeguard world peace, promote the development and prosperity of all countries and base international relations on equality, mutual benefit, friendship and co-operation in order to build a better world. Those were the hopes which China brought to the solemn commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism and of the end of the Second World War.

Mr. GOODMAN (United States of America) said that even though much had been achieved since the victory in Europe and in the Pacific, there was no doubt that there was still a long way to go before the ideals expressed in the Charter of the United Nations could be converted into reality for the millions who still suffered under one form or another of fascism and totalitarianism.

The Second World War had brought great suffering to people everywhere, to participants in the fighting, to innocent victims, to the aggressors and to those who had ultimately succeeded in putting down aggression. The burdens of the War had not been confined to any nation; all had suffered its consequences. Today, far too many people still carried with them the physical and psychological scars of the conflict. However, it would be all too easy to dwell on that tragic episode, and

(Mr. Goodman, United States)

nothing would be gained by adopting a backward-looking approach to the current commemorative ceremony. It would be better to consider the great progress made since the day on which, 40 years before, a curtain had been lowered and, as President Reagan had stated, "democracy and freedom and peace and friendship began between erstwhile enemies".

The achievements and benefits of post-War reconciliation and co-operation among the Western-oriented nations had been unmatched in world history. The growth of free societies, dedicated to pluralism, freely contested elections, genuine human rights and economic progress had been astounding. During the past 40 years, a third world war had been avoided, even though that had not meant the elimination of armed conflict and aggression. Perhaps, most remarkable of all was the emergence of thriving democracies dedicated to individual liberty, free enterprise and human dignity in the very nations that had been defeated in the Second World War. That constituted an example for the peoples whose aspirations to that end were still unfulfilled. However, the democratic experiment remained a fragile exercise and needed constant dedication and support. In that respect, the recollection of the horror which had ended in 1945 and the knowledge that other horrors, perhaps comparable, continued to plague the small planet should be sufficient to ensure that the international community rededicated itself to the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

The very fact that the European Community was that morning speaking to the Council as an association of free and democratic nations which 40 years before had been at war with each other was a tribute to the great progress that had been made. Similarly, in the Far East, Japan had emerged from utter ruin to become a dominant economic power, innovative, dynamic and, above all, free and democratic. To the extent that the United States had contributed to the emergence of freedom and democracy where neither had existed before, it could only be proud of its efforts and the results achieved. Wars were never fought between nations which freely elected their leaders and which guaranteed human rights and the rule of law for their peoples.

That was why the international community should concentrate on the future and not allow itself to be consumed by the past. The horrors of the Second World War could not and should not be forgotten, but if a repetition of the terrible mistakes which had led to that War was to be avoided, it was necessary to work to ensure

(Mr. Goodman, United States)

that true democracy flourished everywhere. A world which needed no walls to keep the people in, which respected the rights and dignity of peoples everywhere, and which ensured that nations were governed by the rule of law was a world where the tragedy that had ended 40 years before would not be repeated. The task was difficult, but much had been achieved since 1945.

Mr. LEE (Canada), speaking on behalf also of New Zealand and Australia, pointed out that all three countries had contributed wholeheartedly and vigorously to the struggle in many parts of the world during the Second World War and had sustained great losses. Yet their resolve to defend freedom and democratic values remained undiminished. The same could be said of many other countries which had taken part actively in the fight against aggression and prejudice during the world conflict which had caused millions of casualties and brought tragedy to countless persons.

Yet, out of the ashes and the devastation of that war, a determination had been forged that had animated the successful efforts to date to avoid a similar or worse catastrophe. That same determination had been at the root of the establishment of the United Nations with its aims and ideals and with its persistent search, over the years, for peace and disarmament, its significant steps towards peace-keeping and peace-making, its practical programmes of economic and social development and co-operation, and its progressive establishment of enlightened norms of human rights and international law.

On the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, while the Organization pressed forward with its efforts in those and other important areas of human endeavour, it had to avoid recrimination and denigration, mustering instead all the qualities of peaceful co-operation and mutual encouragement learned from that most destructive of all wars, and thus helping to overcome the barriers of the past.

Mr. BUCCI (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the European Economic Community, said that, in the Second World War, human dignity and conscience had confronted an implacable and destructive totalitarian system and that what had been at stake was freedom. Victory had resulted from the sacrifice and heroic determination of many nations, and the international community should pay tribute to all the victims of those terrible years.

(Mr. Bucci, Observer, Italy)

On the other hand, the struggles and sufferings of the European nations and the horrors of one of the cruelest wars in the history of man had undermined rabid patriotism and myopic and selfish nationalism on the European continent, thus making possible the creation of the European Economic Community. The 10 States members of the European Economic Community, joined together by deep bonds of friendship and by their faith in freedom, democracy and human rights, underscored the close link between the last world conflict and European integration. The ninth of May was the thirty-fifth anniversary of the historic speech of Robert Schuman in which the French Government had proposed the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which, as had been pointed out by Walther Hallstein, the then Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, had led not only to the establishment of new economic ties but also to the creation of a supranational European community. The process of European unification was the major politico-economic event of the post-War period and the major contribution of the past 40 years to world peace. Current relations among the 10 countries of the European Economic Community were such that the two world conflicts mentioned in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter were considered in Europe as two devastating fratricidal wars which had made the new spirit that animated Europe possible.

The members of the European Economic Community had, by their active participation and their confidence in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, evidenced their will to overcome the remaining sources of friction among the two major world blocs and to initiate a new, more constructive phase in relations among the nations of the continent. It was consequently indispensable to respect the Ten Principles of the Helsinki Conference Final Act. The new European spirit was also reflected in the relations of the 10 member countries with other continents and especially in their support for negotiation and a search for peaceful solutions, producing neither victors nor vanquished, to the problems of regions in crisis such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, South Africa and Central America.

In addition to contributing to stabilization and peace in Europe and the world, the European Economic Community was promoting its own economic and social progress and that of other nations, especially the developing countries. It represented for all countries of the world the best exponent of freedom and total

(Mr. Bucci, Observer, Italy)

respect for human rights, and on the basis of those principles the community had now been expanded by the admission of two new members.

Despite the difficulties involved in the process of economic integration and in the establishment of political co-operation, the European Economic Community had not isolated itself but rather had remained open to the developing countries. In the economic field, it should be noted that the Community had participated actively in the latest series of GATT negotiations on commodities and in the more than 200 agreements on economic and trade co-operation concluded with more than 120 countries, especially the three Lomé Conventions, the latest of which, concluded on 8 December 1984, linked the Community with 65 developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, representing a total of 370 million persons.

The European Community was the main trading partner of the developing countries and in 1983 had provided almost 45 per cent of official development assistance. The least developed countries were the recipients of 40 per cent of Community exports.

With regard to the Community's contribution to the social and humanitarian advancement of peoples, attention should be called to the rise of free trade unions in Europe after the World War, the great victories in defence of workers' rights, the progress made with regard to the family, equal rights for women, social legislation and practice and, above all, in the field of civil and political rights. All those factors had allowed the countries members of the European Economic Community to play an important role in elaborating, within the United Nations, instruments promoting human rights and international co-operation favouring social progress and greater freedom.

However, the 10 countries members of the European Economic Community believed that nations must remain on guard against totalitarian systems which prevented individuals from enjoying their civil, political and human rights and expressing themselves freely in a democratic system. Consequently, inspired by the principles of the United Nations Charter and as part of their contribution towards making them effective, they reiterated their strong condemnation of ideologies that were out of step with history or that stood condemned by it and of all forms of totalitarianism and intolerance wherever they existed.