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COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

List of communications received from non-governmental organizations  
granted category (b) or (c) consultative status

This list is in accordance with the provisions of section IV, paragraph 4, of the report of the Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations, approved by the Council on 21 June 1946 (resolution 2/3 of 21 June 1946, in Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, first year, second session, pages 360-365).

THE COORDINATING BOARD OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS FOR CONSULTATION WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS (Comité de Coordination d'Organisations juives chargé des Consultations avec le Conseil économique et social des Nations Unies)

By letter dated 16 May 1949 addressed to the Secretary-General, the Coordinating Board\* submits for the attention of the Council and of the Commission on Human Rights a thirteen page memorandum entitled "Protection of Human Rights Pending Adoption of the Covenant", which may be summarized as follows:

1. The Commission on Human Rights while continuing the highly important task of preparing a covenant on human rights and measures of implementation may not appropriately overlook certain action which it can and should take now to protect human rights. Completion of the covenant and measures of implementation will necessarily involve delay; but certain steps can and should be taken without delay if the human rights programme is to have reality.
2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affords a firm basis for present action to secure the greater protection of human rights. It is neither necessary nor helpful to resolve the much discussed issue of whether the Declaration created legal or moral obligations. The fact is that, in whatever manner the obligations may be described, it was the common understanding that the adoption of the Declaration involved an unequivocal pledge by

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\* Constituents:

B'nai B'rith  
Board of Deputies of British Jews  
South African Jewish Board of Deputies

/the Member States

the Member States to accept the Declaration "as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" and "by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance". In short, the Declaration plainly involved a commitment of present action not contingent upon the adoption of the covenant and measures of implementation.

3. In appraising the effect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a living document involving promises of present action, it is also necessary to keep in mind the relationship between the Declaration and the Charter on the one hand and the proposed covenant on the other hand. Whether obligations under the Declaration are regarded as legal or moral, it is clear the Charter imposes legal obligations as regards the protection of certain of the human rights specified in the Declaration. Moreover, the proposed covenant which will presumably deal with only a limited category of human rights will not limit or be in derogation of the protection afforded by the Charter and the Declaration to the much larger category of human rights. The Covenant must clearly indicate this fact. It may be seen, therefore, that the Declaration standing alone authorizes and requires action to protect human rights.
4. The Commission on Human Rights which played the leading role in securing adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a continuing responsibility of leadership in recommending prompt action by the Member States and by the United Nations itself in fulfillment of the Declaration.
5. As an initial step in fulfillment of the Declaration, the Commission on Human Rights should, at its present session, consider and recommend to the Economic and Social Council adoption of the following measures:
  - A. Action by Member States

Appropriate recommendation should be made for the adoption by the General Assembly at its next session of a resolution urging each Member State promptly to take the following action:

    - (i) Each Member State should make a comprehensive survey of the present observance and enforcement of human rights within its territories, with a view to ascertaining what measures it is now practicable for the Member State to adopt to achieve additional protection of human rights.

/The results

The results of these surveys should be transmitted to the Secretary-General for collation and reference to the Commission on Human Rights.

- (ii) Each Member State should now adopt all practicable measures concerning the protection and enforcement of human rights to narrow the gap between existing practices and the standard of achievement established by the Declaration. Its action should be reported to the Secretary-General for reference to the Commission on Human Rights.
- (iii) Each Member State should establish its own permanent national commission on human rights. Each such commission would have the continuing responsibility of collecting information concerning, and of appraising, human rights policies, practices, enforcement programmes and activities, both public and private, within the Member State. Each such commission would report its findings to its Government and would recommend measures for the increased protection of human rights. Each Member State would keep the Secretary-General adequately informed of the activities, findings and recommendations of its national commission, and the Secretary-General in turn would keep the Commission on Human Rights informed.

It is suggested that President Truman's Civil Rights Programme in the United States demonstrates both the practicability and importance of adopting the foregoing proposals.

B. Action by the United Nations

The Report of the Secretary-General on The Present Situation with Regard to Communications Concerning Human Rights (E/CN.4/165), clearly demonstrates that the United Nations has not developed any orderly or coherent system for dealing with human rights communications and other human rights matters which are arising and will continue to arise under the Charter and the Declaration. It further appears that the Commission on Human Rights which is most directly concerned is not now performing the functions in this field which it can and should perform. The adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights has made it essential that the Commission on Human Rights take the lead now in developing a practicable procedure for the handling of human rights communications and problems. As an initial step, the Commission on Human Rights should at its

/present session

present session consider and recommend the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of appropriate resolutions embodying the following proposals.

- (i) The United Nations in replying to human rights communications should not take the position that it has no power to deal with human rights complaints.
- (ii) The Secretary-General should be authorized to keep himself and the Commission on Human Rights fully informed concerning all matters relevant to the enforcement and observance of human rights in the Member States. He should be authorized to make independent studies as well as to study material submitted by the Member States.
- (iii) The members of the Commission on Human Rights should be authorized to examine and obtain copies of human rights communications.
- (iv) The Secretary-General should be permitted to make such examination and study of human rights communications as the importance of the questions raised and the capacity of the Secretariat may permit. He should also be authorized to bring to the attention of the Commission on Human Rights such communications as he deems worthy of the Commission's consideration.
- (v) The Commission on Human Rights should be authorized to examine, consider and study such issues raised by communications on human rights as it deems worthy of consideration and to develop a practical procedure for dealing with such matters.

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