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EVIDENCE OF EXISTENCE OF FORCED LABOUR

Report of the Third Committee

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1. The General Assembly, at its 435th meeting on 17 September 1953, decided to include in the agenda of its eighth session the item, "Evidence of existence of forced labour" and to refer it to the Third Committee for consideration and report.
2. The Committee considered the item at its 529th to 534th and 536th meetings, held on 20, 23, 24, 25 and 27 November 1953. It had before it the explanatory memorandum submitted by the United States delegation with reference to its request for the inclusion of the item in the agenda (A/2438 and Corr.1), together with chapter V, section VIII, of the report of the Economic and Social Council.^{1/}
3. Although the report (E/2431) of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour was not formally before the Committee, the discussion was largely concerned with that document. The discussion was marked by clear differences of view. Some delegations endorsed the findings and conclusions of the Ad Hoc Committee, published in its report, as evidence of the existence of systems of forced labour employed as a means of political coercion or for economic purposes in a number of countries. They emphasized the importance which they attached to the abolition of such systems. Other delegations questioned the Ad Hoc Committee's impartiality and methods of

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighth Session, Supplement No. 3, document A/2430, page 100.

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work, rejected its findings and conclusions concerning certain countries and charged that it had disregarded the existence of forced labour in other countries. Several delegations expressed the view that the Ad Hoc Committee's inquiry had been unduly restricted in its scope. Certain representatives felt that the question should be considered from a purely humanitarian point of view and that all States should be called upon to abolish forced labour in any form or guise by taking all necessary measures, including legislative measures. The right of reply was exercised by a number of delegations with reference to various statements and allegations made during the course of the general debate.

4. Australia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Greece, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America submitted a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.395). Most representatives expressed support of the joint draft resolution. Some opposed it on the basis of their objections to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour. Others argued that the procedural provisions of the draft resolution were redundant since the Economic and Social Council and the Governing Body of the ILO had already placed the report on the agenda of their forthcoming sessions.

5. At the request of the representative of Iraq a separate vote was taken on each paragraph of the joint draft resolution as well as on the words "on such a scale as" in the operative paragraph 1. The voting was as follows:

Preamble

The first paragraph of the preamble was adopted by 44 votes to none, with 6 abstentions.

The second paragraph was adopted by 36 votes to 5, with 9 abstentions.

The third paragraph was adopted by 42 votes to 5, with 3 abstentions.

The fourth paragraph was adopted by 36 votes to 5, with 9 abstentions.

The fifth paragraph was adopted by 36 votes to 5, with 9 abstentions.

Operative part

The words "on such a scale as" in paragraph 1 of the operative part were adopted by 35 votes to 8, with 8 abstentions.

Paragraph 2 was adopted by 36 votes to 5, with 10 abstentions.

Paragraph 3 was adopted by 37 votes to 5, with 9 abstentions.

Paragraph 4 was adopted by 35 votes to 5, with 10 abstentions.

6. The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by a roll-call vote of 36 to 5, with 10 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Greece, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Against: Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Argentina, Burma, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Union of South Africa, Yemen.

7. The Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

EVIDENCE OF EXISTENCE OF FORCED LABOUR

The General Assembly,

Recalling the determination of the peoples of the United Nations under the Charter to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person,

Regretting that the Economic and Social Council at its sixteenth session was unable to consider the conclusions contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour (E/2431),

Considering that systems of forced labour constitute a serious threat to fundamental human rights and jeopardize the freedom and status of workers in contravention of the obligations and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations,

Observing that the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour has now been placed on the agenda of the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council and of the 123rd session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office,

Considering that in view of this delay there is still time for certain governments which have not yet done so to provide information in response to the Ad Hoc Committee's request for comments and observations on the allegations concerning them,

1. Affirms the importance which it attaches to the abolition of all systems of forced or "corrective" labour, whether employed as a means of political coercion or punishment for holding or expressing political views or on such a scale as to constitute an important element in the economy of a country;
2. Invites the Economic and Social Council and the International Labour Organisation, as a matter of urgency, to give early consideration to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour at their next sessions with this aim in view;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to consult with governments which have not yet found it possible to provide information in response to the Ad Hoc Committee's request to the effect that they submit such information before the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council so that these replies may be brought to the attention of the Council;
4. Requests the Economic and Social Council to report on forced labour to the General Assembly at its ninth session.
