

United Nations
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

Nations Unies
CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

UNRESTRICTED

E/AC.7/SR.17
6 August 1947

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

FIFTH SESSION
SOCIAL COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Monday, 4 August 1947 at 10:45 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. Moe	
	Mr. Kaminsky	(Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
	Mr. Davidson	(Canada)
	Mr. Smith	(Canada)
	Mr. Gonzales	(Chile)
	Mr. Chang	(China)
	Mr. Wu	(China)
	Mr. Sun	(China)
	Mr. Osuna	(Cuba)
	Mr. Stolz	(Czechoslovakia)
	Mr. Boris	(France)
	Mr. de Clermont-Tonnerre	(France)
	Mr. de Folin	(France)
	Mr. Ahmad	(India)
	Mr. Sen	(India)
	Mr. Van der Mandele	(Netherlands)
	Miss Hampton	(New Zealand)
	Mr. Haer	(Norway)
	Mr. Seyersted	(Norway)
	Mr. Sur	(Turkey)
	Mr. Gore-Booth	(United Kingdom)
	Mr. Mackenzie	(United Kingdom)
	Mr. Veysey	(United Kingdom)
	Mr. Stinebower	(United States of America)
	Mr. Kotschnig	(United States of America)
	Mr. Borisov	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
	Mr. Lomakin	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Secretariat:	Mr. Stanczyk	(Representing the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Affairs)
	Mr. Hogan	(Division of Human Rights)
	Mr. Dumontet	(Joint Division of Co-ordination and Liaison)

1. Consideration of Resolution Relating to Chapter III of the Report of the First Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (Document E/AC.7/32)

Mr. de FOLIN (France) presented the report of the Drafting Sub-Committee and explained the adaptations which had been made from the Report of the Commission on Human Rights. Regarding communications from specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, the sub-committee felt that a simple reference in the summary record to the fact that they would be treated differently would be sufficient. There would be nothing private about those communications.

/In reply

In reply to a query from the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as to the necessity for the final sentence of paragraph (d) he stated that it was inserted so that the difference between complaints and other communications should be made clear.

In the absence of discussion the CHAIRMAN put paragraphs of the Resolution to the vote.

DECISION: The Introduction was adopted by thirteen votes in favour, with two abstentions.

Paragraph (a) was adopted by thirteen votes in favour, with two abstentions.

Paragraph (b) was adopted by thirteen votes to one, with one abstention.

Paragraph (c) was adopted by thirteen votes in favour, with two abstentions.

Paragraph (d) was adopted by eleven votes in favour, with two abstentions.

Paragraph (e) was adopted by twelve votes in favour, with three abstentions.

The first paragraph of the Conclusion was adopted by twelve votes in favour, with two abstentions.

The second paragraph of the Conclusion was deleted after the representatives of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had pointed out that the paragraph referred to had already been noted by the previous session of the Council.

Paragraph 5 was adopted by twelve votes in favour, with two abstentions.

The Resolution as a whole was adopted by twelve votes to two, with one abstention.

Mr. BORISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) reserved the right to raise the question again later since he felt that the procedure adopted was against the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and was against the procedure set down for handling communications from specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

2. Consideration of Resolution Regarding the Draft Convention on the Consideration of Draft Resolution on the Crime of Genocide (Document E/AC.7/31)

Mr. de CLERMONT-TONNERRE (France) felt that in view of the urgency of the matter the wording of the text could be more imperative. He proposed that in the fourth paragraph "as soon as possible" be replaced by "with the shortest delay possible and if possible before the next session of the

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General Assembly", in paragraph 6 "proposes" be replaced by "intends", and in the final paragraph "may be" be replaced by "have been".

Mr. KAMINSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) was unable to accept the French proposal because he felt that in this case governments knowingly might be withholding information which they would submit at a later date.

Mr. STINEBOWER (United States of America) explained that both the sense of urgency and the governments' ability to collect information had been taken into consideration in the wording of the draft resolution.

With regard to the possibility of discussing the question again before the meeting of the General Assembly he felt that it would fulfil no useful purpose in the light of the number of replies which would have been received.

Mr. DAVIDSON (Canada) preferred the compromise text which had been drafted by the sub-committee but if any specific date were to be considered it should be the date of the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights and not of the General Assembly.

Mr. HAAR (Norway) suggested that a separate vote should be taken on the three French proposals since he was prepared to support the first and last but not the second.

Mr. AHMAD (India) supported the French proposals because they did not give a definite date and because the date of the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights was not as yet known.

- DECISION: 1. The French proposal that "as soon as possible" in paragraph 4 be replaced by "with the shortest delay possible, and if possible before the next session of the General Assembly" was rejected by eleven votes to three.
2. The French proposal that "proposes" in paragraph 6 be replaced by "intends" was withdrawn after the Canadian representative suggested that the amendment was probably prompted by a difficulty in translation.
3. The French proposal for amending the last phrase of the final paragraph to read "any comments from member governments received in time..." was accepted by nine votes to one with one abstention.

The draft Resolution as a whole, with the amendment accepted above, was adopted by thirteen votes in favour, with two abstentions.

3. Consideration of Resolution Prepared by the Drafting Sub-Committee on the Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of Resolution 58 of the General Assembly on Advisory Social Welfare Functions of UNRRA Transferred to the United Nations (Document E/AC.7/34)

Mr. BORISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he had no objections to the United Nations continuing the advisory functions of UNRRA in 1948, provided that other means of financing the scheme could be found, since the demands on the budget of the United Nations were heavy and there were more important matters which had first call on the available funds.

Mr. CHANG (China) felt that it was unnecessary and improper to criticize the distribution and allocations made by the Secretariat for the year 1947 since those followed the pattern laid down by UNRRA. He proposed the acceptance of the Resolution since the Secretary-General would be able to consult with the Social Commission before making any definite provision in the 1948 budget.

Mr. DAVIDSON (Canada) remarked that there seemed a certain amount of overlapping in the last two sections of the Resolution and proposed that they be reversed in order.

DECISION: The Canadian proposal to reverse the order of the final two sections was accepted.

Mr. VEYSEY (United Kingdom) proposed that the words "should if interested share" be replaced by "should have the opportunity of sharing".

Mr. DAVIDSON (Canada) felt that the section was unnecessary since it expressed an evident fact.

Mr. BORISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mr. CHANG (China) were unable to accept the United Kingdom proposal on the grounds that the words "if interested" fulfilled a useful purpose since not all Member States would request advisory services.

Mr. HAAR (Norway) opposed deletion of the section because he felt that the principle contained in it was important in regard to future work.

The Canadian and United Kingdom representatives did not press their proposals.

At the suggestion of the Indian representative commas were inserted around the phrase "if interested".

DECISION: The Draft Resolution as amended was accepted by thirteen votes to one, with one abstention.

4. Continuation of the Discussion on the Report of the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press (Document E/441)

In reply to the Chairman, Mr. IOMAKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his proposal should be considered as a substitute text for the draft

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agenda contained in the Report, and as such, should be voted upon first.

Mr. SMITH (Canada) pointed out that the general principles upon which the draft agenda had been based had been the subject of a lengthy discussion in the Sub-Commission. In the opinion of the Canadian Government the draft agenda should not be replaced by the text put forward by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. KAMINSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) regretted that the press was not always conscious of its responsibility towards the cause of peace and the democratic ideal. The task which lay before all the organs of the United Nations was to wipe out the remnants of fascism which still threatened the peace of the world.

The denazification of western Germany had not yet been completed and in the press could be found pro-fascist articles and occasionally even a defence of Franco Spain. The fascists were crying out against the communists, in a manner reminiscent of Hitlerite Germany, and their cries were receiving support in various countries.

Not only the press but the radio was being used libellously to break down mutual respect between nations. In the name of freedom of the press, propaganda was being carried on for a new war.

The peoples of the world looked to the United Nations to guarantee a firm peace. The press must serve actively the cause of peace or it would be working against the United Nations.

Mr. Kaminsky warmly supported the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal which he considered should be taken as the basis of the work of the forthcoming conference.

Mr. STINEBOWER (United States of America) was troubled by the fact that the text put forward by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics representative approached the question of freedom of information from the negative rather than the positive side. The American people were wholeheartedly against war-mongers and fascists but there was also a need to have some concrete ideal to work towards. The United Nations was for the freedom of the individual and the promotion of peace and the draft agenda had not been made restrictive for that very reason.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal was based on the assumption that freedom of the press did not depend on the fullest diffusion of information but rather, that a State or one-party monopoly of information would make for freedom of the press. With such an approach the United States Government was unable to agree.

The form of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal was more suited to a philosophical treatise than to an agenda for a conference. The

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draft agenda submitted by the Sub-Commission dealt with the gathering, the international transmission and the publication of information. It laid down the rights, obligations and practices inherent in the conception of freedom of information and in so doing approached the problem in a realistic fashion.

In one way or another, each point contained in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal was covered in the draft agenda but the latter had been organized in a more useful manner. Further, the agenda had been worked out on the basis of the Sub-Commission's terms of reference, that is, on the basis of the idea of freedom.

Mr. AHMAD (India) agreed that the draft agenda was better organized and that it covered, in large part, the points of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal. The latter, therefore, could be treated as amendments to the former. Should the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal be put to the vote as a whole, he would have to vote against it.

Mr. MACKENZIE (United Kingdom) supported the suggestion that the discussion be based on the draft agenda drawn up by the Sub-Commission.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal omitted any reference to such important questions as censorship, freedom to travel, arbitrary expulsion and the withholding of news from the people of a country.

Mr. BORIS (France) drew attention to the divergence of principle which existed and which was evident from the speech of the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

While the press must defend the truth, human frailty and hence the possibility of error, would have to be taken into consideration. Further, he did not consider that the press should serve any particular cause alone, however noble.

He was not entirely opposed to certain points contained in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal and the French people had always considered that the fight against fascism was important. Collaborationist editors had been silenced even in cases where they had been acquitted in the courts.

He agreed that cartels, monopolies and economic pressure could stifle competition and under the guise of freedom could ensure the success of selfish interests.

The duties and responsibilities of journalists would have to be developed and even sanctions and controls imposed when news had been falsified deliberately.

The French delegation felt, however, that the Sub-Commission had kept some of these considerations in mind and therefore would vote for its draft agenda on the understanding that each representative would be free to submit amendments.

/Mr. STOLZ

Mr. STOLZ (Czechoslovakia) considered that the representative of the United States was incorrect in saying that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal was against, rather than for, something. The items outlined on the bottom of page 3 (document E/AC.7/30) were very positive. In connection with item 4, "Measures to combat the spreading of false and libellous information," he recalled the unfortunate role which had been played by a great part of the press at the time of the Munich Crisis.

He agreed with the procedure suggested by the representative of India, that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal be regarded as amendments to be incorporated in the draft agenda.

Mr. LOMAKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) spoke strongly against any tendency to subordinate a subject as important as the agenda of the Conference to the question of time. A correct agenda had to be drawn up so that the peoples of the world would be ensured a lasting peace.

The struggle against fascism and the preservation of peace was the main task of the United Nations.

There was nothing in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal which would be difficult to accept and as the five main items had been put forward in the Sub-Commission, it would be familiar to the various representatives.

In the Sub-Commission certain experts had become involved in the question of voting procedure in an effort to avoid a substantive vote. Every proposal deserved to be considered on its intrinsic merits and the main interest never should be a procedural one.

The future of the press was of enormous significance for the whole world. It was a question in which the United Nations should actively interest itself.

In reply to a request from the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that his proposal be voted on paragraph by paragraph, the CHAIRMAN explained that it would have to be voted on as a whole as it had been presented as an amendment to the draft agenda.

Mr. KAMINSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) requested a roll-call vote.

DECISION: The proposal that the draft agenda drawn up by the Sub-Commission be replaced by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics text was rejected by twelve votes to three with three abstentions.

The voting was as follows: In favour, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

Against, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, France, India, Netherlands,

/New Zealand

New Zealand, Norway, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States;
Absent, Lebanon, Peru, Venezuela.

Chapter I, Paragraph 1 of the Provisional Draft Agenda

In reply to a question from the Indian representative, Mr. SMITH (Canada) stated that the Sub-Committee would have the right to add new items to the agenda.

Mr. AHMAD (India) inquired whether it would be practicable to wait and see if there would be new items for consideration before the conference.

The CHAIRMAN stated that governments would be able to submit them to the conference.

Mr. MACKENZIE (United Kingdom) supported the paragraph.

Mr. AHMAD (India) questioned whether the United Kingdom amendment (document E/508) would not be better considered with the paragraph under discussion than with Chapter II.

Mr. MACKENZIE (United Kingdom) stated that the Sub-Commission had felt that the definition was restrictive and should not be applied to Chapter I.

Mr. AHMAD (India) withdrew his suggestion and seconded the United Kingdom proposal to accept Chapter I, paragraph 1.

In connection with a statement by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the CHAIRMAN suggested that the proposal of the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (document E/AC.7/30) be sent to the Sub-Commission for its information.

The CHAIRMAN put Chapter I, paragraph 1 to the vote.

DECISION: Chapter I, paragraph 1 of the Provisional Draft Agenda was adopted by eleven votes in favour, with three abstentions.

Chapter I, Paragraph 2 of the Provisional Draft Agenda

Mr. SMITH (Canada) moved the adoption of the paragraph.

Mr. AHMAD (India) inquired whether the United Kingdom amendment (document E/508) should be discussed in connection with this paragraph.

Mr. SMITH (Canada) suggested the substitution of the general phrase "and other information" for "as media of information" to avoid the double discussion of definitions.

Mr. BORIS (France) objected to a general phrase as it implied the inclusion of books among the media of information.

Mr. AHMAD (India) suggested substitution of the phrase "media of information as defined in Chapter II".

Mr. MACKENZIE (United Kingdom) felt that media of information should not be limited in this paragraph by anything that followed, and proposed deletion
/of all

of all qualifications to "media of information".

The CHAIRMAN put the United Kingdom amendment to the vote.

DECISION: The United Kingdom amendment was adopted by twelve votes to one with two abstentions.

Mr. IOMAKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed the substitution of the relevant paragraph (A 1 to 4 inclusive) of his delegation's proposal (document E/AC.7/30) for this item.

The discussion was adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1:45 p.m.
