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*Chairman: Mr. S. Amjad ALI (Pakistan).*

**Freedom of information (*continued*): (a) Problems of freedom of information, including the study of the draft convention on freedom of information (A/AC.42/7, A/1272, chapter V, section VI, A/2181, A/C.3/L.239, A/C.3/L.242/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.243, A/C.3/L.244, A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.257/Rev.2, A/C.3/L.262, A/C.3/L.263, A/C.3/L.265, A/C.3/L.266) (*continued*)**

[Item 29 (a)]\*

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1) (*continued*)

1. Mr. DEMCHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) recalled that exactly five years before, the General Assembly had adopted a resolution condemning propaganda for war and recommending that measures should be taken by the several States to prohibit such propaganda (Assembly resolution 110 (II)). In the intervening period the dissemination of such propaganda had not diminished; indeed, active and unceasing preparation for war was taking place in many quarters. Among the elements most active in that respect were the United States monopolies, which had accumulated huge profits from the Second World War. Some of the most powerful United States capitalists owned or controlled publishing houses, newspapers and other information media, which unceasingly disseminated slanderous insinuations calculated to create hostility among nations. It was to combat the possible serious consequences of those activities, which might well lead to a new world war, that the USSR delegation had submitted its draft resolution on freedom of information (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1).

\* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

2. The delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and other States had expressed the fear that the USSR draft resolution would have the effect of violating or limiting freedom of information. But those countries themselves placed certain restrictions on the right to freedom of information. Laws in force there made it a penal offence to publish obscene or pornographic literature or to make use of the mails to transmit such literature. Virtually all countries prohibited use of the mails to transmit literature promoting prostitution or the white-slave traffic. In the United States of America, further, some states prohibited the direct or indirect transmission of false or misleading advertising matter and other information likely to mislead the public. If such restrictions were considered legitimate in the best interests of society, it could hardly be claimed that the USSR draft resolution contravened the principle of freedom of information. The purpose of the proposal was simply to prohibit slanderous propaganda and warlike appeals directed against whole nations. Incitement to war was a far greater crime than the dissemination of obscene literature, and it could and should be prohibited by law. The chief argument against the USSR draft resolution was therefore baseless and inconsistent with the actions of the governments which had advanced it; and the argument that war propaganda could not be effectively prevented by means of legislation was merely an excuse.

3. Some States had expressed the view that some form of censorship would be necessary in order effectively to prohibit war propaganda. But there was no mention of censorship in the draft resolution; it merely called for some measures of control, to be determined by the individual government in accordance with the customary practices of the country. In any event, a more destructive form of censorship was already prac-

ticed in the United States and the United Kingdom, that is, censorship by the powerful monopolies which determined what should be printed and who should write it.

4. An official commission investigating the situation of the Press in the United States of America had reported that most media of information in that country were controlled by big business, that the number of privately-owned newspapers was decreasing, and that free expression of opinion in the Press was rapidly declining. A similar commission in the United Kingdom had reported that the Press was controlled by large publishing concerns and that newspapers naturally reflected the views of the owners and large stockholders, rather than those of the people. Many other facts could be cited to prove that in those countries freedom of the Press was merely freedom for the monopolies to publish whatever they wished, however they wished.

5. For that reason the USSR delegation had recommended, in paragraph 3 of the operative part of its draft resolution, the adoption of measures by Member States to promote the dissemination of truthful and objective information independent of dictation by private monopolies, trusts and syndicates.

6. The representative of Belgium and other representatives had opposed the USSR draft resolution because some of the terms used therein had not been clearly enough defined. But the peoples of countries which had endured nazi occupation during the Second World War were in no doubt about the meaning of the terms "nazi", "fascist" and "war propaganda". Moreover, it was clear from contemporary events that the nazi ideology had not changed and still represented a threat to mankind; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany had stated recently that Europe should be unified as far east as the Urals, a clear indication that war against the USSR was contemplated.

7. The representative of the United States, in speaking of the USSR draft resolution, had made slanderous charges against the people of the USSR, including a statement that they did not want cultural exchanges with the people of other nations. It was a well-known fact that cultural missions to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic had been treated with friendly hospitality; on the other hand, when a similar mission from that country had visited the United States of America, the Government of the United States had required its members to be finger-printed and registered as aliens, a procedure applied only to criminals in most countries. When the mission had objected to that procedure, it had been requested to leave the United States within twenty-four hours.

8. The United States representative had also maintained that the USSR Press constantly endeavoured to incite the people to hatred of the United States of America. But it was not only the Press of the Soviet Union which had published news of the bacterial warfare carried on by the United States in North Korea and the atrocities perpetrated against Koreans by the troops of the United States and other countries; photographic evidence of those atrocities had been published by newspapers in a number of western European countries as well. Moreover, the United

Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea had testified to them in its report.

9. The United States representative had said that the people of his country did not want war. The Ukrainian representative well believed that the American people did not desire the Korean war. But that war was desired by those for whom war was profitable—by the ruling circles of the United States, by the United States monopolies. They needed the war to increase their profits, to maintain the armaments race and feed the war psychosis. That was why they were dragging out and frustrating the Korean truce talks, as could be seen from many statements by American politicians and from the Press. For example, the *Wall Street Journal*, in the spring of 1952, had stated that rumours of a possible truce in Korea had interrupted armaments production and caused stocks to fall temporarily. General Bradley had said that the United States of America must use the time gained through the war in Korea to build up its armaments and extend its network of bases outside the country, and that the Korean war was helping the United States to perfect its techniques of warfare. Finally, as late as 29 October 1952, the United States Secretary of the Navy was reported to have said that the military experiment being carried out in Korea would have had to be made eventually somewhere in Asia, if the opportunity had not arisen in Korea. Those statements, and many more which could be cited, indicated clearly that the United States considered the Korean war a necessary pretext for building up huge armaments and developing a war psychology among its people.

10. For all those reasons, the Ukrainian representative considered that the arguments raised against the USSR draft resolution were not well founded. His delegation would support the draft resolution.

11. Mr. DEDIJER (Yugoslavia) said his delegation would vote against the USSR draft resolution because of the discrepancy between its terms and the actual practices of the Government of the Soviet Union, particularly with respect to his own country. While the wording of the draft resolution was acceptable, his delegation had little confidence in the underlying intention.

12. On the other hand, he supported and would vote for a number of the amendments proposed by the delegations of India (A/C.3/L.269) and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.270).

13. He had certain comments to make on the United States representative's statement at the preceding meeting to the effect that the countries of eastern Europe were under the communist yoke. That statement was misleading, since many eastern European countries felt that communism had little in common with the imperialistic practices of one major eastern European Power. In many parts of the world communism was regarded as the common goal of many of the world's greatest thinkers, who had belonged to many different countries. Each nation was free to choose its own way of life and its own ideal. He felt that the United States representative's remarks tended to obscure the main issue and thus to further the ends of the major Power to which he had referred.

14. Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq) agreed with the Indian representative that General Assembly resolution 110

(II) was in essence positive rather than negative; it not only condemned all forms of propaganda designed to provoke any threat to the peace, but requested governments to promote friendly relations by propaganda and to encourage the dissemination of all information designed to give expression to the undoubted desire of all peoples for peace. In so far as the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1) reflected the spirit of the Assembly resolution and of the United Nations Charter, she could support it; but paragraph 2 of the operative part was wholly inconsistent with that spirit, and she could not but agree with the Lebanese representative (433rd meeting) that it rendered the whole draft resolution suspect.

15. She would accordingly support the deletions proposed by the Saudi Arabian delegation (A/C.3/L.270) and orally by the Afghan representative (433rd meeting). She assumed that the increase of war propaganda mentioned in the second paragraph of the preamble could be taken as alluding to what had certainly occurred in all the larger countries, including the USSR, and so she could not support the Indian representative's proposal (A/C.3/L.269, point 2) for its deletion. In the Indian amendment to paragraph 3 of the operative part (A/C.3/L.269, point 5), the deletion of the original reference to private monopolies, trusts and syndicates would not be necessary if it was balanced by a reference to monopolist governments and governmental pressures.

16. With those exceptions, she was in favour of the Indian amendments and of the draft resolution, if thus amended.

17. Mr. SECADES (Cuba) said that his delegation was naturally in favour of any resolution which would promote the objectives listed in paragraph 3 of the operative part of the USSR draft resolution, but it could not accept the idea of taking legislative steps to limit freedom of expression. That proposal was inconsistent with General Assembly resolution 110 (II), which recommended a freer, not a more restricted, flow of information. While his delegation hoped that the undue influence of monopolies and trusts would eventually disappear, it equally believed that the power of governments and ideologists to violate freedom of information should also be curbed.

18. He would vote against the draft resolution.

19. Mr. LOOMES (Australia) agreed with the Belgian and Norwegian representatives that the real intention of the draft resolution was far from clear, and, on that ground alone, he would vote against it. Furthermore, there seemed to be no good reason for repeating General Assembly resolution 110 (II), much less for altering and expanding it.

20. Mr. AGUIRRE (Uruguay) opposed the draft resolution because its intent appeared to be to make propaganda rather than to promote freedom of information and because the attempt to increase governmental interference with the Press ran counter to his country's most cherished practices. None of the amendments would improve the draft resolution.

21. Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that paragraph 3 of the operative part clearly and concisely restated what was implicit in General Assembly resolution 110 (II), the crux of

the problem of freedom of information. Some representatives had stated that the intention was excellent, but that the draft resolution required amendment. The amendments, however, whittled down precisely those parts of the draft resolution which were most in consonance with resolution 110 (II). By seeing that expression was given to the undoubted desire of all peoples for peace the United Nations would be expanding, not restricting, freedom of information.

22. The United States representative had repeatedly tried to prove that the United States Press was not controlled by monopolies, trusts and syndicates. Undoubtedly there were a few honourable exceptions among the smaller provincial newspapers, but they were not typical. United States journalists themselves had often admitted the overwhelming influence of the large chains and news agencies on all media of expression. They had complained that those who spoke up for peace and against incitement to war were intimidated, and that uniformity and conformity were being increasingly imposed. The mere expression of ideas which might be held to coincide with some ideas held in the USSR had become automatically suspect. She wondered how that could be reconciled with freedom of information.

23. The United States representative had cited from the USSR Press what he alleged to be incitements to hatred of the United States of America and articles denouncing the Korean war and the inhuman treatment of North Korean prisoners and civilians by the United States armed forces. Any newspaper had the right to speak out against war and inhumanity, but that did not entail preaching hatred of any people, only hatred of war and inhumanity and of the monopolistic gangs which battered on them. The United States representative could not cite a single instance in which the USSR Press had called for war against the United States or had advocated hatred of the people of the United States. He could find only a unanimous effort to prevent a third world war.

24. The United States representative had further asserted that foreign plays had been taken off the USSR stage in order to prevent the people from obtaining any knowledge of the world abroad. In fact, the repertory included all the classics of all countries, many of them forgotten in their country of origin. The accusation was somewhat strange, coming as it did from the representative of a country in which outstanding actors, singers and writers were currently being persecuted for their opinions.

25. The dissemination of truthful information would be guaranteed under the USSR draft resolution; she would accordingly support it.

26. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) had introduced the USSR draft resolution because it had seemed desirable to draw attention to the fact that, although five years had passed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 110 (II), there were many countries in which nothing had been done to put it into effect. The Press and other information media were not discharging their duty to fight for peace and against the dissemination of propaganda for war. Many speakers had agreed that there were good grounds for adopting a more specific resolution in furtherance of resolution 110 (II). The objection had

come from precisely those delegations which realized that their countries were most open to criticism.

27. Some speakers had argued that it would be unwise to go further than resolution 110 (II), that all that was required was respect for the principles embodied in it and that the USSR proposal was too strongly worded and accordingly needed amendment. It was precisely because no effective steps had been taken internationally against propaganda for war that a resolution, couched in stronger language, was necessary, laying down the duties of the Press, and governments in that respect.

28. Some delegations had questioned the need to refer again in 1952 to the task of counteracting nazi and fascist propaganda; but it was only too evident that fascism and nazism were reviving and constituted a threat to the peace which the United Nations could not ignore. Few representatives could plausibly allege that fascism and nazism could not be defined; they had experience to guide them.

29. Representatives had said that legislative steps should not be taken to prevent the use of media of information for purposes of propaganda of any kind in favour of aggression and war. But paragraph 2 of resolution 110 (II) rather left it to governments to take any appropriate steps they deemed fit, including legislation, which had in fact been enacted in the USSR and other countries.

30. Great play had been made with the contention that the Press would be gagged if the USSR proposal were adopted. Yet, under it nothing was to be prohibited except propaganda in favour of aggression and war, incitement to hatred between nations, racial discrimination, slanderous rumours and false and distorted reports. The United States representative would surely not contend that the Press in his country was so wholly devoted to such undesirable topics that it would have nothing else with which to fill its columns if those matters were eliminated.

31. He found it hard to see why the United States representative thought that to enact a law preventing the use of the Press for purposes of racial discrimination would entail the violation of freedom of information, when, in a country which claimed to possess complete freedom of information, it was a penal offence for a newspaper in the state of Mississippi to advocate social equality between white and coloured persons.

32. The United States representative had asserted that the basic task of the Press in the USSR was to propagate hatred for the people of the United States of America. His source had been the testimony of a diplomat who had grossly violated elementary diplomatic etiquette by slandering the country to which he had been accredited—not, perhaps, the most reliable informant available. He had also referred to accounts of the bacterial warfare carried on by the United States of America in Korea. The USSR Press was not the only Press which had published such factual accounts, and nowhere had the USSR Press ever intimated that the people of the United States approved of bacterial warfare. The United States representative had not and could not find in the USSR Press any expression of hatred for the people of the United States, because the people of the USSR had never confused the people of

the United States with the small gang of monopolists which wanted to end the Korean affair by any and every means, including bacterial warfare, and to drive the people into a vaster war. There would never be any incitement to hatred of the people of the United States of America; there would be unrelenting denunciation, not in the USSR Press alone, of the gang that incited to war and profited by it.

33. The USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1) was simply a request to the General Assembly to enforce its resolution 110 (II). All those who opposed propaganda for a new world war should support it.

34. The CHAIRMAN stated that the debate was closed.

35. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) suggested that, in view of the fact that the adoption of the second Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.269) to the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1) would render the Saudi Arabian amendments to the preamble redundant, the latter amendments (A/C.3/L.270, points 1 and 2) should be voted on first.

36. Mr. MANI (India) said that, in the light of the discussion that had taken place and the stress that had been laid on the necessity of drawing attention to General Assembly resolution 110 (II), his delegation would support the first Saudi Arabian amendment, with the additional deletion of the words "the introduction of new" in the second paragraph of the preamble.

37. He could not, however, support the second Saudi Arabian amendment, but agreed that it should be voted on before the Indian proposal for the deletion of the third paragraph of the preamble.

38. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the first Indian amendment merely involved a drafting change in the English text. The Russian text corresponded to the wording of General Assembly resolution 110 (II).

39. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the text of the first paragraph in all the official languages should conform with that of the Assembly resolution.

40. He put the first paragraph of the preamble, thus amended, to the vote.

*The paragraph was adopted by 22 votes to 6, with 23 abstentions.*

41. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Afghan oral amendment (433rd meeting) calling for the deletion of the word "war" in the second paragraph of the preamble to the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1).

*The amendment was rejected by 9 votes to 9, with 30 abstentions.*

42. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the proposal of the Saudi Arabian and Indian delegations to delete from the second paragraph of the preamble the phrases "in certain countries", "in those countries" and "the introduction of new".

*The proposal was adopted by 16 votes to 6, with 29 abstentions.*

43. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the second paragraph of the preamble of the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1), as amended.

*The paragraph, as amended, was rejected by 17 votes to 10, with 23 abstentions.*

44. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) withdrew his second amendment in favour of the second Indian amendment.

45. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the second Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.269), calling for the deletion of the third paragraph of the preamble.

*The amendment was adopted by 28 votes to 8, with 15 abstentions.*

46. Mr. DEDIJER (Yugoslavia) explained his vote against the deletion of the third paragraph of the preamble. Although, as the Indian representative had pointed out, nazi and fascist propaganda had been most active during the Second World War, his country and others were still aware of the danger of propaganda by neo-fascist elements. Moreover, his delegation considered that the words "any other propaganda . . ." would serve as protection against anti-Yugoslav war propaganda from the USSR.

47. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the amendment proposed by India (A/C.3/L.269, point 3) and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.270, point 3), calling for the deletion of the words "including legislative steps" from the introductory paragraph of the operative part of the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1).

*The amendment was adopted by 21 votes to 5, with 27 abstentions.*

48. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the introductory paragraph of the operative part of the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1), as amended.

*The introductory paragraph, as amended, was adopted by 18 votes to 9, with 25 abstentions.*

49. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote paragraph 1 of the operative part of the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1).

50. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked for a roll-call vote.

*A vote was taken by roll-call.*

*Greece, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.*

*In favour:* Guatemala, India, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, Pakistan, Poland, Saudi Arabia Thailand, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia.

*Against:* Haiti, Honduras, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United States of America, Australia, Belgium, China, Denmark.

*Abstaining:* Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Lebanon, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France.

*Paragraph 1 of the operative part was adopted by 21 votes to 10, with 22 abstentions.*

51. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) considered that, since the purpose of the fourth Indian amendment was to replace the original text by an absolutely different paragraph, a vote should first be taken on the deletion of the USSR text, and then on the substitution of the new wording.

52. Mr. AZMI (Egypt), supported by Mrs. FIGUEROA (Chile), Mr. KAISER (France) and Mr. VILLAMAR (Guatemala), considered that that would be contrary to the rules of procedure.

53. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia), supported by Mr. PAZHWAQ (Afghanistan), suggested that if the Indian representative would agree to add his text to the USSR paragraph, instead of substituting it for the USSR text, the USSR representative's requirements could be met.

54. Mr. DEDIJER (Yugoslavia) proposed the adjournment of the meeting.

*The motion for adjournment was rejected by 20 votes to 13, with 20 abstentions.*

55. Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon) formally proposed the deletion of paragraph 2 of the operative part of the USSR draft resolution. The Indian amendment could be voted on if that paragraph were rejected.

56. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Lebanese proposal for the deletion of paragraph 2 of the operative part.

*The proposal was adopted by 32 votes to 8, with 12 abstentions.*

57. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the fourth Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.269).

*The amendment was adopted by 32 votes to 2, with 18 abstentions.*

58. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the fifth Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.269).

*The amendment was adopted by 18 votes to 6, with 29 abstentions.*

59. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) withdrew his amendment to paragraph 3 of the operative part (A/C.3/L.270, point 4).

60. Mr. PAZHWAQ (Afghanistan) thought that it would be better to vote on the draft resolution as a whole when the amended text had been distributed, and moved the adjournment of the meeting.

*The motion for adjournment was rejected by 22 votes to 16, with 12 abstentions.*

61. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.255/Rev.1) as a whole, as amended.

62. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked for a roll-call vote.

*A vote was taken by roll-call.*

*Yugoslavia, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.*

*In favour:* Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yemen.

*Against:* Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Denmark, El Salvador, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Lebanon, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Philippines, Sweden, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

*Abstaining:* Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Indonesia,

Israel, Pakistan, Peru, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*The draft resolution as a whole, as amended, was rejected by 21 votes to 19, with 12 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.