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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Secretary-General

In accordance with resolution 772 B (XXX) of the Economic and Social Council, the Government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic has communicated the following information regarding national advisory committees on human rights.

Byelorussian SSR

/Information submitted in a letter dated 23 April 1962/

Concern for the welfare of the citizens of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and respect for their interests constitute the supreme law governing the activities of the State, party and public organizations of the Republic. Soviet society ensures the real liberty of the individual. The highest manifestation of this liberty is man's emancipation from exploitation, which more than anything else is the foundation of genuine social justice.

The Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR not only proclaims but also guarantees to the citizens of the Republic broad rights which are intended to ensure the comprehensive and complete enjoyment of personal freedom.

All citizens of the Republic, irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, domicile, social origin, property status or past activities, may vote for and be elected to all Soviets of Working People's Deputies. Deputies are chosen by the citizens of the Byelorussian SSR on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot.

Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have the right to work, that is, the right to guaranteed employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality (Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, article 93); the right to rest and leisure, ensured by the establishment of a seven- or six-hour day and by a shorter working day for certain trades, by annual vacations with full pay for manual and non-manual workers, and by the provision of sanatoria, holiday homes and clubs for working people (article 94); the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or disability, ensured by an extensive system of social insurance of manual and non-manual workers at State expense, free medical service, and the provision of a wide network of health resorts for working people (article 95); the right to education, ensured by universal compulsory eight-year education, by extensive development of all types of education free of charge, by a system of State grants, by instruction in the native language, and by the organization in the factories, State farms, and collective farms of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the working people (article 96).

Women in the Byelorussian SSR are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity (Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, article 97). Equality of rights of citizens of the Republic, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity, is an indefeasible law. Any acts violating this equality of rights are punishable by law.

The citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are guaranteed by the Constitution freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings, freedom of street processions and demonstrations (Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, article 100). Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda are recognized for all citizens (article 99).

Citizens are guaranteed inviolability of the person. No person may be placed under arrest except by decision of a court or with the sanction of a procurator. Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR enjoy the right to inviolability of their homes

and privacy of correspondence (Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, article 102). If criminal proceedings are instituted against him, the accused is guaranteed the right to defence.

The administration of justice in the Republic is truly democratic: it is based on electiveness and accountability of the judges and people's assessors, the right to recall them before the expiration of their term, the publicity of court proceedings, and the participation of publicly appointed prosecutors and counsels for the defence in the work of the courts, with strict observance, by the court and the organs of investigation and inquiry, of legality and all the rules of procedure.

The laws of the Byelorussian SSR impose upon all organs of State power and State administration, the courts and the Procurator's Office the duty to act in strict conformity with the rights of citizens. The Constitution of the Republic (article 19) entrusts the safeguarding of the rights of citizens to the higher organs of State power and State administration. Supreme supervisory power to ensure the strict observance of the laws protecting the rights of citizens in the Byelorussian SSR is vested in the organs of the Procurator's Office of the Republic.

The rights and freedoms of citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are protected not only by the organs of State power but also by an extensive system of public organizations, which educate their members in the spirit of socialist humanism and of profound respect for human rights.

In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to develop the organizational initiative and political activity of the masses of the people, citizens of the Byelorussian SSR - it is stated in article 101 of its Constitution - are guaranteed the right to unite in public organizations: trade unions, co-operative societies, youth organizations and so forth. And the progressive and most politically-conscious among the members of the working class, collective farm peasants and the intelligentsia voluntarily unite in the Communist Party - the battle-tested vanguard of the Soviet people.

The Communist Party is the party of the entire Soviet people; it exists for the people and serves the people. Acting through its members who are employed both by the State and by public and co-operative organizations, the Communist

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Party, as the leading and guiding force of Soviet society, keeps a close watch over the protection of human rights, endeavours to broaden those rights and fights for the restoration of rights and freedoms illegally abridged and for the prevention and prohibition of any abuses and violations of legality.

The trade unions play a very great role in the defence of the rights and interests of the working people of the Byelorussian SSR. The trade union organizations of the Republic are granted wide powers to maintain a check on the activities of the management in questions concerning wages, standards of output and the material, community and cultural services for workers. No manual or non-manual worker may be dismissed by the management without the consent of the factory, works or local trade-union committee. Reflecting the interests of the manual and non-manual workers, the trade unions encourage the working people to use their rights and freedoms actively, take steps to eliminate violations of the rights of manual and non-manual workers, and carry on considerable educational work among the working people.

The finest representatives of the working people, for whom concern for the welfare of the people and defence of their rights are the supreme guiding principle, occupy leading posts in the organs of State power and in party, trade union and other public organizations of the Byelorussian SSR.

In recent years, in the Byelorussian SSR as in the other Union Republics, measures have been taken to provide for the further extension of Soviet democracy and for the more active participation of the general public in the administration of the State. At present the general public enjoys very wide powers with respect to the defence of human rights and the restoration of rights which have been unlawfully abridged. The practice of referring certain cases of infringement of human rights to the People's Courts has been introduced, publicly appointed prosecutors and counsels for the defence participate in criminal proceedings and an extensive network of people's volunteer squads has been established to lead the fight against violations of law; standing committees of the local Soviets of Working People's Deputies function in the basic branches of economic and cultural construction. In order to carry out their tasks with the greatest possible success, the standing committees encourage the extensive

participation of the most active members of the working people, collective farmers and intelligentsia in their work. Thus, Byelorussian citizens take part directly in the defence and restoration of rights which have been abridged.

Under decisions of the Byelorussian party and Soviet organs, steps have been taken to ensure that the applications and complaints of citizens are dealt with more carefully and effectively; persons guilty of procrastination and negligence with regard to the queries of the working people are to be held strictly responsible. All these measures help to prevent illegal activities which conflict with the legitimate interests of the person and the collective.

Socialism is the social structure which ensures man's genuine freedom and happiness, for socialism liberates man from oppression and exploitation, grants him broad democratic rights, affords him the opportunity to live in suitable conditions, gives him confidence in the future, reveals his individual talents and abilities, and makes him increasingly aware that his work is for the benefit of society as a whole. The transition to communism means the fullest extension of personal freedom and the rights of Soviet citizens. Communism will bring the working people further great rights and opportunities.

At present, in the Byelorussian SSR as in the other Republics of our country, work is proceeding on the immediate practical task of establishing a classless communist society, set by the twenty-second Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR. Under communism all people will have equal status in society, will stand in the same relation to the means of production, will enjoy equal conditions of work and distribution of material wealth, and will actively participate in the management of public affairs. Harmonious relations will be established between the individual and society on the basis of the unity of public and personal interests.

While communism is being built, the material and spiritual requirements of the working people will be met more and more fully.

In the first decade (1961-1970) the material prosperity and the cultural and technical levels of the working people will improve substantially, all sections of the Soviet people will live in easy circumstances, they will have material security; the demand of the Soviet people for well-appointed housing will, in the main, be satisfied; hard physical labour will disappear; there will

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be a six-hour working day or a thirty-five-hour working week for the main mass of workers and a shorter working period (thirty hours a week) for the rest, i.e. the shortest working day in the world; at the same time, the length of paid holidays will increase.

At the end of the second decade (1971-1980) the material and technical basis of communism will have been created, and there will be an abundance of material and cultural benefits for the whole population, Soviet society will come close to a stage where it can introduce the principle of distribution according to needs. Every family will have a well-built apartment. The transition to an even shorter working week will begin, and the minimum paid holiday will increase in length to one month. The following will be provided at public expense: free maintenance of children at children's institutions and boarding schools (if parents wish); maintenance of disabled people; free education at all educational establishments; free medical services for all citizens, including the supply of medicines and the treatment of the sick at sanatoria; rent-free housing and free public services; free public transport facilities; free use of some types of communal services; steady reduction of charges for and partially free use of holiday homes, boarding houses, tourist camps and sports installations; increasingly broad provision of benefits, privileges and scholarships to the population (grants to unmarried mothers and mothers of large families, scholarships for students); gradual introduction of free public catering (midday meals) at enterprises and institutions, and for collective farmers at work. Many of these types of maintenance and services for the working people at public expense are already an established part of the life of the Soviet people, in particular free medical services and free education at all educational establishments, the provision of scholarships for students, grants to mothers of large families and unmarried mothers, and pensions for aged manual and non-manual workers, and so forth.

The socialist State system will develop into public self-government, through the growth and perfection of socialist democracy in all its aspects, active participation of all citizens in the administration of the State and in the management of economic and cultural development, improvement of the work of the government apparatus and increased control over its activities by the people.

The role of the Soviets as an all-inclusive organization of the people will grow as communist construction progresses. It is recognized as desirable that at least one-third of the membership of the Soviets should be renewed at each election so that more millions of working people may learn to govern the State.

The participation of public organizations and associations of the working people in the legislative activity of the Soviet State organs will be extended. The trade unions and other mass public organizations will be entitled to take legislative initiative, that is, to propose draft laws. The programme of the Communist Party of the USSR declares: "Discussion by the people of draft laws and other decisions of both national and local significance must become the rule. The most important draft laws should be put to a nation-wide referendum."

The various forms of control by the people over the activities of the organs of State power and administration will be extended in every possible way, so as to make them more effective in the effort to achieve the steady improvement of the material, cultural and legal position of the working people. Inspection by people's control bodies is regarded as an effective means of drawing broad masses of the people into the management of State affairs and the exercise of control over the strict observance of legality and the prompt implementation of proposals made by the working people.

There will be a further promotion of socialist law and order and a further improvement of the legal principles governing economic, organizational, cultural and educational work and contributing to the accomplishment of the tasks of communist construction and to the all-round development of the individual.

The democratic foundations of justice will be developed and improved. The goal is the enforcement of strict observance of socialist legality, the eradication of all violations of law and order, the abolition of crime and the removal of all the causes of crime. There must be no room for law-breakers and criminals in a society building communism. The whole system of governmental and public organizations educates the people in a spirit of voluntary and conscientious fulfilment of their duties and leads to the organic fusion of rights and duties to form the integral rules of communist society.

Communism means the highest flowering of mankind and the human personality, the realization of the moral principles of collectivism and humanism, expressed by the words: "one for all and all for one", "man is to man a friend, comrade and brother".

In the Byelorussian SSR, which has just entered the period of the full-scale construction of communist society, the role of the trade unions and other public organizations is steadily expanding. The Communist Party has set itself the task of developing the activity of all Soviet citizens and encouraging their participation in the administration of public affairs, and improving the activity and further expanding the functions of all public organizations, particularly the trade unions. The trade unions are called upon to help the working people in learning to manage State and social affairs, to organize an emulation movement for communist labour, to take an active part in controlling the measurement of labour and the rate of consumption, to work steadfastly for the improvement of the skills of manual and non-manual workers and of their working and living conditions and to protect the material interests and rights of the working people; to develop the activity of the working people towards the fulfilment of the aims of communist construction, to ensure that the plans for the construction of housing and cultural amenities are fulfilled and that public catering, trade, social insurance and health resort services are improved; to ensure control over the spending of public consumption funds and over the work of all enterprises and institutions serving the working people, to improve cultural services and recreation facilities for the working people, and so forth.

Thus, in the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic the rights and freedoms of citizens are protected more effectively and comprehensively by State organs, and by party and public organizations than they could be by the national advisory committees recommended in Economic and Social Council resolution 772 B (XXX), since the aforementioned organs and organizations of the Byelorussian SSR not only protect the rights of citizens and restore them when they have been abridged but also see to the prevention of unlawful activities which are contrary to the interests of the individual or of the collective and constantly endeavour to widen the circle of rights of the citizens of the Republic in response to their legitimate wishes.

There is therefore no necessity for the establishment of national advisory committees on human rights in the Byelorussian SSR.