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Agenda item 8

SLAVERY

Concise summary of the information supplied in
accordance with resolutions 238 (IX), 276 (X),
388 (XIII), 475 (XV) and 525 A (XVII)

Rapporteur: Mr. HANS ENGEN (Norway)

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has received from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations a letter dated 23 March 1955, No. 97, which contains the following statements:

"On 9 February 1955 this delegation received document E/2673, the title page of which bears the following note:

"The Secretary-General has received the attached report prepared by Mr. Hans Engen pursuant to resolution 525 A (XVII) of the Economic and Social Council, and has the honour to circulate it herewith to the Economic and Social Council."

"Having acquainted itself with the contents of the document, the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has the honour to draw your attention to the following.

"In chapter II, paragraphs 34-35 and chapter IV, paragraphs 69 and 88, the author of the 'report' issued under your instructions as an official United Nations document and distributed to all the members of the Economic and Social Council attempts to represent that 'slave labour' is at present being used in the People's Republic of China. This is a notorious falsehood and a malicious slander against the great Chinese nation.

"Since, as a result of the resistance of the United States of America, representatives of the People's Government of China are not yet present in the United Nations or the Economic and Social Council and cannot yet take their lawful place and themselves defend the interests of China in the United Nations, the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics requests you, in connexion with the discussion of items 7 and 8 of the agenda for the nineteenth session of ECOSOC, to issue as a United Nations document the present letter and the attached extracts from the Constitution of the People's Republic of China adopted at Peiping by the First National People's Congress on 20 September 1954. The fundamental law of the Chinese nation, particularly in its articles 1, 2, 9, 16, 85, 86, 87, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94 and 96, contains the principal legislative provisions regarding political and economic rights and guarantees of free creative labour for citizens of the Chinese nation. These provisions thoroughly refute the slanderous allegations contained in the above-mentioned report by Mr. Engen."

The extracts from the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* attached to the above letter read as follows:

"E X C E R P T S
from the text of the
CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
ADOPTED BY THE FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE CAPITAL, PEKING
ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1954

C h a p t e r 1

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

"Article 1. The People's Republic of China is a people's democratic state led by the working class and based on an alliance of the workers and the peasants.

"Article 2. All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people as represented by the National People's Assembly and the local People's Assemblies.

"The National People's Assembly, the local People's Assemblies and the other organs of the state practise democratic centralism.

"Article 9. The state protects the right of handicraftsmen and other non-agricultural individual working people to own means of production in accordance with the law.

* English text furnished by USSR delegation.

"The state guides and helps individual handicraftsmen and other non-agricultural individual working people to improve their enterprise and encourages them to organize producers' and supply-and-sale cooperatives on a voluntary basis.

"Article 16. Work is a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen of the People's Republic of China. The state encourages citizens to take an active and creative part in the labour effort.

Chapter III

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF CITIZENS

"Article 85. All citizens of the People's Republic of China are equal before the law.

"Article 86. All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of eighteen, irrespective of nationality, race, sex, occupation, social origin, religious belief, education, property status or domicile, have the right to elect and be elected, with the exception of insane persons and persons who are by law deprived of the right to elect and be elected.

"Women have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with men.

"Article 87. Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration. The state guarantees citizens the enjoyment of these freedoms by providing the necessary material facilities.

"Article 89. Freedom of the person of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable. No citizen may be placed under arrest except by decision of a people's court or with the sanction of the procurator's office.

"Article 91. Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to work. The state guarantees the citizens enjoyment of this right by planning the development of the national economy, steadily increasing employment, improving working conditions and increasing real wages.

"Article 92. Working people in the People's Republic of China have the right to rest and leisure. The state guarantees the working people enjoyment of this right by fixing working hours and initiating a system of vacations for workers and office employees, and by steadily improving the material facilities for their leisure and their good health.

"Article 93. Working people in the People's Republic of China have the right to material assistance in old age and in case of sickness or disability. The state guarantees the working people the enjoyment of this right by providing social insurance, social relief and public health services, and by steadily, expanding these facilities.

"Article 94. Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to education. The state guarantees the citizens the enjoyment of this right by providing, and steadily enlarging, the number of educational establishments of different kinds and other cultural institutions.

"The state devotes special attention to the physical and mental development of the youth.

"Article 96. Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, social and domestic life.

"Marriage, the family, and the welfare of the mother and child are protected by the state."
