



Wednesday, 17 December 1952, at 8.15 p.m.

404th
PLENARY MEETING

Headquarters, New York

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President: Mr. Lester B. PEARSON (Canada).

The Tunisian question: report of the First Committee (A/2312)

[Agenda item 60]

1. Mr. THORS (Iceland), Rapporteur of the First Committee: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the First Committee's report on the item entitled "The Tunisian question". The First Committee devoted nine meetings to this item, which was thoroughly discussed. I presume that all representatives have read and studied the First Committee's report. I shall therefore speak very briefly.

2. I wish to call the General Assembly's attention to the last three paragraphs of the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee (A/2312); I think they definitely express the Committee's view on the matter.

3. In paragraph 1, the General Assembly would express its confidence that, "in pursuance of its proclaimed policies, the Government of France will endeavour to further the effective development of the free institutions of the Tunisian people, in conformity with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter". I should like to call representatives' attention to the use of the words "the Tunisian people" and to the provision of our Charter that the self-determination of all peoples should be one of the aims of the United Nations.

4. In paragraph 2, the General Assembly would express the hope that "the parties will continue negotiations on an urgent basis with a view to bringing about self-government for Tunisians in the light of the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations".

5. In paragraph 3, the General Assembly would appeal "to the parties concerned to conduct their relations and settle their disputes in accordance with the spirit of the Charter and to refrain from any acts or measures likely to aggravate the present tension".

6. I trust that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee.

7. Finally, I would remind representatives that the Chairman of the First Committee commended the Committee for the high spirit which had animated its deliberations on this item. I know that the same high spirit will animate the General Assembly's consideration of the question.

8. The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly, at its [403rd] meeting yesterday, decided that there would be no discussion on this item, which has already been exhaustively discussed in the First Committee, but that there would be explanations of vote only. I hope, in view of the discussion which this matter has already received, that those explanations of vote can be limited to the customary time of seven minutes, when the vote on only one resolution is being explained.

9. I have also been requested by several delegations to consider this item as an important one within the meaning of rule 84 of the rules of procedure, and if there is no objection, that will be done.

10. The General Assembly has before it the draft resolution proposed by the First Committee for adoption (A/2312).

11. Mrs. PANDIT (India): I come before the General Assembly tonight formally to explain the vote which my delegation will cast on the important question before us and also to make an appeal to the conscience of mankind and to men of good will everywhere.

12. The vast movement for national liberation and freedom which has been sweeping through the great continents of Asia and Africa is now reaching a critical phase. Over the greater part of Asia, peoples numbering hundreds of millions, who had been struggling and striving for their liberty and independence, have freed

themselves from the shackles which bound them. It can be said to the credit of some of the imperial Powers that this process was happily consummated in some countries in an atmosphere free from bitterness and violence; but in Africa we see a spectacle of an entrenched colonialism turning its back upon the swelling tide of nationalism. This refusal to recognize the lessons of history and the laws of human evolution is producing a situation of acute tension and instability in North Africa.

13. The events of the last few months, and especially the last few weeks, have filled all who value human liberty and fundamental freedoms with a sense of deep concern and anxiety. We desire to see in Tunisia an orderly and peaceful transition to full nationhood from the present status of a protectorate. Freedom is for the Tunisian people, as it is for all people, their natural right, a right which is recognized and affirmed in our Charter. We therefore earnestly hope that the present grave situation in Tunisia, and indeed in Morocco as well, will not be viewed from a narrow or limited viewpoint, but will be seen and comprehended in the wider context of the history of our times. Broadness of vision and real statesmanship alone can find the key to a situation of such urgency and magnitude.

14. So far as the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee is concerned, while we respect the intentions of the sponsors, it does seem to us that it hardly reflects the grave and pressing realities of the present situation in Tunisia. There are unfortunate omissions of great significance in that draft resolution. No mention is made of the restoration of peaceful conditions or normal civil liberties which are so essential if negotiations are to take place in an atmosphere of freedom and mutual trust. Neither is there any mention of the United Nations good offices. Such good offices, in our view, would have enabled this Organization to discharge its responsibilities in this matter and would have assisted the parties in reaching an amicable settlement. It would also have helped to restore materially the belief of the Tunisian people in the good intentions of France. The draft resolution calls upon both parties equally to resume negotiations; but it should be remembered that it was not the Tunisians who broke them off.

15. Having expressed these reservations about the draft resolution which is before the General Assembly, let me say that the future of Tunisia transcends any resolution which we may or may not pass. The Tunisian people are destined, like all peoples of the world, to have their birthright of freedom restored to them. If the adoption of this draft resolution helps them on that path, we shall be happy; but even if it contributes little or nothing to that end, we have no doubt that the freedom of the Tunisians cannot ultimately be prevented.

16. In concluding, I should like to make an appeal from the General Assembly to France to desist from measures of repression and violence against the unarmed Tunisian people, and in a spirit of liberality and goodwill to enter into negotiations with the true representatives of the Tunisian people, so that they may attain their national aspirations speedily and peacefully, and thus usher in a new era of friendship and co-operation between a free and independent Tunisia and the other nations of the world.

17. Mr. MOSTAFA (Egypt) (*translated from French*): Although my delegation is not entirely satisfied with the draft resolution that has been submitted to the General Assembly, it voted for it in committee.

18. My delegation would have liked a United Nations good offices committee to be set up to help the parties to continue the negotiations, because there is a lack of balance between the parties to the dispute; United Nations participation would have restored the balance to a certain extent. While France holds the power in Tunisia, while substantial French forces control the whole of Tunisian territory, while martial law is enforced and repressive measures are being carried out, the Tunisian people are unarmed, oppressed by a harsh régime and abandoned to their fate; they are unable to express their opinions freely.

19. While the United Nations is considering the question of Tunisia, the French authorities, according to information received by my delegation, are exerting pressure on the Sovereign of Tunisia and are trying to force his hand and compel him to accept a plan of reforms that the Tunisian people and their Sovereign have already rejected as only partially fulfilling the country's legitimate aspirations. According to the same source, the Bey of Tunis is threatened with deposition if he does not accept the proposed plan of reforms. If that information is confirmed, it will become evident that France is trying to impose its will on Tunisia and to compel acceptance of its own solution of the present crisis in Franco-Tunisian relations. The least that can be said of that method is that it is a challenge to the United Nations.

20. My delegation hopes the General Assembly will not overlook the fact that a solution imposed by force does not solve anything. Recourse to force and the deposition of the Bey of Tunis, far from relieving the present tension, would only heighten it. Such acts would be illegal and would have very serious consequences.

21. My delegation would like to believe that wisdom and moderation will prevail and that France and Tunisia will begin negotiations in an atmosphere of calm and mutual confidence and on a basis of legality that should yield positive and satisfactory results. It is in that spirit that my delegation will vote for the draft resolution before us.

22. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq): My country is bound to the people of Tunisia by ties of culture, history, language and religion, as well as those of humanity and love of freedom. We wish the Tunisians to be as free as anyone else; we wish to see them seated among us in this Assembly. The Tunisians, with their great historical and cultural background, are not less qualified or less able than many of us here present. Their aim has been put quite simply by their new party leader, Mr. Bourgiba, who stated:

"What Tunisia demands is the status of an independent and sovereign State, tied to France by a freely negotiated treaty of alliance, which guarantees to the latter its strategic, economic and cultural interests. The Government of Tunisia will be national, constitutional and democratic, under the aegis of the legitimate Sovereign of the country."

The attainment of this simple, sound and noble objective should not be denied to the Tunisian people. It is

their natural right, as established in the Charter. The fact that it has been withheld from them shows that there has been something abnormal and improper in Franco-Tunisian relations.

23. It was for this reason that my delegation joined twelve other delegations in submitting a draft resolution to the First Committee. That draft resolution contained four specific points. The first was the recognition of the right of Tunisia to independence. The second was the demand that normal conditions should be restored to Tunisia; civil liberties must exist before any progress can be made. The third point was that free negotiations should be entered into between the true representatives of Tunisia and of France. After studying the situation, we were convinced that France, in its present mood and with the attitude it has displayed, would be unable to approach the question calmly, and, therefore, a fourth point was suggested, namely, the establishment of a United Nations good offices commission. Unfortunately, that draft resolution was not adopted by the First Committee.

24. In our readiness to co-operate and in our desire to achieve unanimity—believing that half a loaf was better than none—we supported the draft resolution submitted by eleven Latin-American States. We agree with the high aims and noble purposes which are set out in that draft resolution. However, we are not satisfied that it is sufficiently practical; it has no teeth in it, and it will not meet the situation. Nevertheless, we wish to show our goodwill and our readiness to co-operate, and it was in that spirit that we voted in favour of the draft resolution before the General Assembly (A/2312). We voted in favour of it with the understanding that the principles of the Charter which are included in paragraph 1 of the operative part mean that the people of Tunisia are entitled to independence. They have a right to independence and to membership of the United Nations. They are a people with a great history; they are peaceful, moderate, and willing to negotiate. Tunisia is among those nations which are the most fully qualified for independence.

25. We understand that the parties referred to in paragraph 2 of the operative part of the draft resolution are His Highness the Bey, and the true representatives of the Tunisian people and of France. Negotiations must be freely entered into between the true representatives of the Tunisian people and of France, and not by people chosen at random or for their willingness to represent French interests. We wish the nationalist point of view to be clearly and strongly represented in the negotiations in order that they may lead to a fruitful and lasting conclusion. Otherwise, the main objective will be defeated.

26. We sincerely appeal to France for the restoration of normal conditions in Tunisia in order that the negotiations may be properly conducted. Repressions must be stopped and lives must be spared. We hope that those people who are in gaol will be released, particularly the nationalists; they should be called upon to assist in the negotiations. We hope that death sentences will be commuted so that a friendly atmosphere may be established, and that civil liberties will be restored to the people. It is our understanding that the draft resolution includes all these points. I hope that the General Assembly will agree that an appeal should

be made to France to have the death sentences commuted. We appeal to France through the President of the General Assembly to stop the repression in Tunisia and to end the threats to His Highness the Bey.

27. We read in yesterday's *The New York Times* that "the French Resident-General will leave for Paris early tomorrow with a plea to have the Bey of Tunis removed from his throne". I hope that this will not be proved true, because an atmosphere which will bring about friendly relationships between an independent Tunisia and an independent France is the objective of the United Nations which our Charter demands that we achieve.

28. I hope that this draft resolution, although weak and unsatisfactory to us, will have good and fruitful effects upon the situation in Tunisia.

29. Sir Percy SPENDER (Australia): It is not our purpose to refer again to the arguments which have been put forward in the Committee in support or explanation of our vote. Rather, in explaining our vote, I should like to make some general comments on admonitions in the First Committee to those who, in common with Australia, relied on the lack of competency of the First Committee to act in this matter. Whilst this was the basic ground on which we had determined our vote, it should also be remembered that we expressed what we regarded as well-founded doubt as to the wisdom of dealing with this matter in the United Nations even if we could assume competency.

30. What I want to make some observations upon is the suggestion that those who have based their votes upon the lack of authority of the United Nations to deal with this dispute have taken a narrow technical approach. I feel that it is important to explain why we vote the way we do because of a misunderstanding which may otherwise arise in the public mind. It is always easy to disparage any approach as being legalistic. What is needed, I gather, is not a legal approach but an approach of what is called lofty statesmanship. This attempt to throw into antithesis the so-called "legal" or "technical" approach with the so-called broad "statesman's" approach has confused the real issue in the minds of many of the public.

31. It is a fact to be noted—indeed it has been noted more than once, only to be quickly dismissed in practice, by some representatives—that the United Nations is not a world government. Since it is not, it follows, first, that no agency or constituent organ of the United Nations has any authority to deal with any question which arises between nations or touches on security, except to the extent that authority is to be found in the Charter itself. Secondly, the Charter itself is a treaty which cannot be altered except by means found within it. Accordingly, if any subject matter is not within the competency of the United Nations or any of its constituent organs, the intervention of the United Nations is contrary to the express provisions of the Charter. Thirdly, to permit the Charter to be disregarded will, in our opinion, progressively destroy it and make the General Assembly merely the medium through which the national policies of different nations or groups of nations may be expressed or carried through, irrespective of whether the purposes of the Charter are served or not. This is, in our view, already

taking place, and unless it is arrested it could well, in the end, destroy the Charter and this Organization.

32. Either the Charter provides that a given dispute is within its terms and stipulates how it shall be dealt with, or it does not. If it does not, to attempt to deal with it is not "lofty statesmanship". It can be, and frequently is, unwise interference. On the assumption that any matter is in fact not within the competency of the Assembly, to attempt to treat it as if it were, or to give to the words of the Charter not their proper meaning but the meaning which the majority from time to time may consider it convenient for them to have, may amount, in our judgment, to far worse than any "legal approach". It may amount, in many cases, to placing the expediency of the moment above the solemn obligations and provisions of the Charter.

33. The United Nations is going through an exceedingly difficult period of its existence. Those of us who desire to see it succeed, and who see in it the ultimate fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of the millions of people in the world, would do well to hesitate before seeking to disparage those who give heed to the Charter and its terms. If today the words of the Charter may be deflected from their true meaning to deal with a dispute or a matter which otherwise possesses merits and attracts our concern and interest, tomorrow it is certain that they will be used by others for purposes which will be destructive of the very principles and high purposes on which the Charter is based. Wisdom, I suggest, dictates that we observe at all times and with circumspection the precise terms of the Charter, lest what we may do today remain to plague us tomorrow.

34. It is for these reasons that we have voted on these draft resolutions as we have, and it remains our hope—although I confess that I have no great optimism about this—that we shall in the future display more caution in the choice of those matters which we lay before the Assembly.

35. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The delegation of the Soviet Union considers it necessary to explain the reasons for its vote on the draft resolution on the Tunisian question submitted by the First Committee.

36. The Tunisian question was placed on the agenda of the General Assembly because of the very natural hope of the colonial peoples who are now engaged in a struggle for their freedom and independence that the United Nations will afford them assistance and support in that struggle. These peoples turn to the United Nations because they believe in the high principles embodied in the United Nations Charter, and in particular in the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Having embodied this important principle in its Charter, the United Nations has no right to reject such appeals. On the contrary, in each individual case, the United Nations is obliged to study all the factors carefully and, in conformity with the principles of its Charter, to take whatever measures may be necessary.

37. Tunisia is a Non-Self-Governing Territory within the meaning of the Charter. According to the Charter, the United Nations has a special responsibility towards Non-Self-Governing Territories and their inhabitants.

On the other hand, the States administering Non-Self-Governing Territories have not only undertaken to apply the general principles of the Charter in those Territories, but they have also assumed special obligations to ensure the political, economic and social advancement of the peoples of those Territories, to develop self-government, and to take due account of their political aspirations. The facts show, however, that the French Government is not fulfilling its obligations towards Tunisia.

38. By virtue of the unequal treaties imposed upon it by the French Government, Tunisia is formally a protectorate of France, but is actually a French colony. As a result of long years of domination by the French colonizers, the natural resources of Tunisia, including its mineral wealth, have been seized by French monopolies and its most fertile land taken by French colonists. Tunisia has been converted into a reservoir of raw materials for France, and only those branches of industry are developed which are connected with the extraction of raw materials, especially strategic raw materials. Obviously the conversion of Tunisia into a reservoir of raw materials cannot be described as the economic advancement which the French Government undertook to promote under the Charter.

39. The French authorities in Tunisia are systematically carrying out a policy of discrimination towards the indigenous population of Tunisia, grossly violating the obligations they assumed under the Charter. For example, owing to the discrimination practised in the matter of wages, a Tunisian worker is paid less than a European worker for equal work. The system of gross discrimination is also widespread in public health and education, and, as a result, only an insignificant percentage of Tunisian children of school age can attend school. Nor is the French Government carrying out the obligation it assumed under the Charter of developing self-government in Tunisia. Actually the Tunisian people are prevented from participating in the administration of the country.

40. As we know, the representatives of Tunisia engaged in lengthy negotiations with the French authorities on the question of granting Tunisia self-government. However, the negotiations ended last December, when the French authorities rejected all the Tunisian demands and declared that the protectorate régime would continue unchanged. As a result of the punitive actions of the French troops and police, a tense situation was created in Tunisia which justified the raising of the Tunisian question in the United Nations.

41. The French Government is not only failing to carry out its obligations towards Tunisia under the Charter, but, by its efforts to suppress the national liberation movement, to militarize Tunisia and to transform it into an American military base, it has created a serious situation which calls for effective measures by the United Nations.

42. When the Tunisian question was under consideration in the First Committee, the USSR delegation supported the proposals of the thirteen Arab and Asian countries aimed at settling the conflict in Tunisia. These proposals are in full accord with the principles of the Charter and, if adopted by the General Assembly, would undoubtedly contribute towards easing the tense situation in Tunisia. However, the proposals of the

Arab and Asian countries were rejected by a very small majority, and the Committee adopted a weak and inadequate draft resolution submitted by the delegations of certain Latin-American countries. That draft ignores the violation by the French Government of the rights of the Tunisian people to self-determination, and recommends measures which are clearly insufficient to ensure the observance of the legitimate rights of the Tunisian people and to prevent further violations by the French authorities in Tunisia of the principles of the United Nations Charter. Such a resolution cannot promote a just settlement of the situation in Tunisia in accordance with the principles of the Charter and the national aspirations of the Tunisian people.

43. For the foregoing reasons, the USSR delegation abstained from voting on this draft resolution in committee and will abstain also in the General Assembly.

44. Mr. ZEINEDDINE (Syria): In the First Committee, the Syrian delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution now before the General Assembly and will also vote for it in the Assembly, although with reluctance. We should have preferred a draft resolution clearly setting forth the objectives of future negotiations and establishing a basis on which the two parties could agree, as a prelude to their negotiations. Such a draft resolution would have been more positive and effective in assisting the two parties. Yet we are aware of some merits in the present draft resolution which are worthy of mention.

45. This draft resolution has, in the opinion of my delegation, definitely decided the question of the competence of the United Nations. We have never doubted that the United Nations was competent, but the fact that its competence was contested gives this draft resolution a special value. It has established the necessity for the assistance of the United Nations to the two parties concerned in order that they may reach agreement among themselves—an agreement in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter.

46. Secondly, it has brought the Tunisian question out of the limited orbit of purely Tunisian-French relations to a wider orbit in which the influence of the United Nations will not fail to be felt. This is a development of great importance. The negotiations to be carried out ought to take place between France, on the one hand, and the true representatives of the Tunisian people, on the other. Those who do not represent the Tunisian people are not entitled to act in their name or to try to bind them in any way or to decide their future.

47. The return of normal conditions and a normal atmosphere is also essential for the success of these negotiations and, unfortunately, the present draft resolution is unsatisfactory in those two aspects.

48. But there is something much more important than the words of the draft resolution. The movement for national liberation in formerly dependent territories, or in presently dependent territories, has been in progress for so long that it has brought to independence in the last decade more than 600 million people in Asia and Africa. This mighty tide continues to move and has now reached the shores of North Africa. It is an irresistible tide and, indeed, a sign of the times,

and, once such a draft resolution as that now before the General Assembly has been adopted, I do not believe that either the United Nations or any other power will forget the general tendency in the world towards the fulfilment of their national aspirations.

49. The Tunisian question started solely as a question between Tunisia and France. Of course, Tunisia had the sympathy of other countries, but thirteen Arab-Asian States expressed their support of the Tunisian case by bringing it to the attention of the United Nations for the purpose of having it dealt with in accordance with the Charter instead of in accordance with colonial wishes. Such support is unsurpassed in the annals of actions of this kind, and undoubtedly it is upheld by a vast section of public opinion in many other countries, including France itself. The interest which this discussion in the United Nations has aroused and the influence it brought to bear is a healthy one. It does not increase friction; on the contrary, it brings the general consensus of opinion, the expression of the conscience of mankind, into political efficacy, and should be very helpful in convincing the parties of the wisdom of adopting an agreed solution, which would resolve the present situation—a situation which is at variance with the Charter and with the legitimate aspirations of the Tunisian people—by establishing free co-operation in the dealings between France and Tunisia. The Tunisian people are persevering and will follow the same road towards independence which other peoples before them have followed.

50. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) (*translated from French*): Before voting on the question of Tunisia, I should like to remind the Assembly that the world is troubled and there are, alas, danger spots everywhere. There is widespread suffering, young and generous blood is shed freely every day in various regions of our turbulent and unquiet world. Some are fighting for their convictions, for a cause which they believe to be just. Others are simply fighting under orders. But men are still giving their blood, afflicted mothers have nothing to live for or cannot sleep for anxiety. Devilish weapons with unbelievable powers of destruction are being manufactured at enormous cost. There is relentless competition to increase their number and their destructive power, while civil, social and humanitarian interests are ignored.

51. The world is anxious and mothers cannot sleep. The world longs for a ray of hope and such a hope can be provided only by this Organization and by the genuine implementation of the Charter. Women, old people and children are suffering, liberties are being violated, dwellings destroyed, fields ravaged, liberators assassinated and whole nations oppressed. A torn and anxious world yearns for a glimmer of hope; it can find it in the Charter and the true execution of its terms.

52. The United Nations Charter is being interpreted according to neither the spirit nor the letter, but according to the desires of some and the interests of others, according to the circumstances and the interests of the moment. Such biased interpretations undermine the very foundations of this Organization and threaten it with irreparable destruction, which will lead it to the same tragic fate which befell the League of Nations; that would indeed be a disaster for the whole

of humanity, which wants to maintain its hopes. We must avoid casting whole nations into despair.

53. In North Africa, in Tunisia and in Morocco, efforts are being made to secure respect for the right of peoples to self-determination. Peoples are fighting for freedom. The people of Tunisia, honourable and proud—if for no other reason than that they have participated in the liberation of other peoples and other occupied countries—are fighting, like the people of Morocco, an unequal battle for their dignity, their liberty, their equality—mere equality with aliens who are occupying their country. These peoples, who are being driven to despair, must be given hope.

54. The children of those who have devoted themselves body and soul to the cause of liberation, those who take part in the resistance or who merely sympathize, thousands in number and now imprisoned, in concentration camps, deported, exiled to distant countries, these people are yearning for hope. These men, women and children who are working for a better age, as the people of France did 160 years ago, as the people of the United States did when they fought for their liberation, as did the peoples of Latin America too, these men, women and children, sustained by the sympathy of peoples throughout the world, are looking to you, to us, to this Organization. They do not want this feeble ray of hope, which, as you know, issues forth from this Organization, to be eclipsed. This glimmer is all we have, and we know that the United Nations can have no real value except to the extent that it is given sincere co-operation.

55. To the unhappy world which clings to the feeble ray of hope represented by this Organization, France has said, "No, I will not co-operate". France has withdrawn, France is absent. The Government of the fair land of France, of our beloved France, of the generous French people—the Government of the Fourth Republic, sprung from the French resistance, will not allow this ray of hope to lighten the tragic soul of the world in which we live, and particularly the soul of the peoples of North Africa who are seeking their freedom and are resisting as France itself once resisted. The people of France, who have given to the whole world so great a light, who have contributed so much to art and to science, so much that is of human value, this people whose capital, Paris, remains the symbol of an enlightened mind and individual liberties, would not wish, I am sure, to extinguish the flame of hope which we have reposed in this Organization.

56. I have made this brief statement to explain why, despite the weakness of the present draft resolution, a weakness which has been fully brought out by the representative of Syria and by the other speakers before me, we have been persuaded to vote for it. It is a weak draft, which throws the lamb to the wolves. We have been persuaded to vote for it because we wish to adopt a constructive attitude on the matter in the United Nations. Such an attitude was clearly called for, since negative attitudes can only undermine the foundations of the Organization.

57. We do not wish to destroy the hope of which we stand so much in need. That is why we voted for this draft resolution, in order to sustain this feeble glimmer, because we do not wish to bear the responsi-

bility of sharing in the destruction of this Organization, in which lie the hopes of the world.

58. Mr. ALIREZA (Saudi Arabia): The First Committee, in a lengthy and most enlightening debate, was seized of the facts of the Tunisian problem. It was the solemn duty of my delegation to present the many aspects relating to the deterioration of relations between the French and the Tunisians as a result of the continued efforts of the Government of France to sacrifice and scuttle the aspirations of Tunisia in order to preserve the interests of a minority of French exploiters in that country. We pointed out that such a policy not only violates the Treaty of Bardo of 1881 and the Convention of La Marsa of 1883, but rather constitutes a danger to world peace. Recent events in Tunisia have vindicated our concern.

59. The Tunisian tragedy is that of a people who have been struggling for the last 70 years to achieve the freedom of their fatherland. The present upheaval in North Africa symbolizes these endeavours most modestly. It is the supreme duty of the United Nations to air the grievances of oppressed nations and to take measures to eradicate the attempts of certain Powers to immortalize the outmoded policies of colonialism. Unless with conviction and courage we set an example of upholding the principles of the Charter, the path to our objectives will be crowded with the victims of our disbelief.

60. Even while we are discussing and on the verge of voting on this question, "Operation Decimation" or *Ratissage* is in full swing in North Africa. The French authorities, according to news dispatches from Paris—as indicated by my friend, Mr. Al-Jamali—are resorting to a scheme by which they intend to depose His Highness the Bey of Tunisia, in order to destroy the symbol of resistance to their tyranny. It is a calculated policy to have another *coup de force* in addition to the persecution of the legitimate Tunisian Government headed by His Excellency, Mohammed Chenik, who is now imprisoned with a large number of Tunisian political figures and trade union leaders by the French administration in Tunisia.

61. Having all the doors closed before us, to save the situation and redeem justice, we are left with no alternative but to support the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee. We do this with reluctance and reservation. We have no confidence in the outcome of any direct negotiations that might be conducted between two parties, one of which is powerful and the other weak. Yet we shall be glad to be proved wrong if the Franco-Tunisian negotiations dissipate our anxiety and set Tunisia on the road to independence. It is with that hope that we say reluctantly "yes" to something to which we should definitely say "no".

62. The PRESIDENT: Since there are no other speakers on my list, we shall now take a decision in regard to the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee (A/2312).

The draft resolution was adopted by 44 votes to 3, with 8 abstentions.

63. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Czechoslovakia for an explanation of vote.

64. Mr. KOMZALA (Czechoslovakia) (*translated from French*): In an earlier statement in the First Committee, the Czechoslovak delegation set forth its position on the Tunisian question in the light of history and of recent events.

65. The peoples of the colonial and dependent countries, having been enslaved for centuries under the yoke of colonialism, have awakened and are rising against the oppression of the colonial system. Like millions of other human beings, the people of Tunisia are also claiming their inalienable right to self-determination, the right to exploit their own natural resources, the right to manage their own political and economic affairs and to develop their national culture.

66. This trend, which is of truly historical significance and of which the struggle of the Tunisian people is an integral part, is directed towards objectives laid down in the Charter itself when, in Article 1, paragraph 2, it makes it a purpose of the United Nations "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace". This historical trend is towards equal rights and peaceful co-operation among all nations. That is why the Tunisian people, placing their confidence in the proclaimed principles of the United Nations Charter, are appealing to our Organization with the firm hope that it will help them to acquire their freedom, self-government and independence.

67. In keeping with this point of view, the draft resolution submitted to the First Committee by the thirteen Arab and Asian States was calculated to provide a wise and fair basis for the solution of the Tunisian question. That is why the Czechoslovak delegation voted for it in the First Committee. By contrast, the draft resolution of Brazil, Venezuela, Honduras, Costa Rica, Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Ecuador provides no means of resolving the Tunisian problem. Its purpose is not to assist the Tunisian people in achieving the objectives for which they are shedding their blood and which are at the same time the objectives of the Charter.

68. For that reason, the Czechoslovak delegation was unable to vote for the draft resolution and preferred to abstain. By adopting it, the United Nations deeply disappointed the Tunisian people, who have made great sacrifices for a just cause in which fundamental human rights are at stake. The Organization has sorely disappointed a people who had regarded the pledges and principles proclaimed in our Charter as genuine.

Eritrea. Report of the United Nations Commissioner in Eritrea: report of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee (A/2313 and Add. 1)

[Agenda item 21]

Mr. Salazar (Dominican Republic) Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Political Committee, presented the report of that committee (A/2313 and Add. 1) and then spoke as follows:

69. Mr. SALAZAR (Dominican Republic), Rapporteur of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee (*translated from Spanish*): In conclusion, it is my pleasant duty to report to the General Assembly the many eloquent

statements made by various delegations congratulating the people of Eritrea on this happy occasion of the establishment of Eritrea as an autonomous State, and expressing their deep appreciation of the brilliance and efficiency with which the United Nations Commissioner in Eritrea, Mr. Eduardo Anze Matienzo, ably assisted by his staff, carried out the exacting mission entrusted to him. Representatives also expressed their appreciation of the United Kingdom Government's work as the administering Power during the process of development which led to the establishment of Eritrea as an autonomous State. They also thanked the Italian Government for its co-operation in furthering these lofty aims, and the Imperial Government of Ethiopia for the active and unstinting aid it gave up to the time of the establishment of the Federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia.

70. I wish also to draw the General Assembly's attention to the statements made in the Committee, on the occasion of the successful completion of this mission which justly and satisfactorily fulfilled a people's aspirations in a matter affecting their own destinies, reaffirming faith in the effectiveness of the United Nations and in the honesty and justice with which effect is being given to the purposes and principles on which this Organization is founded.

71. The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly has already decided not to discuss this draft resolution, but I shall call upon the representative of Greece for an explanation of vote.

72. Mr. KYROU (Greece): I shall be extremely brief. Through an affirmative vote my delegation wishes, first, to express its deep appreciation to all those who have contributed to this great moral victory of our Organization: to the people of Eritrea, to the Governments of Ethiopia, the United Kingdom and Italy, and to the United Nations Commissioner in Eritrea. Secondly, we desire to extend our wholehearted wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the newly-born Federation under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown.

73. Ato AKLILOU (Ethiopia) (*translated from French*): After the full, but very cordial, discussion which took place in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee on the report of the United Nations Commissioner in Eritrea, there is no need for me to reopen the discussion of the substance of the matter or repeat my statements on the subject.

74. Thanks to the genuine co-operation of the distinguished Commissioner of the United Nations, of the British Administration—which for eleven years has performed the thankless task of administering the territory—and of the Ethiopian Government, under the high authority of His Imperial Majesty, three years of work and study by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the four great Powers, and four years of investigation and discussion by the United Nations, have thus resulted in the success which today we are celebrating in these halls.

75. At this historic moment, when our Organization is duly testifying to the fact that this question has been settled, I have pleasure in once more paying a tribute to the breadth of vision and the high qualities of Mr. Anze Matienzo, a great representative of Latin

America, who was chosen by the General Assembly in pursuance of its recommendation of December 1950 [resolution 390 (V)], and in bearing witness to the efficiency, impartiality and fairness with which the British Administration in Eritrea carried out its difficult task during that critical period. On the other hand, without the great prestige and the personal influence of His Imperial Majesty, the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea would certainly not have accepted freely and whole-heartedly the recommendations of the United Nations. That seems to me to be a guarantee for the future and for the stability of the settlement of 11 September last.

76. The happy conclusion of all the work, study and discussion is a notable success for the United Nations from various points of view.

77. First, it shows that a solution has been found despite the utmost difficulties, thanks to the determination and even obstinacy of the Members of the Organization in seeking an adequate solution.

78. Secondly, it shows the truth of the principle that each problem ought to be settled entirely on its merits, avoiding any attempt to introduce political considerations which have nothing to do with the problem.

79. Finally, it shows that whatever may be the weight of other considerations, such as "the interests of peace and security", the essential basis of a solution must remain "the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants". Only when the peoples in question are themselves firmly convinced of the justice of the proposed solution and accept it themselves, in application of the principle of the self-determination of peoples, can the interests of international peace and security be furthered. Thus, by respecting the principle of self-determination, we also, and thereby, satisfy "the interests of peace and security". It is thus that peace and security have returned to East Africa, which has been disturbed for so many years, and sincere friendship and collaboration have been established between old enemies, who have now happily become friends.

80. Ethiopia has made honest efforts to carry out the recommendations of the United Nations and its delegation will vote for the draft resolution submitted by the thirteen friendly countries, as it did in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. It has already demonstrated its willingness to work for the success of the federation between it and Eritrea and for the welfare of its inhabitants, be they Eritreans, Italians or other aliens. It will conscientiously fulfil its high mission. Eritrea, federated with Ethiopia, will be called upon to share in the social and economic progress of Ethiopia, with which it will henceforth march hand in hand towards a future full of hope and promise.

81. The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly will now vote on the draft resolution contained in the report of the Committee (A/2313 and Add. 1).

The draft resolution was adopted by 51 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

82. The PRESIDENT: The action which the General Assembly has just taken marks the conclusion of a successful chapter in the history of the United Nations and the beginning of a new era for the people of Eritrea. As President of the General Assembly, I

do not want to let this occasion pass without adding my congratulations to those which have been expressed to His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Ethiopia, and to the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia, two peoples who are now joined together in a federation under the Ethiopian Crown.

83. The question of Eritrea represents a striking example of effective international co-operation brought to a happy conclusion through appropriate and efficient procedures. The General Assembly decision upon which the new Federation is based was arrived at through investigation followed by the democratic process of discussion and decision. The General Assembly's continuing responsibility in the implementation of its decision was placed in the hands of the Commissioner, Mr. Anze Matienzo. I know that I express the Assembly's sentiments when I offer to him our gratitude and admiration for the way in which he has discharged the responsibilities which this body placed upon him. The implementation of the General Assembly decision with regard to Eritrea required the closest co-operation and understanding, not only with the people of Eritrea, but also among the United Nations Commissioner, the administering Power (the United Kingdom) and the Ethiopian Government. The successful conclusion of this matter testifies to the good will brought to this problem by all of the parties concerned.

84. The General Assembly, I am sure, would want me to express to the people of Eritrea, as well as to the people of Ethiopia, our best wishes for the future.

Repatriation of Greek children. Reports of the Secretary-General and of the international Red Cross organizations: reports of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee (A/2295) and the Fifth Committee (A/2301)

[Agenda Item 23]

85. Mr. SALAZAR (Dominican Republic), Rapporteur of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee (*translated from Spanish*): As you are aware, the question of the repatriation of Greek children was first brought to the attention of the General Assembly in 1948, when the Assembly decided by resolution 193 C (III) of 27 November 1948 to recommend the return to Greece of all children who had been taken away from their homes and interned in other countries. In that resolution, the States concerned in the matter, and the international Red Cross organizations, were called upon to co-operate in the implementation of those recommendations.

86. Four years have elapsed since that resolution was adopted. Through the reports of the Secretary-General and the international Red Cross organizations, the General Assembly has been kept informed year after year of the many complex difficulties which have frustrated the efforts made to further the repatriation of the Greek children.

87. At the fourth, fifth and sixth sessions respectively, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 288 B (IV) of 18 November 1949, 382 C (V) of 1 December 1950 and 517 (VI) of 2 February 1952; all of them were adopted without objection, the texts being similar to that of resolution 193 C (III) to which I referred a moment ago. Thus the most recent of those

resolutions, for instance, resolution 517 (VI) adopted in Paris, contained *inter alia* a provision urging all countries harbouring Greek children to take steps to facilitate the early return of the children to their homes. It decided to continue the United Nations Standing Committee on the Repatriation of Greek Children with the same terms of reference as it had been given previously; it requested the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies to continue their work for this humanitarian purpose; it also requested the Secretary-General to report from time to time to Member States on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution; at the same time, it requested the international Red Cross organizations and the Secretary-General to submit progress reports before the convening of the seventh session of the General Assembly.

88. At this session, the General Assembly has before it the fourth general report of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, as well as the report of the Secretary-General and of the Standing Committee on the Repatriation of Greek Children. Those documents contain a summary of the efforts made, all of which were fruitless, with the exception of the return of children from Yugoslavia, and of a further attempt, which failed, to negotiate with the Czechoslovak Red Cross Society in 1952, for the purposes stated in resolution 517 (VI), to which I have alluded.

89. The first of those reports stated that the international Red Cross organizations felt that they had exhausted all possible ways and means available to them in seeking a solution to the problem, except for the opportunities which might still occur of repatriating Greek children living in Yugoslavia, and that they felt obliged to suspend their work in that direction. It was also stated that the organizations would remain ready to resume their work if and when the United Nations or the governments concerned in the matter succeeded in establishing conditions, at the governmental level, which would make practical action by the Red Cross possible and useful.

90. The *Ad Hoc* Political Committee considered the problem in the light of those reports for three meetings. Only one draft resolution was submitted to the Committee, by Brazil and New Zealand, in which it was proposed that the Assembly, after noting the position of the problem at the present time, should express deep regret that, except for Yugoslavia, none of the States harbouring Greek children had complied with the recommendations of the General Assembly on the question; that it should condemn the failure of those States, other than Yugoslavia, to co-operate in efforts to enable the Greek children to return to their homes; and that it should decide to discontinue the Standing Committee on the Repatriation of Greek children and agree to the suspension of the work of the international Red Cross organizations, with the exception of that being accomplished in Yugoslavia, until such time as conditions were established making practical action by the Red Cross possible and useful.

91. In the course of the debate, Ecuador and the Byelorussian SSR proposed amendments to the draft resolution. The joint draft resolution of Brazil and New Zealand, as amended, was finally approved by 46 votes to 5, with 7 abstentions.

92. As a result of that decision of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, it is my privilege, on behalf of the Committee, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution set out in the report (A/2295).

93. The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly has already decided not to discuss this matter, but I shall call on certain delegations for an explanation of vote.

94. Mr. MUNRO (New Zealand): I am sure that in speaking on this draft resolution I am addressing a most sympathetic audience, and, so far as my country is concerned, there is none which could approach this problem with greater sympathy or with greater understanding. The men of my country, along with others from the Commonwealth, fought beside the Greeks, and I repeat, there is none which could speak to you with greater understanding of the needs and the sufferings of the Greek people.

95. The draft resolution before us deals with a great human problem. Like most human problems, its elements are simple: the deliberate separation of thousands of children from their homes and from their parents.

96. For four years, the General Assembly has attempted to rescue and to help the Greek children abducted from their homeland and kept in countries of eastern Europe. For four years, the General Assembly has endeavoured to encourage these countries to allow the children to return. For four years, agencies of the Red Cross have been available to assist in this work, and for much of that time a committee of the General Assembly, the Standing Committee on the Repatriation of Greek Children, has endeavoured to play a part. And what has happened? In all that time, despite all the work of the Standing Committee, despite all the patient efforts of the agencies of the Red Cross, the results have been pitifully small. Only one country, Yugoslavia, has made a positive response and returned children to their homes. The remainder of the harbouring countries have met the appeal of the General Assembly with evasion and lack of co-operation. Not a single Greek child has been allowed to leave their territories.

97. When this question was discussed in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, my delegation joined the delegation of Brazil in presenting a draft resolution which we felt met the facts of the present situation fairly and frankly. In the first place, our draft resolution paid tribute to the organizations which had endeavoured for so long to overcome the problem. Secondly, it called upon the General Assembly to condemn the harbouring States, other than Yugoslavia, for their failure to co-operate in efforts to accomplish the return of the children. Thirdly, it sought to have the General Assembly recognize that, in the face of the continued refusal of the harbouring States, other than Yugoslavia, to respond to the repeated urgings of the Assembly, there was little useful work that could now be performed by the Standing Committee and the agencies of the Red Cross. Our draft resolution, therefore, proposed that the Standing Committee should be disbanded and that, in accordance with their own recommendation—and I repeat, their own recommendation—the activities of the Red Cross agencies should be

discontinued. My delegation was confident that our draft resolution did not close the door on the possibility of repatriating Greek children in the future. We felt this because the draft resolution specifically provided that the Red Cross agencies should resume their work as soon as conditions were established making practical action by them possible and useful.

98. However, many members of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, whose motives I sincerely respect—since who could fail to respect their motives?—found it unpalatable to suspend the work of the Red Cross, lest it appear that the United Nations was refusing to act when something might still be done. To all my friends in the Latin-American bloc who felt that way, I pay full respect. It is, nevertheless, in this amended form that the draft resolution appears before the General Assembly today.

99. I should like, at this stage, however, to read the following telegram [A/2277], dated 28 November 1952, received by the Secretary-General on 2 December 1952 from the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross:

“Have taken note of the resolution adopted by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee whereby the International Red Cross is requested to continue work for the repatriation of displaced Greek children, we again point out that continuation of the work is absolutely conditional on the removal of obstacles described in the letter accompanying our report of 1 October [A/2236]. We must stress that Red Cross action cannot produce results unless favourable conditions are created by the governments concerned. We would be glad if the Assembly noted, firstly, that the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League are obliged to suspend their activities, having exhausted all means at their disposal, secondly, that the International Committee of the Red Cross and League will resume activities when the United Nations and the governments concerned provide favourable conditions permitting the useful expansion of Red Cross action, thirdly, once again urge governments to take all steps likely to produce such conditions. We would be most grateful if you intervene to ensure that the final General Assembly resolution takes note of the above considerations. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League will of course continue the repatriation already made possible.”

100. I submit to this Assembly that the situation as described in this telegram is exactly that which the original draft resolution of New Zealand and Brazil was designed to meet. That draft resolution, in its original form, would even now meet the wishes expressed by the International Red Cross.

101. Let me, in conclusion, say just this. Facts are often uncomfortable things, and this Organization has not always been ready to be ruled by them. On the whole, I think that is a proper instinct. But in the present case—it is a sad case, dealing with human beings who have suffered greatly—I suggest that we should do well to recognize the facts, unpalatable as they are, and mould our actions to suit them. The Red Cross will not be enabled to do useful work merely because the General Assembly asks that organization to do so. It cannot, in fact, do any more work until the

governments concerned, those responsible for this sad state of affairs, have a change of heart. Let us be quite clear. It is those governments alone that now have the opportunity and the responsibility of effecting some improvement in the present situation.

102. It is in the hope that the General Assembly will be prepared to recognize this fact that my delegation has submitted the amendment (A/L.128) to restore the previous draft resolution, and I entrust it with confidence to the Assembly.

103. Mr. BOULITREAU FRAGOSO (Brazil): The Brazilian delegation has co-sponsored, with the delegation of New Zealand, the draft resolution which, subsequently amended, is now before the General Assembly for final approval.

104. As the representative of New Zealand has just stated in his very able speech, we thought that the Standing Committee of the United Nations for the Repatriation of Greek Children should be discontinued and the work of the Red Cross suspended. But the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee decided that the proper course to follow would be to direct the Red Cross to continue its efforts to induce the countries which are now harbouring Greek children to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations. Although we were, of course, of the opinion that our draft resolution presented the best solution of the problem, we were satisfied and decided to accept the situation. We should certainly not have reopened this question were it not for the telegram received from the Red Cross, which has been quoted by the representative of New Zealand. But in the light of this new development, I think the least we can do is to ascertain whether the adoption of the draft resolution that was approved by the Committee is the best practical step to be taken at the moment.

105. We certainly agree with everything that has been said by the representative of New Zealand, and we very respectfully suggest to the General Assembly, and especially to the representatives of Uruguay and Ecuador, that the decision taken by the Committee should be reviewed at this stage of the debate. I welcome this opportunity to emphasize that every suggestion offered by the delegations of Ecuador and Uruguay always deserves and receives from my delegation the closest attention and the fullest consideration. When these delegations express different points of view from those which we have supported, we stop and ponder the whole matter very carefully, and we certainly should be ready and willing to re-examine our position should we reach the conclusion that their views present a better, a more practical and a more easily implemented solution. I sincerely hope that we may be able to see eye to eye with them on this matter.

106. I fully sympathize with the motives that prompted Ecuador and Uruguay to present the amendment which was approved by the Committee. It is commendable indeed that they should want to see the work of the Red Cross proceed in order to reach the ultimate goal for which we have been striving. We are in full agreement on this point, and we too should like to see the complete repatriation of all Greek children who were taken away from their homes.

107. There are, however, two points which I should like to make and which I think will clarify the posi-

tion taken by my delegation. In the first place, we have to agree that Greece is the party directly concerned in this matter, and in the Committee we heard the representative of Greece declare that he wished the work of the Red Cross to be discontinued. Secondly, we must agree also that nothing whatever can be done without the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

108. The International Committee of the Red Cross has stated, in a manner which leaves no room for doubt, that it wants to be relieved of this task. It has done everything in its power to help to implement the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and it feels that further action cannot produce any satisfactory results unless favourable conditions are created by the governments now harbouring the Greek children. We know that these conditions, unfortunately, do not exist now, and are not likely to be created, I am sorry to say, in the near future. Shall we then, in the light of the opinions expressed by the representative of Greece and in the telegram of the Red Cross, adopt a resolution which is directly contrary to the opinions of the parties which are most interested in finding a solution to this problem? Even though we may feel very reluctant to take an action which, to a certain extent, acknowledges our failure, I see no other course open to us.

109. I wish to address myself to the representatives of Uruguay and Ecuador and to ask them whether, considering the reaction of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the draft resolution approved by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, they still wish to maintain their amendment, or whether they would be willing to recognize the facts, unfortunate as they are, which are before us?

110. Mr. THORSING (Sweden): My delegation has directed me to support the amendment presented by the representative of New Zealand, an amendment which implies the restoration of the text originally proposed by the delegations of New Zealand and Brazil in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. I can do so and be consistent, as my delegation voted against the well-meant but impractical alterations proposed, in a generous and purely humanitarian spirit, by the representative of Ecuador, with the support of some other representatives. The effect of these amendments disregarded the conclusion to which the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies had arrived. Knowing well the carefulness and objectivity with which these organizations always approach their problems, my delegation felt no doubt or hesitation about abiding by the result of their investigations.

111. In saying this, I wish to make it quite clear that my delegation does not underrate in the slightest the lofty ideals which inspired the sponsors of the amendments submitted in the Committee. However, my delegation fears that if those amendments were allowed to stand they would disturb the relations of the United Nations with Red Cross organizations, which cannot possibly be suspected of having neglected any opportunity to serve this great humanitarian cause. We cannot direct or dictate to these organizations. We may solicit their assistance when we ourselves have created conditions enabling them to act. Therefore to request them to do something which they have explicitly de-

clared themselves unable to do in the absence of an agreement on a governmental level between the countries concerned is, to say the least, impractical.

112. And as I am as concerned with safeguarding the prestige of the United Nations as with enunciating its ideals, I hope that the General Assembly will not, by its vote, expose itself to the accusation of shunning the hard facts of the situation. This amendment submitted by Brazil and New Zealand (A/L.128), which restores the original text, will save us from that.

113. Mr. PONCE YEPES (Ecuador): I wish briefly to explain the vote of the delegation of Ecuador, which submitted an amendment to the joint draft resolution of Brazil and New Zealand in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. Under that amendment, the first sentence of paragraph 5 of the draft resolution was to be retained, while the remainder of the paragraph, relating to the suspension of the work of the international Red Cross organizations, except for the work being done for Greek children in Yugoslavia, was to be deleted. Moreover, my delegation at the same time suggested the deletion, from paragraph 7, of the words "in Yugoslavia", in order not to restrict any future efforts of the international Red Cross organizations. Our amendment, therefore, was intended as an attempt to give a last chance to action on behalf of humanity.

114. Unfortunately, owing to the unwarranted refusal of certain States which habitually scorn all civilized standards, the United Nations recommendations have not been carried out, were stultified despite the courageous action and efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, the Standing Committee for the Repatriation of Greek Children, and the Secretary-General.

115. In the circumstances, and in view of the telegram mentioned by the New Zealand representative, my delegation felt it should accept the amendment (A/L.128) proposed by that delegation, and it will vote in favour of the draft resolution and the amendment. The delegation of Uruguay, which supported the amendment suggested by my delegation, has authorized me to announce that it also will support those texts.

116. Accordingly, my delegation takes pleasure in acceding to the legitimate wishes of the delegations of Brazil and New Zealand, and in associating itself with their views.

117. Mr. POLITIS (Greece): The affirmative vote that my delegation is about to cast needs an explanation, lest it be misconstrued. By supporting the recommendation submitted by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, as amended by New Zealand, we simply bowed to the behests of a tragic fate rendered inevitable by an unheard-of human callousness. We did so with a feeling of sorrow, disappointment and bitterness.

118. For, as has been made abundantly clear during the debates in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, no other course or alternative was left open to us. The same conclusion had already been arrived at by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, that is, the two organs which in 1948 and 1949 were unanimously—I repeat, unanimously—entrusted with the task of bringing about the repatriation of the Greek children [*resolutions 193 C (III) and 288 B (IV)*]. Indeed, a sense of frustra-

tion and failure is dominant throughout their fourth general report [A/2236]. Let me quote only the following sentence from the letter of transmittal which prefaces the report:

"Accordingly, considering that they have now exhausted every possible ways and means available to them in seeking a solution of the problem of the displaced Greek children (excepting the opportunities which may still occur of repatriating Greek children living in Yugoslavia), the International Committee and the League feel obliged, for the time being, to suspend their work in this direction".

This view is corroborated by the cable of the Red Cross Organization (A/2277) dated 2 December 1952.

119. No less emphatic about the failure of its mission and the dimness of its prospects was the Standing Committee on the Repatriation of Greek Children. Both these authorities, however, despite the moderation and restraint befitting their high international status, were explicit as regards the responsibility for a situation which, I fear, will be a slur on the record of our century.

120. The arguments adduced by those who will incur the odium for this sorry situation are not novel. We heard the usual complaints about the genuineness of the lists of the children eligible for repatriation, about the fate allegedly meted out to repatriated children and about the conditions prevailing in Greece.

121. The report of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies gave an accurate picture of the difficulties encountered in drawing up the lists of the abducted children. Difficulties of identification arose, perhaps, and were bound to arise, in the case of infants. But the International Red Cross made repeated and insistent efforts to contact the national Red Cross societies of the harbouring countries with a view to checking and verifying the lists. In the few instances, however, in which these efforts were not thwarted from the very outset, the negotiations did not go a step further than the preliminary stages. The other so-called harbouring countries did not even deign to answer the invitation of the International Red Cross.

122. On 10 March 1952, the permanent representative of Greece to the United Nations launched a new appeal to what shreds of good faith and good will could still linger in the bosoms of the detaining governments. He wrote, and I quote from his letter No. 1045:

"In this connexion I deem it necessary to stress that were the technical difficulties the only hurdle standing in the way to repatriation of Greek children, the Greek Red Cross, for its part, is always ready to reconsider with an open mind any such difficulty... Never have we ceased to advocate and support such a collaboration between the International Red Cross Organizations and the National Red Cross Societies, in the belief that with a little good will a technical difficulties can be overcome."

It is needless for me to add that this appeal also remained without any response whatsoever.

123. The representatives of the so-called harbouring countries have made allegations to the effect that the

children repatriated from Yugoslavia were not restored to their families. The report of the International Committee of the Red Cross tells, however, a totally different story. This report bears ample witness to the scrupulous observance by the Greek Government of its promises with regard to the immediate reunion of the repatriated children with their parents. We never denied the representatives of the International Red Cross the necessary facilities in order to ascertain, at will, that our assurances were strictly adhered to.

124. Thus the solution to this poignant problem that the conscience of the world demands seems as remote as ever. In these circumstances, no one can take exception to the request of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies to have their highly humanitarian authority no longer exposed to the taunts and flauntings of the Cominform countries. Nor can we, devotedly attached as we are to the cause of the United Nations, again expose the Organization to the defiance of international defaulters by adopting a resolution doomed to remain, as in past years, a dead letter. The door is left ajar, however, and any change of heart on the part of the ruling circles of the so-called harbouring countries will not pass unnoticed. In the mean time, I take this opportunity to express to the two organizations of the Red Cross the deep gratitude of the Greek people and their Government for their endeavours on behalf of our children. Let them be assured that our gratitude is in proportion to their unflagging efforts and not to the meagre results obtained.

125. I cannot close my explanatory remarks without turning my thoughts to our beloved children. Those who have, with justice, been branded forever by the General Assembly, are labouring to defile the souls of these children and to turn them against their country. Who knows whether these hapless young people, many of whom have already fought against their fatherland as Cominform guerrillas will not be mobilized one day into the ranks of a Cominform international brigade?

126. In this, as in the many tragic episodes of its long and glorious history, Greece will bear its cross. But never will it relinquish the hope that, with God's help and the moral assistance of the civilized world, its lost children—lost to their families and their country—will one day be restored to it.

127. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now proceed to vote on the draft resolution submitted by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee (A/2295), to which certain amendments have been submitted.

128. We shall vote first on the amendment submitted by the Byelorussian SSR (A/L.130), which provides for the deletion of paragraphs 3 and 4 of the draft resolution.

The amendment was rejected by 43 votes to 5, with 6 abstentions.

129. The PRESIDENT: We shall vote next on the amendments submitted by the delegation of New Zealand (A/L.128).

The first amendment was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.

The second amendment was adopted by 49 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.

130. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the Soviet Union on a point of order:

131. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): I would ask the President to put paragraphs 3 and 4 to the vote separately.

132. The PRESIDENT: A request has been made that paragraphs 3 and 4 of the draft resolution [A/

2295], should be put to the vote separately, and that will be done.

Paragraph 3 was adopted by 41 votes to 5, with 9 abstentions.

Paragraph 4 was adopted by 43 votes to 5, with 11 abstentions.

133. The PRESIDENT: I shall now put the draft resolution as a whole, as amended, to the vote.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 46 votes to 5, with 6 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 10.45 p.m.