



Saturday, 17 March 1951, at 10 a.m.

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President: Mr. Hernán SANTA CRUZ (Chile).

Present: The representatives of the following countries:

Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Iran, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization.

Forced labour and measures for its abolition (E/1884, E/1885 and Corr.1, E/L.104 and E/L.165) (*continued*)

[Agenda item 13]

1. Mr. ARROYO TORRES (Uruguay) said that, although there was no forced labour in Uruguay, his country was extremely concerned about the problem in general since it was convinced that the whole basis of society lay in respect for the dignity of man.

2. His delegation would be prepared to support any proposal which seemed likely to prove effective, and it welcomed the suggestions made by the Canadian delegation (471st meeting) with regard to the implementation of the joint draft resolution (E/L.104). It was extremely important in the first place that the committee to be set up under that draft resolution should be composed of completely impartial and highly qualified persons. It should therefore be composed of three members appointed by the International Labour Organisation, one of whom should represent the governments, one the employers and one the workers. In that connexion, he was very glad to note that ILO had offered to collaborate with the Council in its campaign against forced labour (E/1884).

3. In the second place, an effort should be made to improve upon the provisions of Convention No. 29 adopted by the International Labour Organisation in 1930.

4. Lastly, the committee should prepare a system of sanctions and there should be an agreement that no experts would be accepted from any country which was found guilty of undermining the health and freedom of the workers. His delegation had made a similar proposal to the International Labour Conference, and it was convinced that some form of sanctions should be adopted.

5. Mr. BORIS (France) wished first to reply to some of the charges made against France by the representatives of the USSR and the World Federation of Trade Unions.

6. The USSR representative had mentioned the existence of the pioneer corps in French Equatorial Africa as an example of forced labour. A similar and equally unfounded allegation had been made at the tenth session by the representative of the WFTU. He had himself replied in detail to that accusation, and had showed that the pioneer corps was made up of volunteers who received wages higher than those offered by contractors in the open labour market.¹ He had also, on that occasion, read passages from the real text of the decree dated 6 October 1949, a text which was entirely different from the one quoted at the 365th meeting by the WFTU representative and again during the current session by the USSR representative. For the details of his reply on that point he referred members to the summary record of the 365th meeting of the Council.¹

7. During the current session, the WFTU representative had referred to a report by the ILO Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in an attempt to prove that forced labour still existed in the French overseas territories, on the pretext that no special text had yet been adopted laying down specific punishments for those convicted of using forced labour. In actual fact, however, there was no need for any special text on the subject since the provisions of the Penal Code applied necessarily to persons

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Tenth Session, 365th meeting.*

attempting to use forced labour. The WFTU representative had also given various isolated examples of alleged forced labour in the territories of overseas France. Mr. Boris said that he would not go into all those cases in detail but would simply emphasize that no law had ever succeeded in completely eradicating a crime. The important point was that a law existed banning forced labour, and that anyone who felt he had been wronged could always institute legal proceedings in order to secure the conviction of the offenders.

8. It was significant that the representatives of the WFTU had said nothing whatever about any cases of forced labour which might exist in the countries of Eastern Europe. Since 50 million of the organization's members lived in the USSR, the WFTU could surely have asked them what the situation really was. The representative of France asked once more whether the representatives of the WFTU had questioned the Soviet delegates, whether they had received a reply, and whether they could not, or would not, tell what they had learned.

9. On the one hand, the survivors of the German concentration camps had been filled with consternation when they heard that such a system could exist in a country which had helped to liberate them at the cost of such great sacrifices. On the other hand, the people of France, exposed to communist propaganda which continuously boasted of the achievements of the communist régime, wanted to know at what cost those achievements had been bought. They had been shown only one side of the picture and they wanted to know the other side. If the USSR had agreed to an investigation on the spot as most other countries, including France, had done, everything would have been quite simple. If the investigation had shown that the USSR had been slandered, it would have been a triumph for that country and its friends. The rejection of that proposal had served to transform doubts into assumptions and questions into charges.

10. Nevertheless, the French delegation had consistently approached that painful subject with objectivity. In particular, it had sought to determine whether an absolute prohibition of forced labour was equally applicable to a planned collectivist economy and to a free economy. It had tried scrupulously to elucidate the concepts of forced labour and free choice of employment by sifting through all the emotional factors beclouding the issue.

11. Yet, while recognizing the difficulties and special requirements of a communist régime, he found it unacceptable and inconceivable that the régime should set itself above the indefeasible laws of justice and respect for the human person as specifically stated in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

12. If it were finally proved that a dilemma existed between the capitalist system with its goals and another system under which, while the majority might gain by great economic and social progress, the minority would be reduced to the status of convicts, a very large number of working people would be overwhelmingly

discouraged. By refusing an on-the-spot investigation, the USSR had played into the hands of its enemies.

13. Affidavits which had been produced had convinced the Council that forced labour camps existed in the Soviet Union and that people could be sentenced to corrective labour not only by regular courts, but by mere administrative decisions. Corrective and forced labour institutions were under the control of the State police; they were managed in accordance with a definite financial and industrial plan and a balance sheet of their operations was established. They made profits by deducting from prisoners' wages and by hiring out workers. A portion of the profits was paid as a bonus to the State police officials. They actually constituted a tremendous trust of cheap labour, a network of forced labour camps which were an essential part of the economy and had contributed in large measure to the achievements of which the USSR so often boasted. In the circumstances, it might well be asked whether the labour camps were made to house the criminals or whether the criminals were made to fill the camps.

14. The nature of some of the statements of witnesses and the fact that they all agreed gave grounds to assume, even proved, that persons were most often sentenced to forced labour for purely political reasons and that living conditions in the camps were extremely harsh. It also seemed clear that the number of prisoners was very high and the refusal of the representatives of the USSR to give any figures on the subject served only to confirm that information. The fact that the prison population in the USSR was proportionally ten or twenty times higher than in the democratic countries proved that the régime was characterized by a severity and harshness which could not even be compared with democratic countries; that was part of the other side of the picture which was being concealed.

15. World public opinion made it imperative for the Council to take action. Any action, however, had to have a solid basis and the Council must determine whether it had such a basis; it must define forced labour in the precise terms which led it to condemn that practice and decide the principles on which to found its action.

16. Mr. Boris showed that the definition of forced labour used in the ILO Convention No. 29 of 28 June 1930 was not an adequate basis. It stated simply that forced labour meant work exacted under threat of punishment. Interpreted literally, that definition would apply to any form of work inasmuch as work was always made compulsory under threat of punishment either by the State or simply through unemployment, suffering and hunger.

17. It might be said that forced labour went back as far as Adam and Eve: according to the Book of Genesis, God condemned man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; Saint Paul said that he who did not work would not eat. To the argument that what was involved there was the general obligation to work and not the specific obligation to perform a definite job of work, the reply was that no one entirely free to choose the work he wished to do, under any régime.

18. Although there was no definition of forced labour to provide a solid basis of judgment, it was none the less certain that the concept of forced labour, which was rejected in all conscience, was not purely theoretical and could therefore not escape analysis. It was recognized that there should be a certain amount of freedom in the choice of vocation and in the actual conditions of work. It was admitted that no person should be bound to an enterprise as the serf of the Middle Ages was bound to the land. It was recognized that a charge of forced labour could legitimately be brought when persons who had not been regularly convicted of a crime were subjected to the same treatment as convicts or when that treatment was meted out to such a large proportion of the total population that the victims could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered as justly condemned.

19. When those points of reference had been conceded, a study remained to be made and should be made; that should be the first task of the committee which it was proposed to set up. It should define forced labour in the sense which made it objectionable; in the absence of any other definition, it could only be rejected if it constituted a violation of the principles which the United Nations had been designed to promote and protect in the world: the principles of the Charter and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was a difficult task and could only be accomplished by a very small committee consisting of five members rather than three. The selection of the members was in itself a difficult matter, as the representative of Pakistan had indicated. The French delegation would have preferred to have the Secretary-General, in consultation with ILO, appoint the members. It would have been even better for the Council itself to assume that responsibility. Since, however, ILO had taken certain steps which could not be rescinded, the French delegation was prepared to support the proposal contained in the joint United Kingdom and United States text.

20. After establishing a legal definition of forced labour, the committee should study the legislative provisions or regulations not of a single State, but of all States, with a view to determining whether they permitted or governed forced labour. Those texts could then be denounced and the judgment made of them would be much more valid than that arising from indignation, however justified, which was not based on facts.

21. When the committee had completed that task — and only then — it could decide whether that task could usefully be supplemented by hearing witnesses — and the French delegation was not at all sure of that. Accordingly, the French delegation generally supported the proposal of the United Kingdom and the United States, but thought that it should be supplemented by amendments based on the foregoing considerations.

22. There was no fear that the scope of the committee's action would be unduly restricted. Some might expect spectacular and sensational results. The French delegation preferred to eschew the role of propagandist and partisan.

23. The Council's objective was to improve the living conditions of millions of suffering human beings. To achieve that objective, it was essential to furnish guarantees of absolute objectivity to all quarters, and particularly to those who were eager to seize upon whatever blunders or errors might be committed; it was essential to guarantee irreproachable impartiality and an unshakable will to do justice and nothing but justice.

24. Mr. YIN (China) said that he had little to add to what had already been said on the problem. The threat of forced labour existed, not only in the USSR, but in all the countries under its domination, including communist China. It was used as a means of increasing national production and of political coercion.

25. He recalled the apprehension voiced at an earlier session by a representative of a non-governmental organization, that Soviet domination of the mainland of China would turn that area into another "reservoir" of forced labour. Subsequent events had shown those apprehensions to be justified. Forced labour was one of the most serious problems currently facing the people of the mainland of China.

26. The communist régime at Peking, with the assistance of the Red Army, was rounding up political dissidents or suspects and sending them to concentration or "corrective labour" camps in unbelievably large numbers. Compared with the communist atrocities against politically undesirable persons, however, the problem of forced labour itself seemed insignificant. The problem of atrocities could, however, be dealt with more appropriately by some other organ.

27. Forced labour camps on the mainland of China seemed to resemble closely those in other Soviet-dominated areas as regards the terrible living conditions, exploitation and high death rate of the inmates. He would refrain from citing specific examples in view of the limited time left and the many examples already given by other representatives.

28. There was another form of forced labour in the Soviet-dominated areas of China of which the outside world might perhaps not yet be aware. The practice had become widespread of compelling Chinese labourers, who might have no interest in politics whatsoever, to leave their homes and families for work on new economic or war production projects, possibly thousands of miles away. That practice was intended to break up family ties and to undermine the Chinese social structure so that every individual in the country would be placed at the mercy of the régime through the strict control of food, which a Chinese worker could only obtain by selling his labour where the Communist Party and the Red Army dictated.

29. Although accurate statistics were not available, it was safe to say that the number of Chinese serving in concentration camps or in labour projects of the communist régime amounted to millions. Investigations were being conducted by his government through the limited means still at its disposal and by interested international bodies, and it hoped that a more complete picture of forced labour in Soviet-dominated areas of China would soon be available.

30. The Chinese delegation was prepared to give its full support to the joint draft resolution of the United Kingdom and the United States (E/L.104). The Chinese Government would welcome any fairly constituted international body to investigate the situation in all parts of China, both in those which were under Soviet domination and in free China.

31. Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) said that he hoped that it was for the last time that he would have to speak on the painful problem of forced labour and that a method of dealing with it would be found which would be more effective than public debate.

32. He had listened to a great deal of criticism of conditions in the United Kingdom. Such allegations could more appropriately be dealt with by an impartial committee. There were, however, some points which he could not let pass unanswered.

33. A number of charges had been made against the United Kingdom on the basis of documents and statements which had been correctly quoted. While he disagreed radically with the interpretation which the USSR representative had placed on them, it was the right of every Council member to refer to any document so long as he quoted it faithfully. The WFTU representative's charges, on the other hand, were totally inadmissible as they were based on a deliberate misrepresentation of existing texts, as for example, in the case of the Kenya law on voluntary unemployment. If that representative's accusations against the other countries were as unreliable as those which he had made against the United Kingdom, they were utterly unworthy of comment.

34. The WFTU representative had dwelt at length on alleged cases of serfdom in Latin America. While it was for the countries concerned to answer those accusations, it seemed to him that they fell within the competence of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Slavery, which would be reporting to the Council at its thirteenth session. It was not that the United Kingdom delegation wished to avoid the discussion of the problem; on the contrary, it had itself proposed the setting up of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Slavery at the ninth session of the Council, and was proposing, together with the United States delegation, the establishment of a body to go into the question of forced labour. For the past one hundred and fifty years the United Kingdom had led in the fight against slavery. It made no claim that conditions in its overseas territories, and for that matter in its own territory, were perfect, but progress was being made.

35. Much of the discussion on forced labour had been vague and rather pointless. For example, it could be argued that Belgium was applying forced labour when it required householders to keep the pavement clean in front of their houses. Yet it was clear to everyone that that was not the kind of "forced labour" the Council was discussing, but simply that in that country the inhabitants had to do the work themselves, while in other countries taxes were levied to pay other people to do that work. In certain under-developed territories the same situation prevailed, owing to the fact that currency played a small role in the life of the inhabitants,

who therefore sometimes paid taxes to their local government in kind or in work and were required to perform certain services for the benefit of the community. That was the only way of providing for certain communal services during the transition period from a subsistence to a wage economy. In no way did it constitute a violation of ILO Convention No. 29, which specifically provided for exceptions of that nature. The United Kingdom was a party to that convention, and submitted yearly detailed reports on the question to ILO. It looked forward to the time when those territories would be sufficiently advanced for a regular tax system, as it was obviously easier from an administrative point of view to collect taxes than to induce persons to do certain work for the community. Consequently the charges of forced labour in those territories were unfounded and had been brought for the sole purpose of discrediting the United Kingdom Administration. There were no known violations of the ILO Convention in the United Kingdom overseas territories. If any should be brought to light, the government would take prompt steps to deal with them.

36. What, however, had been the attitude of the USSR towards its colonies, the small nationalities which it called "autonomous" republics? On 26 June 1946 *Izvestia* had published a decree abolishing the Chechen-Ingush and Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics. The decree stated that the abolition had been due to collaboration by part of the population with the German invaders and the fact that the innocent majority had taken no counter-action. The decree indicated that the populations of those republics (700,000 Chechens and 300,000 Crimean Tartars) had been resettled in other parts of the Soviet Union. Assuming for the sake of argument that the French Administration had abolished the colony of Togoland and had resettled the population in other parts of Africa, what would the reaction of the United Nations have been? The same thing had also happened to the Volga Germans and the peoples of the Baltic Republics. During the past years, from 2 to 3 million people had been removed from their homes to the interior of the country and the world had hardly been aware of it. The estimated figures for forced labour in the USSR had been described as preposterous, the argument being that if there were that many persons in forced labour camps, the world would know about it. But were those figures necessarily so ridiculous in view of the mass transfers of the population which had taken place almost unnoticed?

37. Czechoslovakia had accused the United Kingdom of bringing slanderous charges of forced labour against it suddenly in 1949 because it was opposed to the nationalization of Czech industries. There was no reason why the United Kingdom should resent steps which it had itself taken a short time earlier.

38. The United Kingdom's concern regarding forced labour in Czechoslovakia had nothing to do with the nationalization of Czechoslovak industry; its concern had been aroused by law No. 247 promulgated in Czechoslovakia on 25 October 1948, regarding the organization of forced labour camps. Since the United Kingdom was opposed to forced labour, it had

concluded that there was a case for investigation by the United Nations. While he would not enter into a discussion of political systems, he wished to make it clear that the United Kingdom had not associated itself with the United States in the matter of forced labour on account of any similarity in their economic systems, but because both governments were alarmed at the spread of forced labour in the countries dominated by the Soviet Union.

39. The representative of the USSR had similarly described the United Kingdom as a capitalist country. He had also asserted that a free medical service existed only in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Whether or not the United Kingdom was a capitalist country, it also had a free medical system. Its social insurance system moreover covered the entire population, while that of the USSR covered only approximately half of the population. The United Kingdom did not criticize the Soviet Union on that score, since it realized that the United Kingdom was a richer country and could afford services on a scale which the USSR could not as yet afford. The whole subject, however, had been raised as a means of distracting attention from the real subject under discussion.

40. The representative of Pakistan had said that the Council had not agreed on a definition of forced labour. What had been said in the Council seemed to indicate that he was right, but it was clear from what had been left unsaid that every member of the Council was in fact well aware of what forced labour was. Not a single representative of the communist countries had mentioned concentration camps. They had neither admitted nor denied their existence but had spent their time in raising irrelevant issues.

41. The purpose of the lengthy statement by the USSR representative at the 469th meeting was simply to create a gigantic smoke-screen and divert attention from the question at issue. That question was forced labour, which was centred in the Soviet Union but was spreading to other countries as they came under Soviet domination.

42. The USSR representative had dismissed in two or three sentences the grave charges which had been made against his government at several sessions of the Council, saying only that the material submitted by the United Kingdom and other delegations was not objective, but unjust and deliberately calumnious. The material on which the United Kingdom delegation had based its charges, however, consisted almost entirely of official USSR documents. The Corrective Labour Code of the Russian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic, for example, which the United Kingdom delegation had submitted as evidence at the ninth session, was a fantastic and incredible document, but the representative of the Soviet Union did not deny its authenticity. Was it therefore the USSR document which was regarded as unjust and calumnious, or was it the action of the United Kingdom Government in making that document known to the world?

43. He had hoped originally that the debate could be short and to the point, that the Council, without going into details again, would be able to agree that serious

allegations had been made against a number of its members and that a competent and impartial body could therefore be set up to examine those allegations. The representative of the Soviet Union, however, would not agree to that course of action and had tried to confuse the issue. The United Kingdom representative wished, therefore, to recapitulate the main facts on which the charges were founded. He would base his case entirely on official USSR texts and statements which the Soviet Union representative would not dare to question, let alone refute.

44. The USSR representative had said that in capitalist countries all labour was, in a sense, forced labour, since if a man did not work he received no wages. But the position was exactly the same in the Soviet Union, for there too a man received no wages if he did not work. That was not the sense in which the Council was discussing forced labour.

45. Forced labour in the Soviet Union was the central core of both the political and the economic system, and represented something new in the world. It differed in many important respects from chattel slavery and from the penal and penitentiary systems, past or current, of other countries.

46. The USSR representative had argued that the main purpose of the forced labour system in his country was to re-educate the condemned and restore them to the status of useful members of society. But according to volume 29 of the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia*, an official publication of the State Publishing House, it was wrong to regard corrective labour establishments as purely educative or even purely economic establishments, since that view glossed over the element of compulsion and led to a denial of the class question in the application of corrective labour policy, and to a refusal to carry out the task of crushing class-hostile and corruptive elements. The only possible deduction to be made from that authoritative statement was that the main purposes of the system were, in order of importance: to crush class-hostile elements, to serve economic ends, and to re-educate or reindoctrinate the prisoners. Any objective study of the USSR decrees and regulations on the subject of forced labour would confirm the conclusions of the Soviet encyclopaedia.

47. The Corrective Labour Code of the RSSFR, which laid primary emphasis on the crushing of all opposition to the government, bore out those conclusions. The very first paragraph stated that the task of the penal policy of the proletariat during the transition from capitalism to socialism was to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the socialist construction being carried out by it, against encroachments by class-hostile elements and by both *déclassé* and unstable elements among the workers. In paragraph 3 it was stated that the basic types of places of deprivation of liberty were the labour colonies of different kinds to which the condemned were sent in accordance with their labour habits, their degree of class dangerousness, their social position and the success with which they were being corrected.

48. That purpose of crushing hostile elements was carried out with utter ruthlessness and disregard for the most elementary principles of justice. It was not

necessary to have committed an offence. Under article 22 of the Basic Criminal Code of the USSR, exile could be decreed by the State Prosecutor against persons recognized as being socially dangerous, without any criminal proceedings being taken against those persons, and even in cases where they had been acquitted by a court of the charge of committing a specific crime. Under article 58 (1) (c) of the Criminal Code of the RSSFR, published by the Ministry of Justice in Moscow in 1948, members of the family of a member of the USSR armed forces who had fled the country were liable to deprivation of their electoral rights and to exile to Siberia for a period of five years. To punish the members of a man's family for an offence of which they were not only innocent but ignorant was the very travesty of justice: it was sheer terrorism and a violation of the human rights which the United Nations defended.

49. The extracts quoted from USSR documents proved the essential relationship between forced labour and political oppression by the ruling class. Similarly, there could be no doubt of the tremendous role played by forced labour in the economic life of the Soviet Union. It had been of particular value in speeding up the economic development of the more backward and remote areas of the USSR, regions to which it was difficult to persuade men to emigrate, owing to the harsh climate and difficult living conditions. The Council was concerned with furthering economic development in under-developed areas, but not at such a price in terms of human misery. The United Kingdom Government had estimated that more than 10 million persons in the Soviet Union were condemned to forced labour. If that calculation was inaccurate, he invited the USSR representative to present the true figures. The immense size of the forced labour projects was demonstrated by a speech by Mr. Molotov in 1931, in which he had listed a variety of different types of mass projects, including highway and railway construction, the building industry, timber works, stone-quarries, gravel and stone crushing, metallurgical plants, and many others. No other country in the world had enough "criminals" to undertake mass projects in so many different economic fields. The United Kingdom was not proud of its prison population which in the last ten years had averaged between 9,000 and 19,000, but the full total of the forced labourers who had worked on the Baltic-White Sea and the Moscow-Volga canals — only two of the USSR's numerous forced labour projects — must have been at least ten times the entire prison population of England. Other countries would be ashamed of the failure of their social systems if so high a percentage of the population was in prison; but the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* spoke with pride of the tens of thousands employed on the construction of the Baltic-White Sea canal as a brilliant example of the success of the USSR's corrective labour policy.

50. In spite of all the efforts of the USSR representative to distract the Council's attention from the main issue, the spectre of the concentration camp had loomed large throughout the debate — the concentration camp as a means of preserving the power of the ruling class in the Soviet Union, as a means of maintaining discipline among the workers, as a means of developing

the remote areas of the USSR and of providing raw materials for the armaments industry. The concentration camp, the greatest single social evil of the age, was the fundamental problem facing the Council. The charges made against the Soviet Union could not be denied, since they were based entirely on official decrees and statements from the most authoritative official sources. If the USSR representative could not make any adequate reply to the charges, the Council must face its responsibilities with courage and determination.

51. Turning to the two resolutions before the Council, he pointed out that the USSR draft resolution (E/L.165) mentioned the problem of forced labour only once, in the first paragraph; he therefore could not avoid the conclusion that the purpose of the draft resolution was to avert an investigation of forced labour. The Soviet Union proposed the establishment of a large commission to study a wide variety of other problems in the economic field. Since the USSR delegation had itself admitted that an on-the-spot enquiry by such a body would take at least ten years, it was clear that its intention was to defeat the purpose of the enquiry.

52. As regards the joint draft resolution of the United Kingdom and the United States (E/L.104), many attempts had been made to misinterpret that proposal; in particular, the Polish delegation had said (473rd meeting) that its purpose was to promote noisy publicity and propaganda. The United Kingdom delegation repudiated that charge; it would deplore any sensationalism in connexion with the discharge of the committee's task, and hoped that the committee would approach that task quietly and with dignity.

53. He supported the Canadian delegation's suggestion (471st meeting) that the committee should be composed of three men of outstanding quality, but expressed concern regarding the United States delegation's suggestion (470th meeting) that the committee's members should devote at least a year of their time to the task. Such a provision might defeat the purpose of the United States representative since it might well be difficult to persuade men of the necessary quality to serve on the committee if so exacting a time requirement were laid down. The preparatory work, of which there would inevitably be a great deal, could be carried out by the secretariats of the United Nations and ILO. It was unnecessary to make provision for the committee to travel throughout the world; if, however, the USSR were willing to give, before the end of the twelfth session, an indication that it would allow an on-the-spot investigation within its borders, then the draft resolution could be changed materially. On the other hand, if, at the termination of the first part of its work, the committee should feel that such an on-the-spot enquiry was necessary and feasible, it should report to the Council, which could then consider extending its terms.

54. The United Kingdom representative expressed the hope that the joint draft resolution would be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

55. Mr. MAJID (Pakistan) said it was clear that civilized public opinion could not tolerate the existence of forced labour in the world. His delegation had hoped

that the members of the Council would be able to reach agreement on a definition of the term "forced labour" and on the methods by which an investigation should be carried out; it appeared, however, that the attitude of the USSR and certain other delegations would make such agreement impossible.

56. That being the case, he felt that the Council should adopt the procedure set forth in the joint draft resolution of the United Kingdom and the United States, as amended by France, and accordingly, his delegation would support that draft resolution.

57. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) had been impressed by the failure of any of the representatives of the communist States to make any defence against the charges of forced labour which had been brought against them. None of those charges had at any time been refuted; they had simply been ignored. The representative of Czechoslovakia had merely claimed that the United States delegation had placed too broad an interpretation on Czechoslovak laws; while the Polish representative had never denied the existence of forced labour camps nor the charges made concerning living conditions in those camps. The Council could not but draw the conclusion, therefore, that the charges still stood.

58. The representatives of the communist countries had endeavoured to divert the Council's attention from the agenda item under discussion by speaking at length on many other subjects. Those largely irrelevant remarks fell into three main categories.

59. First, they had repeatedly charged that the accusations brought against them were part of a concentrated effort on the part of the United States of America to plunge the world into a new war. The United States representative protested against such a base and despicable allegation, which was entirely unfounded. It was well known that the government and people of his country ardently desired peace; they had undertaken the current rearmament programme with the greatest reluctance, having been forced to the conclusion that the Governments of the USSR and the Soviet-dominated States had no real desire for peace — as shown by their record of aggression in Greece, China, Korea, Indo-China and Tibet — but only a lust for power, and that the peoples of the free world must be strong if they were to be in a position to maintain and safeguard the peace.

60. Secondly, the representatives of the communist States had endeavoured to twist the Council's debate into a comparison between the capitalist and communist systems. At the previous meeting the representative of Poland had quoted a statement by Karl Marx made eighty-three years previously concerning the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system, and had tried to show that all the conditions which would produce that collapse existed in the United States. Karl Marx was a penetrating thinker and a realist. If he lived today he would be the first to adjust his theories to contemporary facts. By contrast, the representative of Poland perverted his facts to adjust them to his theories and thus only proved that both his facts and his theories were false.

61. The representative of Czechoslovakia, pursuing the same comparison of the two systems, had spoken of conditions in his country before the beginning of the communist régime (472nd meeting). Mr. Kotschnig had known Czechoslovakia well during the period between the two world wars, when it had been a flourishing and happy country and a model democracy, under the leadership of Thomas Masaryk, a great champion of justice and freedom; he regretted that its rulers should find it necessary to belittle and disparage that happy period in their own history. As regards Czechoslovakia's much-vaunted new freedom from foreign exploitation and domination, he drew attention to the existence of the joint companies by means of which the USSR controlled and exploited a large part of the economies of the so-called peoples' democracies. The Soviet Union had no capital of its own invested in those companies; its contributions came from so-called German assets taken over in the countries in question, although in Hungary and Romania the assets acquired had been greatly in excess of any assets ever owned by Germans in those countries. Soviet citizens held the key positions in those companies; and the companies received preferential treatment in the matter of access to raw materials and foreign exchange, and tax exemption, as well as extensive rights in the exploitation of the country's natural resources. The USSR was guaranteed an annual profit, regardless of the company's earnings. He gave details of the operations of two such companies in Yugoslavia, one for river navigation, the other for civil aviation.

62. The third way in which the representatives of the communist States had endeavoured to turn the debate away from the subject of forced labour was by citing isolated instances of undesirable practices in other countries and generalizing on the basis of those instances. They had drawn a wildly distorted picture of conditions in the United States by dwelling at length on the migrant labour question and on a few isolated cases of lynching and racial discrimination. The United States had never claimed to be a country free from flaws; on the contrary, it recognized that racial discrimination still existed within its borders, and was doing its utmost, through all the means at its command, to wipe out that discrimination. It was a long and slow process, but progress was being made. As far as lynchings were concerned, it should be sufficient for the Council to note that only one lynching had occurred in 1947 and two in 1948, one of a white man and one of a Negro. Far from being hidden from the world, those disgraceful occurrences and legal actions against those crimes had received extensive publicity in American newspapers. He thought it unnecessary to comment on the migrant labour question, in view of the statement made by the representative of Mexico on that subject.

63. As regards the current loyalty programme in the United States, which had also been the subject of adverse comment, he expressed astonishment that such comment should come from countries with a well known record of bloody political purges, countries where appointment to high political office was often tantamount to a death warrant. The United States had had no purges, but it had a clear duty to protect itself and its

citizens against the highly developed communist system of working from within in its efforts to overthrow governments. Moreover, it should be noted that out of a total of 2 million United States civil servants, less than 300 had been dismissed in the course of the loyalty programme.

64. As regards the statements made in connexion with the Taft-Hartley Act, he merely wished to state that that Act was in no way relevant to the forced labour problem. It in no way interfered with the right of the workers to seek and hold jobs.

65. It had been stated repeatedly that living standards in the United States, and particularly those of the workers, were deteriorating. The United States representative answered that charge by quoting the following figures: average weekly wages had risen from \$16.75 in 1933 to \$54.92 in 1949, while average real wages had increased from \$18.11 weekly in 1933 to \$35.52 in 1950. Moreover, that increase in wages had been accompanied by a progressive decline in the number of hours worked per week. Such statistics were the best indication of the absurdity of the charge made.

66. As regards the two draft resolutions before the Council, his delegation could accept the French proposal as an amendment to the joint draft resolution.

67. With respect to the statement of the United Kingdom representative, the United States delegation had not intended to suggest that the proposed committee should sit continuously for one year, but only that its activities might have to cover a total period of one year. He agreed that much of the preparatory work could be done by the competent secretariats.

68. In reply to a question from the PRESIDENT, Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) said that his delegation would also accept the French amendment.

69. The PRESIDENT, in reply to a question by Mr. BERNSTEIN (Chile), said that the note from the Ambassador of Ecuador to Chile refuting the allegations made by the WFTU regarding the existence of forced labour in Ecuador² would be circulated shortly to the members of the Council.

Tribute to Mr. Laugier on the occasion of his resignation

70. The PRESIDENT said it was with deep regret that he had to inform the Council that it was the last occasion on which Mr. Henri Laugier would attend one of its meetings in the capacity of Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Social Affairs. After five years of service he was resigning from that post, which he had fulfilled with great zeal, devotion, efficiency and distinction. The Council would not wish to let him go without an expression of its gratitude and appreciation.

71. Mr. Laugier had brought to his post a combination of qualities of vital importance to the United Nations — an unshakeable spirit of internationalism and a firm resolve to serve the cause of peace and human

brotherhood. He had carried out his duties with an efficiency and integrity which were exemplary. Beneath his apparent irony and scepticism he cherished an unwavering faith in human destiny and progress through spiritual growth and the advance of science, and in the attainment of harmony between nations through both national and international action. That faith, served by his deep humanist culture and scientific experience, had governed all his work in the United Nations. It had guided many United Nations activities, including the drafting and adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which might perhaps be the most positive achievement of the Economic and Social Council and of the United Nations as a whole.

72. His departure was a serious loss to the United Nations. He had brought honour both to the Organization and to his native country — France, the high qualities of which he so eminently represented.

73. His departure was also a personal loss for the President. Mr. Laugier was a personal friend, whom he respected and admired and whose advice had always been of inestimable value, particularly at times when he had been charged with functions of responsibility in the General Assembly or the Council. He was sparing with his praise but was always ready to offer sound and constructive criticism.

74. He wished to express to Mr. Laugier the gratitude of the Council and of all the countries represented on it and to extend to him every wish for success in the activities he was to undertake in his own country. He hoped that in one form or another Mr. Laugier would continue to be associated with the Council's work; he had no doubt that in heart and spirit he would always be close to the United Nations.

75. Mr. LAUGIER (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Social Affairs) said he had been deeply moved by the tribute just paid to him by the President of the Council. His decision to resign after five years in the United Nations and to return to the service of France had been of his own making and had been taken after long reflection. He wished to thank all delegations, both past and present, for their unfailing co-operation and indulgence in the execution of what had sometimes been a thankless and difficult task.

76. His resignation from the United Nations would release him from the restrictions imposed by his oath of impartiality; as a man who had always eschewed neutrality and stood by his convictions, that oath had sometimes proved difficult to observe. He would, however, always continue to serve the cause of social progress in peace, justice and liberty and would exert every effort to promote a dynamic expansion of the activities of the United Nations in a world in which international action was of ever-increasing importance. If millions of human beings were leading lives which were unworthy of human dignity, it was in part because the United Nations, after five years of existence, was not yet strong enough to impose the universal desire for peace and progress on the peoples of the whole world. It was his hope that the United Nations would increasingly become the conscience of mankind and would place itself at the service of man's struggle for the liberation of man.

² Subsequently issued as document E/1959.

77. He wished to thank the staff of his Department for their loyal and devoted service. It was to them that the credit for the work of his Department properly belonged.

78. His departure from the United Nations opened a new page in his life. He would continue to devote all his strength to the struggle against the terrible possibility of a new and stupid war at the very moment when the golden age was in sight.

79. Mr. CHANG (China) said that he felt a keen sense of loss at the imminent departure of Mr. Laugier, with whom it had been his privilege to be associated for the past five years. Mr. Laugier's scientific achievements were too well-known to call for comment. He had known Mr. Laugier personally as an international civil servant, who had given his very best to that service. It was a consolation to know that his services would not be lost to international endeavour. The United Nations often tended to become swamped with documents and to lose sight of reality but Mr. Laugier's foresight and his warm and sympathetic personality had been one of his most valuable contributions to the United Nations.

80. Mr. LUBIN (United States of America) said there was no need to recall Mr. Laugier's accomplishments and his contribution to the cause which the United Nations had been set up to serve. He would be remembered not so much as an Assistant Secretary-General but as a great human being, who always saw the human element in every problem. He did not think solely in terms of material progress but of music, poetry, art and humour. He was in fact a humanitarian in the broadest sense of the word. Mr. Laugier's departure led him to express the hope that the United Nations would institute periodic reunions of those who had worked together at some time within it, so that the representatives of the Member States might again have the pleasure of the company of Mr. Laugier.

81. Mr. CABADA (Peru) wished to express both his own personal regret and that of his Government at Mr. Laugier's resignation. Mr. Laugier's work and his devotion to the people of Latin America had won him the highest esteem in Peru; he had been granted an honorary degree by the Faculty of Medicine as a tribute to his achievements. Mr. Laugier represented a perfect combination of scientific knowledge and humanitarian ideals, a combination which was traditional in the country he so eminently represented. It was to be hoped that his future work would bring him into contact with the United Nations and that his resignation would not sever his contact with the Organization.

82. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) said that his association with Mr. Laugier in the United Nations had been a very happy one. He had learned to appreciate Mr. Laugier's knowledge, wisdom and burning desire for social justice. In his capacity as Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Laugier had always striven to ensure that the Council's work should be in accordance with the high ideals for which the United Nations had been established. He had brought to that work all that he had: his great knowledge, administrative ability,

experience of social affairs, humanitarian approach to all problems and his unceasing fight for a new and better society.

83. Mr. Laugier's departure should not be regarded as symbolical or be interpreted to mean that he had failed in the mission he had set himself. The Polish delegation still believed in that mission. It was certain that, wherever he was, Mr. Laugier would always find time to give the United Nations his help and advice.

84. Baron VAN DER STRATEN-WAILLET (Belgium) wished to associate his delegation in the tributes paid by previous speakers to Mr. Laugier, whose resignation was a grave loss to the United Nations. He admired Mr. Laugier as a great citizen of the world, a great European and a great citizen of France; he was always a staunch champion of French culture and the French language. It was some consolation to know that he would continue his work for the cause to which he had given so much while he was in the United Nations.

85. Mr. CREPAULT (Canada) also wished to associate his delegation with the tributes paid to Mr. Laugier by other speakers. Canada had had the privilege of having Mr. Laugier in its midst for a number of years and knew that he had a special affection for that country. The Canadian delegation deeply regretted Mr. Laugier's departure; the United Nations' loss would be the gain of those with whom he would be associated in future. Wherever he was, however, he would undoubtedly remain one of the staunchest champions of the United Nations.

86. Mr. BADALYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed his delegation's regret at Mr. Laugier's departure and its best wishes for the success of his future work. It hoped that Mr. Laugier would always be connected with the noble purpose for which the United Nations had been established — the promotion of international peace and security.

87. Mr. REYES (Philippines) associated himself with the expressions of regret at Mr. Laugier's resignation and wished him every success in his future work. The United Nations was losing an invaluable worker for peace at time when his services were sorely needed. It was some comfort, however, to know that his services would continue to be devoted to the cause he had served in the United Nations.

88. Mr. KHOCHBIN (Iran) said that the President had voiced the feelings of all the members of the Council. Mr. Laugier's great achievements had laid the basis for the work of his successor. Though he was leaving the United Nations for other work, it was to be hoped that he would never leave it in spirit.

89. Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) felt sure that after all the oratory to which Mr. Laugier had been subjected in the Council, he would not wish to listen to another lengthy speech. He merely wished Mr. Laugier to know with what sadness he said good-bye not only to a devoted servant of the United Nations but to a very dear friend.

90. Mr. BOBIS (France) wished to pay a tribute to Mr. Laugier, on the occasion of his departure from the

United Nations, both as a compatriot and as a friend of some thirty years whom he sincerely loved for his idealism, his love of justice and peace, and his opposition to conformity and preconceived notions.

91. Mr. BERNSTEIN (Chile) warmly endorsed the preceding tributes to Mr. Laugier on his outstanding contribution to the work of the United Nations. Mr. Laugier would always be remembered for his intelligence, vast culture, wit, kindness and humanitarian spirit. The United Nations could at least take comfort in the fact that if it lost a great man and international civil servant, France, which had always served the interests of humanity, would gain a great statesman.

92. Sir Ramaswami MUDALIAR (India) associated himself with the President in paying a tribute to the great human and intellectual qualities of Mr. Laugier. He was one of those who carried the weight of learning lightly, and combined profound wisdom with cheerfulness and charm. It was sometimes said that the people who worked for the United Nations did so because of the favourable working conditions, high pay

and opportunities for travel. That was not the case. He knew many international civil servants who took their work and the cause of the United Nations very much to heart, and who were distressed and sometimes ready to resign when they found that the purposes of the United Nations were not being carried out. He wished to pay a tribute to those devoted workers in the person of Mr. Laugier who, as he well knew from his long association with him, was an outstanding example of that kind of civil servant.

93. He was glad to know that Mr. Laugier was leaving the United Nations not because he had lost faith in the United Nations, but because he felt that he could serve the cause even better in greater freedom. He would therefore bid him farewell in the hope that the parting would not be final.

94. Mr. BROHI (Pakistan), Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia), Mr. SANGUINETTI (Uruguay) and Mr. MICHANEK (Sweden) associated their delegations with the tributes paid to Mr. Laugier.

The meeting rose at 2.50 p.m.