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President: Mr. Juan I. COOKE (Argentina).

Present:

The representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, France, India, Norway, Pakistan, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Observers from the following countries: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Netherlands.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Forced labour: reports of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour (E/2153, E/2276, E/2341, E/2431 and Add.1 to 8, E/L.588/Rev.1) (continued)

[Agenda item 14]

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the campaign for which the question of forced labour had been made a pretext was part of the psychological warfare conducted by the United States of America: it was not by chance that the report which the representative of the United States had described as impartial, original and scientifically accurate reproduced whole chapters of a pamphlet on forced labour in the Soviet Union published in 1952 by the State Department. In the circumstances it was not surprising that the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour (E/2431) was full of lies and slanderous statements regarding the USSR and the peoples' democracies.

Nor was it surprising that it was the United States delegation that had taken the initiative in submitting the question and the report to the Council for consideration. The purpose of that manoeuvre was threefold. In the first place, it was an attempt to distract the Council's attention from economic issues which were assuming paramount importance at the current time, in particular the question of the expansion of international trade and the elimination of obstacles to the development of commercial relations between the various countries, a question of great concern to the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The United States,

which was responsible for all the measures designed to destroy vital and traditional commercial ties, was seeking to evade the growing pressure of those countries which were anxious that such obstacles should be removed. Secondly, by using the opportunity to make slanderous attacks on the USSR, United States ruling circles hoped to halt the progress made towards a reduction in international tension and to prevent the Council from concentrating its efforts on the solution of such problems as the establishment of economic and cultural co-operation between countries, whatever their economic and political structure. Finally, it sought to divert the attention of the working classes of the capitalist countries, and of the United States of America in particular, from the steady deterioration in their material conditions and the fall in standards of living caused by the armaments race, higher taxes, rising unemployment and the destruction of commercial ties throughout the world.

3. The membership of the *Ad Hoc* Committee was sufficient in itself to show why the Committee had not done its work impartially since to do so it would have had to study working conditions throughout the world and, consequently, in the capitalist countries, and to give particular attention to the situation in the United States of America where the workers were being ruthlessly exploited by the capitalist monopolies. In fact, the members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee, which the United States had sought to use as an instrument in the "cold war" that was all the more convenient because it was used under cover of the United Nations, were persons who knew nothing about labour problems, the working classes and the working-class movement. The only experience which the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee had had in that field had been in 1947 when he had had two trade-union leaders imprisoned and his action had led to a three-week protest strike in which millions of workers had taken part. It was obvious that the members of the Committee had been selected in such a way as to ensure that it would be capable of giving currency to any slanders whatsoever concerning the USSR and the peoples' democracies, whilst turning a blind eye to facts which proved that forced labour was widespread in the United States.

4. The United States representative had given a few striking examples of the so-called information as a result of which forced labour had been placed on the Council's agenda. He had repeated mere rumours and cited statements by former convicts or United States agents who had fled from Albania. It was obvious that such individuals were prepared to spread any kind of slander about the USSR or the peoples' democracies. It was, however, on testimony of that kind that the *Ad Hoc* Committee's report was based.

5. A few examples were sufficient to illustrate the degree of bias shown by the *Ad Hoc* Committee in drawing up its report (E/2431). In paragraph 433 of the report reference was made to article 37 of the Labour Code of the RSFSR. Under that article workers could be transferred from one undertaking to another for a

period not exceeding one month if industrial conditions rendered it necessary; in such cases they continued to receive their former wages. However, in the version given in the report only the words "if industrial conditions rendered it necessary" had been translated exactly. The rest of article 37 was given in a free translation according to which workers could be transferred "compulsorily"—the Labour Code contained no such provision—and persons refusing to be transferred could be prosecuted for a breach of labour discipline, which was untrue. If such a refusal was in fact regarded as a breach of labour discipline, it did not result in criminal proceedings or penalties.

6. Under the Act of 27 June 1936 a pregnant woman could ask to be transferred to less tiring work while retaining her former wage. Yet on page 528 the authors of the report alleged that women workers could be transferred without their consent to another job as a result of pregnancy. What was more, the report attributed that statement to a Soviet publication on labour legislation which of course said nothing of the kind. Only a person with blind hatred of the Soviet Union and a vivid imagination could regard that guarantee, which was an expression of the Soviet States' desire to protect the mother and child, as a form of compulsion.

7. It was stated on page 452 that legislation dated 20 December 1938 had introduced work books in which breaches of labour discipline committed by the holder were inscribed; the statement was absolutely untrue. In fact, under that law, only rewards and commendations earned by the worker were entered in the work book and no entries were made regarding breaches of discipline. He repeated the protest made by his delegation at the eighth session of the General Assembly against the fact that the authors of the report attempted to give the impression that their findings were based on Soviet texts and publications, which they deliberately distorted, by replacing certain words by others, by mutilating quotations and by taking provisions out of their context.

8. The protest addressed to the members of the Council on 1 March 1954 by the eminent scholar, Mr. Stetson Kennedy, clearly showed that the *Ad Hoc* Committee's report had been prepared on the instructions of the State Department with the object of stirring up international hatred, and was based on lies that could have no place in an objective report on conditions of employment in the various countries. In that communication Mr. Stetson Kennedy protested officially against the deliberately distorted information given in the *Ad Hoc* Committee's report. He pointed out that the *Ad Hoc* Committee had not seen fit to consider the numerous facts in the memorandum entitled *Forced Labor in the United States of America* which he had submitted to the Committee, in the statement he had made before the Committee and in the supplementary documents he had submitted. Mr. Stetson Kennedy stated that the *Ad Hoc* Committee had from the start shown more interest in individual cases than in the fate of the 5 million victims of forced labour in the United States, that it had been ready to accept legislation prohibiting forced labour at its face value although it had been proved that the legislation was not being obeyed, and that it had sought to ignore the abuses to which the enforcement of the legislation on conscription, immigration and employment gave rise. The Committee had decided to hold private meetings and had

stated that the report would indicate the precise documentary and other evidence upon which its conclusion had been based; Mr. Stetson Kennedy accused the Committee of having failed to keep its word. The Committee had not included in its report any of the points made in Mr. Stetson Kennedy's statement before the Committee or in the documents he had submitted to it. In the rare instances in which the Committee had referred to his statement, it had ignored a great many very serious allegations or had presented them in such a way as to give the impression that they were not worthy of consideration.

9. In the case of certain other countries, on the other hand, it had found room in its report for very full documentation and testimony without regard to the fact that it was out of date, incomplete and totally unfounded. By treating Mr. Stetson Kennedy's allegations in that way, the Committee had obviously saved the United States Government the trouble of having to reply to them. The Committee had had sufficient official documents in its possession to satisfy itself that forced labour existed both *de jure* and *de facto* in the United States, but it had chosen to ignore them, and to confine itself to the consideration of legislation which was of only theoretical value. Mr. Stetson Kennedy was asking the Council to request the Committee to hand over its complete files, including its correspondence with the United States Government, in order to determine the extent to which the discriminatory attitude it had adopted towards the documents submitted might have been due to an understanding with the State Department.

10. He also protested against the conclusions stated by the Committee in paragraphs 520 and 528 of its report and asked the Council to examine the evidence he had personally submitted to the Committee and the ample documentation on the matter available in public libraries. In connexion with paragraph 528, he pointed out that the *Ad Hoc* Committee had glossed over certain passages of the report of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor. The Commission had stated, for instance, that in order to ensure that the "wet-back" would stay as long as his services were required, all or part of his wages was withheld and matters were so arranged that he was in debt to the store operated by his employer, which, the Commission had stressed, in effect resulted in a state of peonage. The Commission had also stated that at one time the immigration and naturalization departments had been subjected to pressure to persuade them to instruct local officials not to deport workers until the end of the harvest.

11. Similarly, with regard to the imposition of forced labour on individuals coming from other countries (paragraph 529 of the report), the use of vagrancy laws to force certain individuals to work (paragraph 542) and the allegations that the military conscription law was used to force Negroes into servitude (paragraph 545), the Committee stated that no precise allegation had been made, that it had no information, and that the Government concerned knew of no instance in which the provision in question had been illegally used. However, Mr. Stetson Kennedy had supplied the *Ad Hoc* Committee with ample evidence regarding those allegations drawn from official documents, such as the report of the President's Commission, or from Press files. Mr. Stetson Kennedy expressed doubt as to the integrity of the members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee and pointed out in particular that, in dealing

with such countries as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and Spain, the Committee used such formulas as "these laws . . . could be employed to form the basis of a system of forced labour . . ." (paragraph 542) but in dealing with certain other countries, such as the USSR, it had stated its findings in a much more categorical fashion. Mr. Stetson Kennedy considered that the *Ad Hoc* Committee's methods were unacceptable since, while alleging that in the USSR freedom of employment was subject to restrictions likely to lead to a system of forced labour, it rejected the conclusive facts indicating a negation of freedom of employment in the United States. For the Council's information, Mr. Stetson Kennedy had attached to his letter the memoranda he had submitted to the *Ad Hoc* Committee and the text of his statement before the Committee. In conclusion, Mr. Stetson Kennedy had stated that he was under the surveillance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, although the United States Government had promised to co-operate with the Committee, and emphasized that he considered it his duty to lay the true facts before the Council because the *Ad Hoc* Committee had done its best to hide them.

2. In view of the importance of the question before the Council, the USSR delegation considered that Mr. Stetson Kennedy's protest and all the documents he had submitted to the *Ad Hoc* Committee should be issued as official Council documents. It was important that members of the Council should study them very closely before voting on a draft resolution and the discussion might usefully be adjourned for some days to enable them to do so.

3. The United States representative had made slanderous attacks on the USSR in order to hide from the public the fact that human rights, fundamental freedoms and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter were daily being trampled underfoot in the United States of America and that the United States delegation was doing everything in its power to prevent the drafting of the international covenants on human rights, which the United States would refuse to ratify. Furthermore, the former Secretary of Labor, Mr. Martin P. Durkin, had stated, when submitting his resignation, that American workers were unable to exercise their civil and political rights, which was a serious threat to democracy. The United States Government had also refused to ratify the Genocide Convention. It felt free to accuse other members of the United Nations of violating human rights but was itself refusing to enter into commitments to defend those rights. Thus, the United States Government had voted against the proposals submitted by the USSR to prohibit every type of discrimination, to include in the covenants a clause providing that the right to work was guaranteed by the State to secure for women the same employment opportunities as were enjoyed by men, to guarantee them equal pay for equal work, to prevent exploitation of child labour by providing for the prosecution of offenders, to guarantee the right to strike, to prohibit fascist organizations and to secure the equality of all before the law. Those few instances were sufficient to make plain the motives by which the United States was really guided.

4. All the USSR proposals on human rights, to which the United States representatives had so strenuously objected, in fact merely reaffirmed the provisions of chapters X and XI of the USSR Constitution, which

secured the enjoyment of those rights to tens of millions of Soviet citizens. It was well known that the exploitation of man by man had long since been eliminated in the Soviet Union.

15. The basic economic law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was to satisfy the material and cultural needs of society to the maximum by continuously increasing socialist production and by technical improvement. The well-being and development of socialist society and the steady raising of the workers' standard of living were based on the free labour and creative efforts of the workers, the collective farm workers and the representatives of the Soviet *élite*. Under the USSR Constitution the right to work was ensured by the socialist organization of the national economy, the steady growth of the productive forces and the elimination of the possibility of economic crises; manual and office workers in the USSR had no reason to fear unemployment, poverty and economic insecurity.

16. Comparison of the State budgets of the United States of America and of the USSR showed that the Soviet Union allocated only 17.8 per cent of its budget to military expenditure, which was being steadily reduced, while the United States was allocating 87 per cent of its total budget to military expenditure. Appropriations for social services represented 26.3 per cent of the Soviet budget and only 3.7 per cent of the United States budget. Medical care was provided free for manual and office workers in the Soviet Union, while in the United States workers were obliged to devote a very large part of their income to that purpose.

17. The authors of the report had tried to whitewash the capitalist countries by proving that forced labour did not exist in them while slandering the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies. They had been careful not to examine working conditions in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and many other countries. The three-member Committee had deliberately hidden from the United Nations the existence of forced labour and slavery in the British colonies. While slandering the German Democratic Republic, the members of the Committee had completely ignored the appalling working conditions existing in Western Germany and Italy. The Committee had refrained from making a detailed analysis of the statements on forced labour in the United States and the restrictions imposed on labour unions by the Taft-Hartley Act and had made no effort to inquire into the forced labour which that Act had in reality made into a legitimate practice. It had merely stated that such matters were outside its terms of reference. It had completely ignored such matters as the exploitation of child labour, wage discrimination against women, racial discrimination against the Negro population in the United States, and the forced labour of Mexicans and other foreign workers, particularly displaced persons. The authors of the report had not even hesitated to state that it had not been proved that Negroes in the United States were subject to racial discrimination or forced labour (paragraphs 519 and 520 of the report).

18. Whenever concrete evidence had been brought to its notice, as for example of the placing of convicts at the disposal of private enterprises in the State of Arkansas, the Committee had merely said that such practices did not play a significant part in the economy of the country (paragraph 535). It had made similar statements with regard to peonage, servitude for

debt and other forms of forced labour in the United States. Yet, the existence of forced labour was the result of an economic system in which the worker owned none of the means of production, was entirely dependent on the owner of those means and had no right to the product of his own work. It followed that forced labour existed wherever the land, the mills, factories, mines, banks, railways and all the other means of production belonged to a small number of private persons. In those countries millions of manual and clerical workers had to work not for themselves but for a handful of millionaires and multi-millionaires. They had no chance of choosing work they liked or of working for their own account. Owing to the intolerable economic conditions which characterized that economic system, the workers were forced to accept any employment at whatever pay was offered, which was tantamount to accepting forced labour. Forced labour also existed wherever the living standards of the working masses were systematically lowered through increases in the price of essential foods, rising taxes and rents, rising unemployment, inflation, lower salaries and other means, wherever social insurance was non-existent and workers could not, in practice, rest and take care of themselves. In all those countries the manual and clerical workers were living under the constant threat of losing their jobs and often had to accept ridiculously low wages, intolerable working conditions and unscrupulous exploitation. Forced labour existed in countries where by virtue of the legislation in force the manual and clerical workers could not exercise their political, economic and social rights and were directly dependent on employers who brought pressure to bear on them in every way. Any labour which workers were forced to perform under conditions not far removed from serfdom was forced labour. It was well known that such conditions existed in many countries, particularly in the Colonial and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

19. There was no doubt that forced labour was particularly in evidence in the United States of America, the greatest capitalist country in the world. The economic conditions of American workers had steadily worsened as a result of the concentration of capital in the hands of capitalists, whose policy tended to militarize the economy. Prices, taxes, rents and the cost of public utility services were continually increasing in that country. At the same time wages were frozen and could not catch up with the rise in the cost of living. Despite that, as Mr. Herman Eberharter, Representative for the State of Pennsylvania, had pointed out, the workers had to bear the cost of the "cold war", which already amounted to 50,000 million dollars a year. Mr. Tsarapkin then quoted American Press reports to the effect that there were at the moment four million unemployed and more than eight and one-half million workers on part-time in the United States, and that the figures of unemployed might well reach seven million.

20. Statistics of industrial accidents in the United States of America also supplied interesting information about the hardships of American workers. A resolution adopted by the Congress of Industrial Organizations indicated that the increase in the number of fatal accidents was due to the intensification of work which had followed the outbreak of the Korean War. The Bureau of Labor of the United States Department of Labor had reported that in 1952 more than two million

industrial accidents, 15,000 of them fatal, had occurred in the United States, whilst 84,000 workers had been permanently disabled and 1,500 completely incapacitated for work. Accidents had become especially frequent in the United States mining industry; Mr. Tsarapkin quoted figures published in the *United Mine Workers' Journal*.

21. American legislation particularly the Taft-Hartley Act, tended to perpetuate such labour conditions in the United States. The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour had refused to discuss the law, maintaining that it had nothing to do with forced labour. Yet the experience gained in recent years had shown that that Act was directed against the workers and was in reality a punitive law designed to perpetuate forced labour in the United States. Even the most reactionary American trade-union leaders had admitted that fact. After quoting statements by the late Mr. William Green, until his death President of the American Federation of Labor, and by Congressman Robert C. Byrd criticizing the Taft-Hartley Act, Mr. Tsarapkin pointed out that it was not the only one of its kind and was closely linked to anti-labour legislation, such as the Smith Act and the Walter-McCarran Act, which deprived the workers of the most elementary political rights. It was common knowledge that the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act had encouraged the state administrations to enact similar laws, many of which were more brutal than the federal law. Recent developments showed, however that the United States Government was in no way disposed to repeal or even to amend what American politicians themselves had described as punitive and slavery legislation.

22. Accordingly it was not surprising that such so-called labour legislation should lead to discrimination on the grounds of race, sex and nationality. Fifteen million Negroes in the United States were subjected to the most flagrant discrimination and were in fact living in a state of servitude. They were considered as an inferior race and their chances of obtaining employment were extremely limited.

23. The United States Government had itself admitted that Negroes were liable to unscrupulous exploitation. In that connexion he quoted from a report of the Senate Sub-Committee concerned with labour relations, which had brought out the fact that Negroes had a higher mortality and a shorter expectation of life than Whites. The number of unemployed amongst Negroes was 50 per cent greater than amongst Whites; their annual income was also lower than that of the Whites and the gap was widening. In 1953 in the State of Alabama a farm had even been discovered where corporal punishment was inflicted on Negro workers.

24. In 1951, the Workers Defence League had defined seven types of forced labour in the United States of America: (1) peonage, or servitude for debt and even slavery pure and simple; (2) exploitation of immigrant labour by means of contracts signed in advance and exploitation of illegal immigrants, such as the Mexican agricultural workers; (3) exploitation of convict labour; (4) exploitation of persons detained in mental clinics; (5) wartime exploitation of aliens, citizens of Japanese origin and conscientious objectors; (6) exploitation of certain Indian tribes; and (7) compulsory work under judicial decisions forbidding strikes.

25. The legislation enacted in the United States in 1953 to provide for the admission of 240,000 European refugees was sufficient proof of the existence of forced contracts.

26. The American Press was publishing daily reports of Mexican forced labour in the United States. According to *The New York Times* of 18 August 1953 the United States Attorney General, Mr. Herbert Brownell, had said that the exploitation of Mexican agricultural workers in California offered many opportunities to racketeers, dope traffickers and other lawless elements and that there was concern for the high rate of tuberculosis amongst those workers. Those using the "wet-backs" would not only pay lower wages but evaded requirements for medical examination. Mr. Brownell had further noted that no country was doing enough to put an end to that situation.

27. United States monopolies moreover were taking advantage of the exploitation of more than a million Mexican workers to put pressure on American labour and reduce wages. The trade-union organizations of the United States were therefore protesting against the recruitment of Mexican agricultural workers. A delegation of the AF of L and the CIO had been to see Mr. Brownell to protest against the agreement relating to the employment of migrant workers entered into between the United States of America and Mexico and had pointed out that it offered little hope of solving the economic and social problems resulting from the legal immigration of Mexican workers. In their opinion it would merely give the colour of legality to that immigration, and by allowing United States farmers to exploit such labour cheaply, would depress the wages of American workers in the regions where Mexicans were employed.

28. That was the existing situation in the United States of America. The same conditions could be found in many other capitalist countries including the United Kingdom, Australia and the colonial and Non-Self-governing Territories. What he had said about conditions in the capitalist countries on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other clearly showed that the rapporteur and the other members of the Committee had distorted the available facts and made slanderous statements.

29. During the current session of the Economic and Social Council the United States had prevented the Council from studying questions relating to the development of international trade relations, which would certainly help to reduce political tension. But that was precisely what United States reactionary circles feared. The United States delegation had therefore obliged the Economic and Social Council to study the question of forced labour, and in so doing had undoubtedly meant to poison international relations and foster hatred between nations. The reactionary policy of the United States was designed to disrupt economic and trade relations throughout the world, to intensify the racial psychosis, to prevent States from putting their relations on a normal footing and to prepare for a new world war by operations from which the American interests would derive immense profits. In that completely abnormal economic and political situation the United States was hoping to tighten its grip on the economic and political life of a large number of countries in Europe and Asia.

30. The USSR delegation considered that the Economic and Social Council should not allow itself to be deflected from its basic task, which was to promote the economic, social and cultural progress of nations and peaceful international co-operation. That was why his delegation would vote against any draft resolution the object of which was to express approval of the work and report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour.

31. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) felt bound to reply to the statement made at the 785th meeting by the Cuban representative, which had demonstrated that all that representative's assertions were merely a tissue of lies and slander.

32. Ever since he had taken his seat on the Council in 1952 the Cuban representative had taken advantage of the debate on the world economic situation to insult and slander the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Now, he was again trying to poison the atmosphere of the Council's deliberations by speeches in the same vein, the only difference being that his attacks on Czechoslovakia had become even more hysterical in their violence. He (Mr. Nosek) would not go into the substance of those statements, since all the Council members had no doubt already formed an opinion regarding them.

33. The Cuban representative had asserted that his position was different from Mr. Nosek's. That was undeniable, but the difference was not the one mentioned. It lay in the fact that the Cuban representative was obliged to follow the instructions of a single person, whereas Mr. Nosek had the great honour of speaking in the name of the Czechoslovak Government, which was truly representative; the Cuban representative obeyed the orders of a dictator, whereas Mr. Nosek transmitted to the Council the wishes and opinions of an entire people.

34. He would also ignore the personal insults addressed to him by the Cuban representative; he would merely state that whenever the Cuban representative attacked or slandered Czechoslovakia he would be answered accordingly.

35. Mr. HOTCHKIS (United States of America) wished to comment on and correct certain statements made by the USSR representative. The Council had just heard a long series of slanderous attacks unsubstantiated by any precise fact.

36. The USSR representative had said first of all, that the selection of the members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee had been based on the consideration that they would serve the designs of certain countries and produce a report unfavourable to the USSR and the satellites. In fact, however, the *Ad Hoc* Committee had been composed of three eminent jurists—an Indian, a Norwegian and a Peruvian—whose impartiality and objectivity were beyond question. They had taken pains to establish the facts and to base their conclusions solely on irrebuttable evidence.

37. Then, after noting that Mr. Hotchkis at the beginning of his statement had asked why the Council should study the question of forced labour, the USSR representative had answered the question in his own personal way. Actually, Mr. Hotchkis had answered his question himself by stating that the Council should study frankly and objectively all the facts that were

brought to its knowledge and draw the inevitable conclusions.

38. Throughout his statement the USSR representative had merely cited allegations made by Mr. Stetson Kennedy, who he had been informed was a United States citizen and might be a Communist. It might well be asked whether in certain States a man who had made such allegations against his own country would be able to live in peace or, indeed, whether he would still be alive. The *Ad Hoc* Committee had carefully studied Mr. Kennedy's allegations but had rejected them because they had not been supported by the evidence.

39. The USSR representative had spoken at length of the Mexican "wet-backs". He (Mr. Hotchkis) was well informed on that question himself for his home was only about 150 miles from the Mexican frontier. The work of "wet-backs" was the opposite of forced labour; they were workers who did everything possible to enter the United States, and did so illegally in order to earn higher wages there than in their own country for their agricultural labour, which they performed of their own free will. As some of them swam a river in order to enter the United States, they received the name "wet-backs". On 10 March 1954 the Mexican and United States Governments had reached an agreement relating to the legal entry of Mexican workers. He strongly recommended that anyone who claimed that the Mexican workers were victims of exploitation of any kind should read the treaty.

40. Even the "wet-backs" were as free in their employment and in all other respects as the citizens of the United States of America. Nothing was done to hold them in the United States and they were free to return to Mexico whenever they wished. As to their wages, the USSR representative had mentioned a ridiculous figure; it was obvious that neither the workers concerned nor the Mexican Government would agree to such a wage.

41. The USSR representative had also claimed that the United States delegation had voted against the right to strike. He did not know of any body in which it could have voted as alleged. The right to strike was recognized and exercised in the United States. In that connexion it would be interesting to compare the number of strikes in the USSR and in the United States, where workers were free.

42. The USSR representative had cited a statement by Mr. Martin P. Durkin, former Secretary of Labor, purportedly to the effect that the workers of the United States were deprived of their civil and political rights. That interpretation of Mr. Durkin's statements was completely misleading. A report of the statement in question had appeared in the *American Federationist*, which was available in the United Nations library. Mr. Durkin had in fact said that it was regrettable that the United States voters did not fully exercise their right to vote—a matter of particular concern to trade unions since according to experience the trade unions were the first victims of any weakening of democracy, as events in Hitler Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union had shown. To be objective, the USSR representative should have read all of the relevant portion of Mr. Durkin's statement.

43. The USSR representative had made a large number of unfounded accusations against the United

States, but had carefully refrained from trying to deny the existence of forced labour in the Soviet Union. Likewise, the Czechoslovak representative had not denied its existence in his country. They could hardly have denied it, since forced labour was an established institution under the legislation of both States. From its study of USSR legislation, the *Ad Hoc* Committee had reached the conclusion that forced labour was used as a means of political coercion against persons holding or expressing certain opinions. If the Soviet régime was perfect, as its representatives claimed, and liberty in all spheres a reality, as they affirmed, it was hard to understand why the USSR prohibited its nationals from leaving the country and why it imposed such restrictions on foreigners who wished to visit it.

44. In conclusion, he would ask the USSR representative three questions: whether the USSR had voted against the General Assembly resolution (resolution 740 (VIII)) condemning forced labour; whether it had replied to the *Ad Hoc* Committee's questionnaire; and whether it had examined the allegations concerning it made before the *Ad Hoc* Committee, which had been communicated to the USSR Government. With regard to the last question, he drew attention to the letter that the Permanent Representative of the USSR had addressed to the *Ad Hoc* Committee stating that the USSR delegation was returning, unexamined, the documents transmitted by the *Ad Hoc* Committee since they contained slanderous fabrications concerning the USSR. He asked how one could express an opinion on the contents of a document that one had not studied.

45. Mr. NUÑEZ PORTUONDO (Cuba) said that he had neither slandered nor insulted Czechoslovakia; he had merely amplified the *Ad Hoc* Committee's conclusions by listing the concentration camps in that country.

46. While not intending to indulge in personal recriminations, he wished to say that he spoke in the name of the Cuban people, who were free to leave their island or return to it; their movements were not watched by armed soldiers and they did not risk death if they tried to seek a better life elsewhere.

47. If the Czechoslovak representative's assertions had strengthened his position with his Government, Mr. Nuñez Portuondo was very glad; nevertheless, he wished to recall that in spite of their attitudes Mr. Houdek and Mr. Clementis were no longer representatives of Czechoslovakia at the United Nations.

48. Mr. MEADE (United Kingdom) said that the shocking irrelevancies of the representative of the USSR exceeded anything he had ever heard from a delegation which was well practised in the art of irrelevancy. It was significant also that the USSR representative had made not the slightest effort to reply to the criticisms levelled against his country in the *Ad Hoc* Committee's report (E/2431). The smoke screen of charges made against the United States and the emotional use of such words as "lies" and "slanders" failed to relieve the anxiety of those who subscribed to the humanitarian principles on which the *Ad Hoc* Committee's conclusions were founded.

49. It could not be repeated too often that the Members of the United Nations ought faithfully to respect the principle of co-operation. When the United Kingdom had been accused of tolerating forced labour in the territories under its administration, it had cc

operated with the *Ad Hoc* Committee and had been able to satisfy it that those charges were without foundation. He asked why the Soviet Union could not respond likewise to the charges made against it. Its silence was only too eloquent.

50. He also wished to comment on the statement made by the Indian representative at the 784th meeting. In general, that representative was to be congratulated in the moderate tone of his remarks, but it was to be regretted that he had thought fit to echo the charges which had been made against the Union of South Africa and which the *Ad Hoc* Committee had dealt with. Indeed, he had added fresh allegations.

1. He thought that the Indian representative's attitude was unfortunate, for one thing because the Union of South Africa was not represented on the Economic and Social Council, and for another because he had perhaps dismissed too lightly the careful and quite detailed reply of the Union Government on the subject of the *Ad Hoc* Committee's conclusions. He (Mr. Meade) was not in a position to make any comment on the criticisms made about the Union of South Africa but, judging from the observations of the Union Government, he felt that the *Ad Hoc* Committee's conclusions were perhaps not wholly justified. In any case, the Union Government deserved praise for having taken the trouble to write a serious reply to the *Ad Hoc* Committee's critical observations; the same could not be said of all governments which had been criticized.

2. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt obliged to reply to the representatives of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom representative had said that the impartiality and objectivity of the *Ad Hoc* Committee were without question. But the members of the committee had been appointed by Mr. Trygve Lie, who had improperly acted as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Lie had been hostile to the Soviet Union and it was that spirit which had prompted him in his appointment of the members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee. The Indian delegation had stated in the Third Committee that Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar had been appointed in his personal capacity and was not to be considered as a representative of the Government of India.

3. The United States representative had said that Mr. Stetson Kennedy was a Communist, the implication being presumably that Mr. Kennedy's allegations were worthless. That was the sort of reply Senator McCarthy might make, and in any case quite untrue. Mr. Kennedy was not a Communist.

4. According to the United States representative, the *Ad Hoc* Committee had declared that the documents submitted by Mr. Kennedy were not worthy of consideration. The Committee had said as much and Mr. Kennedy had vigorously protested against that statement. Mr. Tsarapkin had requested the publication of the documents submitted by Mr. Kennedy in order that the Council might form its own considered opinion.

The United States representative's observations on the subject of the Mexican "wet-backs" had not

altered the facts: the "wet-backs" were mercilessly exploited; anybody who wished for proof had only to read American newspapers. The USSR representative asked why, if it was true, that the "wet-backs" were paid proper wages, the American workers' unions had asked Mr. Brownell to intervene to stop the unfair competition from the "wet-backs". The fact that Mexicans wanted to work in the United States, in the hope of getting higher pay than in their own country, did not mean that they were not pitilessly exploited in the United States. The President's Commission on Migratory Labor had stated that employers held back part of the pay of the "wet-backs" so as to force them to stay on the job.

56. The United States representative had suggested that the number of strikes in the United States and in the Soviet Union should be compared. But the situation in the two countries was entirely different: it was natural that there should be no strikes in the USSR because the Government was in the hands of the workers and peasants and working conditions were determined by the council of the unions; in the United States of America on the other hand strikes were frequent because wages were low and the standard of living of the working classes was steadily deteriorating.

57. The United States representative had not been able to deny the statements of Mr. Durkin because he (Mr. Tsarapkin) had quoted textual extracts. In fact nobody any longer believed or could believe in the "iron curtain" myth: a large number of foreigners visited the Soviet Union every year for conferences or business or simply as tourists; as for leaving the Soviet Union, it was clear that no one thought of emigrating; on the contrary, the number of applications for admission increased every day.

58. In reply to a question from the United States representative, he said that the United States delegation had voted against the right to strike at the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights held on 26 March 1949.

59. The United Kingdom representative for his part had declared that the USSR delegation's silence on the subject of the existence of forced labour in the Soviet Union was eloquent. He would recall that he had denied all the charges levelled against his country and explained that the idea of forced labour was inconceivable in the Soviet Union. He did not see how else he could have replied to the gross slanders and lies, which deceived no one.

60. In 1917 before the October Revolution Russia had been one of the most backward countries in the world; in 1921 after three years of world war, three years of civil war and a famine in the Volga basin, the country had been virtually in ruins. Thanks to the Soviet régime, however, it had recovered rapidly: it was already the second country in the world in industrial production and it would soon rank first in spite of the sufferings and havoc wrought by the Second World War. He asked how there could be any question of forced labour in the face of such results, which were only made possible by the free and enthusiastic endeavour of a people master of its own destiny.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.