

## FIFTH SESSION

CORRIGENDUM TO THE VERBATIM RECORD OF THE  
ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH MEETING

Translation of the speech made by the representative  
of France at the one hundred and sixteenth plenary  
meeting of the Council, held on 14 August 1947 at  
10:30 a.m.

Mr. BORIS (France) (Translated from French): Jointly with the delegations of Chile and Norway, the French delegation has the honour to submit an amendment to Resolution No. 6. In stating the reasons for which we have submitted this amendment, I shall have occasion to explain why we submit it to a plenary session without its previously having been discussed in the Committee.

This amendment is intended to complete Chapter I, paragraph 2° of the agenda and to define more precisely the fundamental principles which should govern the media of information.

If this amendment is carried, the principles set forth under Chapter I, paragraph 2, (c) and (d) will read as follows:

"(c) To help promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; to combat Fascist ideology by removing the remnants of Fascism and collaborationism from the media of information."

"(d) To help maintain international peace and security through understanding and co-operation between peoples; to combat forces which incite war by removing bellicose influences from media of information."

I would remind you that two texts of different inspiration have already been discussed in the Sub-Commission and that eventually a majority was only obtained for the one which appears in the document at present under discussion, because it was more general and vague in its assertions. I should add that a majority could only be secured for this text, although several members of the Sub-Commission, including the French expert Mr. Géraud, found more than one element in the other text with which they sympathized  
/and which they

and which they would have liked to have seen adopted or taken into consideration in the final text.

During the discussion in the Committee, the same debate arose on two or even three different occasions, but each time in rather peculiar conditions which made it virtually impossible for the members of the Committee to seek and adopt a formula for uniting or amalgamating certain parts of the two proposals into a synthetic and coherent whole.

On two occasions, indeed, the Committee was faced with the alternative of adopting either one of the texts en bloc or the other en bloc, and if they wished to achieve anything, the members of the Committee could only maintain the text which, having received a majority in the Sub-Commission, also appeared to be assured of a majority in the Council. The question was, however, raised in the Committee on a third occasion when Chapter I, paragraph 2, that is to say the four sub-paragraphs a, b, c, and d, as they appear in document E/547 had already been adopted; it was then that the Soviet delegation submitted a new text, also in four sub-paragraphs to be purely and simply added to the text already adopted. At that point, it was only possible to make an addition to the adopted text, which could not be touched, and this addition was such that in certain respects it was a duplication, simply repeating what had already been said, while in other respects, it did not fit in with the text adopted. In other respects again it introduced elements which were not in keeping with the ideas of certain countries, including mine, concerning the freedom of the press and information.

The question therefore arose in the form of an impossible choice and, to serve any useful purpose, it would have been necessary to go over the two texts as a whole, reshape them and recast them.

In these circumstances the French delegation considered that it could not take part in the votes held at that stage, and as it considered nevertheless that the final text could usefully be supplemented on the basis of certain ideas contained in the other text, it thought best to submit in the form of an amendment to the plenary session, formulas likely to fit in logically with the text worked out by the Sub-Commission and capable, as the French delegation hopes, of securing a unanimous vote. The French delegation was glad to find itself in agreement on this point, with the delegations of Chile and Norway on whose behalf it now supports the amendment in question.

I now propose to show what the effort to reconcile the two definitions of the general principles to be observed by the press, consists of. It has  
/been said

been said that the suggestion, originally made to the Sub-Commission by Mr. Lomakin and defended in the Committee by the Soviet delegation, repeated, in the negative form, what the text before us says in a positive form. The latter recommends promoting certain principles and the former recommends combatting the contrary principles. The French delegation considers that these are two complementary notions, and that it is well to remind those who are recommended to fight for certain general principles, that this cannot be done without fighting against the contrary principles. Hence the French delegation, in agreement with the delegations of Chile and Norway, has thought it necessary to affirm that the combatting of Fascist and bellicose ideology is a fundamental principle. It has considered it necessary to adopt this terminology, while putting it in its logical place. The fight against Fascist ideology comes at the end of paragraph (c) which deals with respect for Human Rights of which Fascism is the antithesis, while the fight against warlike ideologies comes at the end of paragraph (d) which affirms the principle of international peace and security.

Moreover, there is an important difference between the text which we submit and that originally submitted by Mr. Lomakin and supported by the Soviet delegation in the Committee. The Soviet text did not limit itself to a general recommendation to combat Fascist ideology and warmongers. It assigned to the press and the radio very precise tasks in this regard. It spoke of campaigns to be undertaken and persons to be unmasked. But here lies the difference. These tasks imposed, these campaigns ordered, are not compatible with our conception of the freedom of the press. According to our conception, while it is possible to define general aims inspired by the Charter on which the United Nations are in agreement, it is impossible to order the press, to orchestrate it, with a view to synchronized campaigns, even if we earnestly believe in the aims in view. No one hates Fascism and warmongers more than we do, but it is not by giving directives to journalists, by assigning to them tasks to be fulfilled, in the name of an authority which could be none other than a government, that we can achieve desired results.

Our opinion would rebel against such obstruction, such synchronization, and we should finally defeat our own aim.

On the other hand there is something which we can do, in keeping with our conception of the press, of the freedom of the press and information, a conception which is not authoritarian but which is also not that of liberty verging on irresponsibility, of a liberty which under a regime of commercial competition, would become dominated by money as the sole and supreme arbiter.

/In press

In press matters we are opposed to private as well as to public monopolies. What we can do in the matter, while respecting this conception, and in agreement with it, is to eliminate from the media of information, the press, the radio, etc. elements which have been tainted, contaminated by Fascist ideology or compromised by collaboration.

After the tempest which has swept over us, it is just, reasonable and prudent not to leave the responsibility of informing opinion - with all the powers and the influence which this represents - in the hands of those who have recently showed themselves or still show themselves, as adversaries of the very principles of the Charter, and not to entrust this responsibility to those who may revive Fascist ideology or give themselves up to bellicose instincts and influences.

Such, in our view, is the manner in which the press, the radio and the other media of information can and should combat Fascism and warmongering. If these elements were eliminated, there would be no further risk of the media of information abusing their liberty which, in our opinion cannot be ordered or limited by directives or instructions from higher up.

If the freedom of information and of the press were entrusted to the care of those who are really worthy to receive it, it would serve to enlighten the intelligence and edify the judgment of men, and would thus assist the victory of the cause of human rights and peace upheld by the United Nations.

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