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*President: Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi PANDIT (India).*

**Second report of the Credentials Committee  
(A/2593)  
[Agenda item 3]**

*The President presented the second report of the Credentials Committee (A/2593).*

*The draft resolution contained in the report was adopted unanimously.*

**Procedural decision concerning the agenda**

*Pursuant to rule 67 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the remaining items on the agenda of the General Assembly.*

**Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifth session: report of the Sixth Committee (A/2589)  
[Agenda item 53]**

1. The PRESIDENT: In connexion with draft resolution II of the Sixth Committee, the delegation of the Netherlands has proposed amendments [A/L.170]. If any member desires to explain his vote on any of the draft resolutions contained in this report, I would request him to do so in a single intervention, if that is possible.

2. Mr. TAMMES (Netherlands): May I in a few words make some observations in connexion with the Netherlands vote as implied in our having submitted some amendments [A/L.170] to draft resolution II contained in the report of the Sixth Committee [A/2589].

3. In making these observations and submitting these amendments, my delegation wanted to have another opportunity to vote in favour of a draft resolution encouraging the International Law Commission in its important study of certain aspects of the régime of the high seas and of the régime of territorial waters. We were unable to give this support on the basis of draft resolution II, and thirteen other delegations were in the same position. This is the more regrettable because the vote in the Committee was not very clear, taking into account the importance of the matter involved. No fewer than eighteen delegations abstained and nine delegations were absent. In such a case it is reasonable, in our view, to provide another opportunity, by way of amendment, for the majority of the delegations of Member States to declare themselves clearly where the development of public international law and its codification are concerned.

4. My delegation would prefer to vote in favour of the first paragraph of the preamble of draft resolution II as amended in the way we suggest in our first amendment, since the wording of the paragraph as it stands does not accurately reflect the contents of the resolution to which it refers. General Assembly resolution 374 (IV) does not—and I recall this here because it passed unnoticed during the discussion in the Sixth Committee the other day—recommend that the International Law Commission should study simultaneously the régime of the high seas and the régime of territorial waters. The word “simultaneously” does not appear in the resolution and was not intended at the time, as follows from an uncontradicted statement by the Chairman of the International Law Commission during the discussion in the Sixth Committee in 1949, at the fourth session of the General Assembly [167th meeting].

5. Furthermore, my delegation would prefer the draft resolution as amended in accordance with the rest of our amendments because it would give effect to a considered opinion of the International Law Commission itself. The Commission's Chairman—and other representatives in the Sixth Committee shared his view at the time—made it clear that a postponement of discussion until all aspects of the régime of the high seas and of the régime of territorial waters had been studied by the Commission would mean a delay of several years. After this period it would be much more difficult to reach agreement on a generally accepted body of regulations, because in the meantime the tendency to unilateral legislation in the matter of the continental shelf would be increasing. The Commission, after careful consideration, came to the conclusion that the question of the continental shelf could very well be discussed apart from other questions relating to the high seas and the territorial waters. This point of view was shared by the great majority of States which replied to the Commission's questionnaire. The same reasons existed

for having the question of fisheries discussed at the same time as the continental shelf. The amendments give effect to these very reasonable and practical considerations with regard to a matter which is in urgent need of regulation.

6. In explaining our vote, I want finally to declare that my delegation is moved purely by the warm interest we take in the development of international law. At the same time, we have a full understanding of special interests, as they have been explained so consistently and strongly by some delegations, and in particular by the delegation of Iceland. In our opinion, an early discussion of urgent problems does not mean that certain aspects of those problems, as they appear from the point of view of particularly situated countries, should not be taken fully into consideration.

7. Mr. VALLAT (United Kingdom): First of all, may I congratulate the Netherlands delegation on its initiative, an initiative which is always a little difficult towards the end of the session and in a plenary meeting. My delegation supports and will vote in favour of the Netherlands amendments to draft resolution II dealing with the régime of the high seas. We shall also vote in favour of the draft resolution as a whole if the amendments are adopted.

8. On the other hand, if the amendments are rejected, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution. The draft resolution contained in the report of the Sixth Committee, which is designed to dispose of the work done by the International Law Commission on the continental shelf and on fisheries, is open to serious objections that were explained by several delegations in the Sixth Committee and by the Chairman of the Commission itself. The draft resolution is negative in character and would postpone indefinitely the consideration by the General Assembly of these important subjects.

9. In the view of the Chairman of the International Law Commission, the minimum delay would be about five years. In fact, the delay is likely to be much longer. The main reason for this is that, quite erroneously in our opinion, it is said that the rules of law on the continental shelf are dependent on the definition of the width of the territorial sea. All those who are familiar with the problem of the extent of territorial waters know how very difficult it is likely to be to reach an agreed solution on that problem in the foreseeable future. Accordingly, it is quite impossible to forecast the length of delay implicit in the draft resolution as it stands.

10. The economic and political importance of the continental shelf is increasing rapidly. First, discoveries of natural resources and an increasing flow of national legislation and declarations make the subject one that merits early consideration by the General Assembly. It would be most unwise for us now to decide to turn our backs on it until the completion of studies on a number of problems, some of which really have no material relation whatever to the law of the continental shelf. My delegation is not prepared to associate itself with such a negative policy.

11. Another reason for rejecting this draft resolution is the bad effect it would have on the general work of the International Law Commission. The lack of enthusiasm in the Sixth Committee itself is demonstrated by the vote of 19 in favour of the draft resolution to 14

against, with no less than 18 abstentions. There is, on the other hand, from speeches made in the Sixth Committee, good reason to think that, if the present amendments were adopted, the draft resolution would receive a substantial majority vote here.

12. My delegation is not altogether enthusiastic about the second amendment, which may lend unnecessary colour to the view that consideration of the continental shelf by the Assembly is, in some way, dependent on further study by the International Law Commission of the whole subject of the régime of the high seas and the régime of territorial waters. Nevertheless, the amendments have merits. The first one avoids the dispute that arose in the Sixth Committee about the interpretation of a previous resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 374 (IV). The third amendment takes proper account of the importance of the subjects dealt with in the report of the Commission and acknowledges the need of adequate time for governments to study them. Above all, the fourth amendment has the constructive purpose of enabling the General Assembly to decide at the tenth session whether or not to debate them in substance at that time. If then the Assembly does not want to discuss the item in detail, it can of course postpone discussion again.

13. Therefore, for these reasons, we think that the amendments, taken as a whole, are worthy of our complete support and we shall vote for all of them.

14. Mr. THORS (Iceland) As we know, the Sixth Committee approved its draft resolution II concerning the régime of the high seas and the régime of territorial waters, which draft resolution is now before the Assembly. We also have before us a number of amendments submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands. In order to evaluate these amendments, it is well to recall the proceedings of the Sixth Committee.

15. The draft resolution proposed by the Sixth Committee was submitted originally by the delegation of Iceland. The Committee also had before it a draft resolution introduced by the delegations of Canada, Egypt, France, Syria and the United Kingdom, the operative part of which was as follows:

*"The General Assembly,*

*"Decides to postpone consideration of parts II and III of chapter III of the said report and to include these questions in the provisional agenda of the tenth session of the General Assembly".*

16. My delegation maintained, in the Committee, that these matters should not be dealt with on an isolated basis and that all aspects of the problem would have to be studied before any decision could be made. We do not wish to reiterate our arguments here, beyond mentioning the fact that we emphasized that it was impossible to appreciate the implications of the draft articles on fisheries which were intended to apply to the high seas until it was known where the limits were. My delegation also pointed out that several other factors would have to be clarified before a complete figure could be obtained. The Sixth Committee agreed with our views and, consequently, did not adopt the joint draft resolution.

17. The amendments which have now been submitted are actually an effort to reverse the decision of the Sixth Committee. If the fourth amendment proposed by the Netherlands were adopted, the operative paragraph of draft resolution II would read as follows:

"Decides not to deal with any aspect of the régime of the high seas or of the régime of territorial waters until the tenth session of the General Assembly, and to include the subject matters of sections II and III of the said report in the provisional agenda of that session".

The Netherlands amendments also propose that the preamble should be redrafted to meet this conclusion.

18. The substance of these amendments has already been rejected by the Sixth Committee. Accordingly, my delegation will vote against all the amendments proposed by the delegation of the Netherlands, as we feel that the draft resolution as it now stands is clear and will prevent any confusion in the work of the International Law Commission. Contrary to what the representative of the Netherlands said, I believe that the vote in the Committee was clear and in line with the work of the International Law Commission and will serve as a guide to the latter. It has been said that a decision on this matter ought to be reached quickly, but I venture to suggest that a thorough investigation is preferable to a hasty decision.

19. The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly will now vote on the draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee [A/2589].

20. We shall vote first on draft resolution I.

*The draft resolution was adopted by 45 votes to none, with 6 abstentions.*

21. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will vote next on the amendments submitted by the Netherlands [A/L.170] to draft resolution II.

*The amendments were rejected by 19 votes to 17, with 14 abstentions.*

22. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now vote on draft resolution II.

*The draft resolution was adopted by 30 votes to 9, with 11 abstentions.*

23. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now vote on draft resolution III.

*The draft resolution was adopted by 36 votes to none, with 16 abstentions.*

### **Evidence of existence of forced labour: report of the Third Committee (A/2588)**

[Agenda item 69]

*Mr. Pashwak (Afghanistan), Rapporteur of the Third Committee, presented the report of that Committee (A/2588).*

24. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The USSR delegation gave a detailed exposition of its position on agenda item 69 in the Third Committee on 20 and 27 November of this year. In view of the short time available, all we can do at this point is to reaffirm our position and briefly explain our vote on this item.

25. It is well known that it was at the insistence of the United States Government that the question of forced labour was hurriedly placed before the General Assembly at its eighth session, over the head of the Economic and Social Council. In its memorandum [A/2438 and Corr.1], the United States delegation cites the so-called report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour [E/2431] as the basic document and the sole "proof" of the alleged existence of forced

labour in a number of States Members of the United Nations.

26. There can be no doubt that this committee, which consists of three private persons in all, is not representative and has no competence, and that its so-called report is a disgraceful travesty of a report, a compendium of forgeries, full of deliberate lies and malicious slander against a number of Members of the United Nations. The fact that the three-member committee is neither representative nor competent and that its report is worthless is explained by the manner in which it was set up, its membership and methods of work.

27. As we know, the members of this small Committee which, on the proposal of the United States and the United Kingdom, was established allegedly to study working conditions, were appointed at the personal discretion of a man who had illegally usurped the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations; he selected three private individuals whom he knew, who were devoted to him, and who had nothing whatever to do with either working conditions or trade unions. The report of the three-man committee—as the authors themselves admit—was based on a slanderous book on forced labour in the Soviet Union issued by the United States Department as far back as September 1952. It was based on such so-called documents as affidavits and testimonies of traitors and renegades, former flunkies of the Nazi invaders, subversives and smugglers who fled illegally from the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies and who, under the Kersten amendment, have now been provided with shelter and financial support out of the \$100 million which the United States Congress appropriated in 1951 for subversive activities and sabotage against the USSR and the peoples' democracies. It is also significant that this three-man committee dealt with these dubious "witnesses" and sources of false information, and with this "evidence", behind closed doors in New York and carefully kept its dirty work secret from the public.

28. The USSR delegation naturally cannot accept a draft resolution which would compel the Economic and Social Council to study this collection of forgeries, and will therefore vote against it.

29. The USSR delegation attaches great and fundamental importance to a serious, truly scientific and objective study of working conditions, with a view to improving the situation of workers and employees in all countries of the world, including the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies. It was with this purpose in mind that the USSR delegation, as far back as the twelfth session of the Economic and Social Council, submitted a proposal [E/L.165] for setting up a comprehensive international commission, consisting of representatives of the manual and intellectual workers united in all existing trade unions, without distinction as to the political trend or religious convictions of their members. The USSR delegation proposed that this authoritative international commission to study working conditions should include representatives of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of the USSR, of the American Federation of Labor, of the Congress of Industrial Organizations of the United States, of the Trades Union Congress of the United Kingdom, of the trade unions of France, Italy, the People's Republic of China and Japan, and of other

national trade union federations. On the basis of the information it received this commission, which would have been truly representative of labour, was to have drawn up reports and recommendations and submitted them to the Economic and Social Council, and wide publicity was to have been given to the results of its work.

30. As we know, that constructive USSR proposal, which was inspired throughout by Chapter IX of the United Nations Charter concerning international economic and social co-operation, failed to win the support of the United States and United Kingdom delegations. Instead of such an authoritative commission to study working conditions, the three-man committee was set up on the insistent demand of reactionary circles in the United States and, at their behest, proceeded to draw up this disgraceful travesty of a report, this compendium of forgeries. That is why the USSR delegation cannot accept this draft and will vote against it.

31. It is common knowledge that, for the last thirty-five years, workers and peasants in the Soviet Union have been able to engage in constructive work, in freedom and peace, having liberated themselves forever from exploitation by land-owners and capitalists. In the USSR, each worker and peasant works for himself and for his socialist society. Exploiting land-owners and capitalists have long since disappeared and there is no exploitation of man by man. That is why this unparalleled falsehood and provocation on the part of the corrupt agents of the three-man committee is wholly unacceptable, and we cannot recognize this report as a document worthy of consideration or discussion.

32. For these considerations we shall vote against this draft resolution.

33. Mrs. LORD (United States of America): Forced labour was the subject of action in the League of Nations and in the International Labour Organisation prior to the Second World War. Evidence of the continued and even increasing existence of forced labour has also been under examination in the United Nations and the ILO since 1947. The testimony concerning large-scale forced labour in certain areas of the world placed before the Economic and Social Council and the Governing Body of the ILO was so overwhelming that by 1951 the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the ILO were asked by the Economic and Social Council [*resolution 350 (XII)*] to appoint an impartial *ad hoc* committee to investigate the situation.

34. That committee has done an admirable job. Its report demonstrates, on the incontrovertible basis of laws and regulations, and to no credit to the world, that systems of forced labour do indeed exist in some countries on a scale such as to constitute an important element in their economy, and that in a number of countries these systems are employed as a means of political coercion or punishment for holding political views.

35. We have heard, in the Third Committee and again today, attacks against this *ad hoc* committee and even against the integrity and impartiality of its members. The authors of these attacks would do better to address themselves to the evidence adduced rather than to revile those persons who have been courageous enough to serve the United Nations. These charges

can only make it more difficult to obtain the services of outstanding persons in the future.

36. In the draft resolution we are being asked to approve, the General Assembly observes that systems of forced labour constitute a serious threat to fundamental human rights and jeopardize the freedom and status of workers in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations. The United States delegation will vote in favour of this draft resolution because it affirms that all such systems must be abolished and asks the Economic and Social Council and the ILO, as a matter of urgency, to consider the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour with this aim in view.

37. The United States does not countenance the existence of systems of forced labour anywhere they may be found. The United States has been accused of increasing world tension because it has brought the issue to the attention of the General Assembly. This is not so. The way to alleviate international tension is not by closing our eyes to social evils which violate our humanitarian instincts, but by understanding those evils and seeking to correct them. The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour concluded, on the basis of laws, regulations and confirming testimony, that this modern form of slavery is condoned and practised on a large scale by the States behind the Iron Curtain, both for political and economic purposes. Those countries have not co-operated in any effort to examine the problem before or since the establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Committee. If they have facts by which to refute this evidence, it is open to them to present those facts for examination, just as many other States have done. I hope that they will do so.

38. Mrs. WASILKOWSKA (Poland): The Polish delegation will vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/2588, for the following reasons.

39. This draft resolution, which is based on the report of the so-called *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour, creates a convenient platform to exploit our Organization for propaganda against peaceful international co-operation. The Polish delegation, in its statement before the Third Committee, gave facts and data which proved that our Organization should reject this report as false and slanderous and because it ignored the real problem of forced labour. The very manner in which this committee, which was sponsored by the most reactionary circles of the United States, was appointed, the definition of its terms of reference as well as its methods of work, clearly indicate that it was meant to serve exclusively as one of the instruments of the propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies. The working methods of this committee have been characteristically illustrated by the fact that it based its work on materials gathered and prepared by the *émigré* organizations composed of outcasts and traitors to their own countries. These organizations have been directed for many years by the intelligence services of western countries, primarily by the American centres of intelligence service and psychological warfare.

40. The report is full of slanders and falsifications against the socialist countries, so extreme as to be unheard of in international relations. It also contains vile insinuations against my own country. The best reply to these slanderous accusations is the reality of contemporary Poland. In people's Poland, the political

power as well as the national resources belong to the working people, who can freely develop their full creative abilities. Unemployment is relegated to the pages of our past history, and the extensive network of social protection and social security, the right to work in a profession of one's own choice, the right to leisure, remove the features of compulsion which characterize work in capitalist countries. As a result of the efforts of the whole nation, Poland, which before the war, when it was ruled by foreign and native capital, was a backward agricultural country, now ranks among the foremost industrial nations in Europe, ahead of Italy, for instance. The level of living and culture of the broadest masses is systematically improving. This can be seen by the recent serious reduction of prices for food and industrial goods in my country.

41. To belittle this achievement of Poland and the achievements of the other peoples' democracies, to belittle the splendid achievements of the Soviet Union in all fields of life, is the aim that inspires the State Department's campaign and that of its instrument, the so-called *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour. At the same time, the aim is to divert the world's attention from the essential problems of the present situation, from the preparations for war, from the armaments race, from the threat of unemployment in capitalist countries. The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour has assisted the State Department in these endeavours, and therefore it is not surprising that the United States representative praised it so highly. This committee deliberately avoided any examination of extensive and authentic documentation that proves the existence of forced labour in capitalist countries, in particular in the United States and in the colonial and dependent countries. Such important factors as unemployment, lack of adequate social insurance, low wages, race discrimination in access to work, the limitation of trade-union rights—the most eloquent expression of which is in the United States Taft-Hartley Law—all of these elements, which indubitably limit the rights of workers as regards the type and location of their work, and lead to various forms of forced labour, the committee chose to ignore. Those facts were also ignored by the United States representative, both in the Third Committee and here in the Assembly. The fate of millions of working people in those countries who suffer from various discriminatory measures and various forms of forced labour remained a matter of indifference to the committee. The committee was eager to whitewash the United States and to concentrate on the slanderous campaign against the countries of progress and peace.

42. The Polish delegation, while acknowledging the need of some action to combat the existence of forced labour, supported the original Soviet proposal for the establishment of a large and a representative commission composed of representatives of all existing trade unions, regardless of their political convictions, which would examine this problem in all countries of the world. The United States, afraid of the results of such a study, brought about the rejection of that proposal and imposed its own proposal for a committee which represents no one and nothing besides the reactionary views of its three members. That committee, acting upon the wishes of the ruling circles of the United States, elaborated a report which is in conformity with the policy of conducting hostile propaganda among nations and of adding to the obstacles to international co-operation.

43. Those attempts are doomed to failure. The peaceful policy of the Soviet Union, of people's China and the peoples' democracies, the policy of solving all disputes by means of negotiations, the policy of co-operation and friendship among nations, has been supported by hundreds of millions of people throughout the world, and the achievements of the Soviet Union and of the peoples' democracies in the economic and cultural fields, and the steady increase in the living standards of the peoples of those countries, are concrete evidence of their peaceful policies.

44. This state of affairs cannot be distorted by those who openly propagate a new war and, by means of abusive attacks, develop a hostile attitude against the socialist countries. The Polish delegation considers that our Organization should not allow its forum to be exploited for the propaganda of hatred. Our task is to concentrate all our efforts on finding ways of relaxing international tensions and developing friendly co-operation among nations.

45. The Polish delegation categorically rejects the report of the so-called *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour and all slanderous accusations contained therein, and will vote against the draft resolution, which has nothing in common with the aims and principles of our Organization.

46. The PRESIDENT: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution proposed by the Third Committee in its report [A/2588]. A roll-call vote has been requested.

*A vote was taken by roll-call.*

*Luxembourg, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.*

*In favour:* Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Israel, Liberia.

*Against:* Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia.

*Abstaining:* Saudi Arabia, Syria, Union of South Africa, Yemen, Afghanistan, Argentina, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq.

*The draft resolution was adopted by 39 votes to 5, with 12 abstentions.*

**Measures for the peaceful solution of the problem of prisoners of war: reports of the Third Committee (A/2604) and the Fifth Committee (A/2609)**

[Agenda item 71]

*Mr. Pazhwak (Afghanistan), Rapporteur of the Third Committee, presented the report of that Committee (A/2604).*

47. The PRESIDENT: In addition to the report of the Third Committee, the Fifth Committee, in accordance with rule 152 of the rules of procedure, has submitted its report [A/2609] on the financial aspects of the draft resolution proposed by the Third Committee. This report is before the Assembly for its consideration.

In addition, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR has submitted a draft resolution [A/L.171].

48. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The question of the prisoners of the Second World War, which was included in the General Assembly's agenda under the misleading title of "Measures for the peaceful solution of the problem of prisoners of war", is outside the competence of the United Nations. The inclusion of this item in the General Assembly's agenda and its discussion are contrary to the United Nations Charter and are incompatible with Article 107. That is why the USSR delegation objected to and voted against the inclusion of this item in the agenda. That, too, is why the USSR delegation objected to and voted against the establishment of the United Nations *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War.

49. It should also be borne in mind that the problem of the prisoners of the Second World War is, to begin with, an artificial or, rather, a manufactured problem, inasmuch as the repatriation of German, Japanese and other prisoners of war from the Soviet Union was completed long ago, as was announced at the time in the Press. Hence, the establishment of the so-called *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War was not only contrary to the provisions of Article 107 of the Charter, but was uncalled for in the circumstances, since the problem of prisoners of war no longer existed when the *Ad Hoc* Commission was set up. Consequently the commission found itself in an absurd position from the start. There was, in fact, nothing for it to do, and if the only purpose of its members, as they hypocritically assert in their report, had been to further international co-operation, they should have resigned as soon as they learned how matters really stood.

50. Unfortunately, however, this did not happen, and the *Ad Hoc* Commission engaged in the collection and examination of perjured testimony and falsified lists of prisoners of war furnished by the Bonn authorities in west Germany, reactionary circles and government authorities in Japan, and the like. As a result, working as it did with falsified and unverified data, the commission became a tool in the hands of aggressive circles in a number of States and deluded public opinion by its activities.

51. Although the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War asserts in its report that it avoided any gesture which might be given a political significance, this assertion rings false and is obviously calculated to mislead anyone not familiar with the substance of the question or the nature of the commission's activity. The fact of the matter is that the activity of the *Ad Hoc* Commission was entirely political. The work of this commission, which was established in violation of the United Nations Charter, had a definite political purpose, namely, to divert attention from those who were mainly responsible for the Second World War and who, by starting the war, inflicted untold suffering not only on the countries they attacked, but also on their own peoples, who suffered countless casualties in killed, wounded and maimed. No hypocritical resolutions on prisoners of war will serve to lessen their guilt and responsibility for these crimes.

52. The discussion of the so-called problem of prisoners of the Second World War by the General Assembly is a typical example of how the United Nations is used as a means of prosecuting the so-called

cold war and as an instrument of propaganda against the USSR at the instigation and under the direction of aggressive circles in the United States, which boggle at no lies or slander against the USSR and the peoples' democracies in order to achieve their purposes, which are inimical to the cause of peace. The problem of prisoners of war, which was forced upon the General Assembly, is yet another in the series of acts of provocation, slanderous charges and fabrications against the USSR and the peoples' democracies. Questions such as this have nothing to do with the interests of peace and international co-operation, and they are used in order to divert the attention of the United Nations from the urgent problems of maintaining peace and reducing tension in international relations. The hullabaloo raised over the so-called problem of prisoners of war is designed to create an atmosphere of international hostility and to facilitate preparations for a new world war. This *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War, which has been justly called by the public the "Commission of Forgers", plays a definite part in the shady schemes of the aggressive circles in the United States and in a number of other countries which support the United States.

53. For all these reasons, the USSR delegation will vote against the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee. For the same reasons, the USSR delegation wholly endorses and will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the Byelorussian SSR, [A/L.171], which proposes that the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War should be discontinued.

54. Mrs. WASILKOWSKA (Poland): The Polish delegation wishes to explain its attitude in regard to the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR and the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee.

55. My delegation fully maintains its position that the so-called *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War is an illegal body. In the light of the Charter, and in particular of Article 107, there is no doubt that all of the aspects of the liquidation of the consequences of war have been assigned exclusively to the competence of the great Powers. The competence of the United Nations in such questions is precluded. This being so, the problem of the prisoners taken during the recent war was not within the competence of the United Nations even while it still was a problem. But at this time, when it has long since been settled, the problem is not only outside the competence of the United Nations but it is being artificially revived only to suit certain purposes of political provocation.

56. The commission, which was appointed illegally upon the initiative of the United States and certain other delegations, has been from the very beginning an instrument for slanderous attacks against the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies.

57. As we know, the Soviet Union made no secret of the fate of the war prisoners who were under its control. A number of official statements, and in particular the communiqués of Tass of 22 April and 5 May 1950, gave exact information about German and Japanese war prisoners who had been repatriated and also gave the number of those who remained in the Soviet Union as war criminals in order to serve out the terms to which they had been sentenced. Then we had the recent agreements between the Soviet Union and the Government of the German Democratic Republic, as well as

those between the Soviet Union and the Japanese Red Cross, which regulate the repatriation of those war criminals who had either completed their sentences or had been granted amnesties by the Soviet Government.

58. Nevertheless, the United States ruling circles are trying to keep alive a non-existent problem of German, Japanese and Italian war prisoners whom they claim the Soviet Union is now detaining. Although the United States delegation pretends to be motivated by humanitarianism, no objective observer could be misled by their claims. How can the United States speak of humanitarianism while intensifying its preparations for war, while openly supporting the plans for revenge of neo-Nazi Western Germany, in the hope of transforming it into the armed fist of an aggressive Atlantic system, while the rearmament of Japan is taking place, and, finally, while Vice-President Nixon says—as he recently declared in Tokyo—that the disarmament of Japan was a mistake? These preparations for a new war have been arousing growing resistance in, among others, the German and Japanese Nations. That is why it is indispensable for the United States to maintain public opinion in a state of constant tension and to accelerate the campaign of hatred against the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies.

59. The whole campaign around the so-called problem of war prisoners is designed to absolve the real culprits, who are the Hitlerite leaders and those forces of international capital that supported them, of all responsibility for the losses incurred by the German nation, and to place this responsibility upon the Soviet Union. We all know the true facts. The Hitlerites concealed the huge figure of casualties from their own people and, in the final phases of the war, despite their evident defeat, threw into the battle with criminal stubbornness even the aged and adolescent, who were killed *en masse* at the front. Their mass executions of all soldiers who displayed any opposition to their criminal policies are also well known.

60. The reactionary circles of the United States, and the neo-Nazi Bonn circles whom they support, are asking the Soviet Union to account for these victims of the Hitlerite rule. They would also have the Soviet Union account for those prisoners who were captured by the United States forces and who are even today working to serve the needs of the countries of the Atlantic bloc—Mr. Byrnes claims they are working of their own free will—as well as for those who are serving in the ranks of the foreign legions and are used in actions aiming at suppressing national liberation movements in Africa and Asia.

61. The perfidious campaign on war prisoners is bound to arouse the indignation of all honest people who have forgotten neither the horror and extent of the Nazi crimes nor the decisive contribution of the heroic Soviet nation in the victory over fascism.

62. The Polish nation, to which the Hitlerite invasion brought unspeakable sufferings, has a particular right to condemn these acts of provocation, which serve as one of the means of masking United States policy in Western Germany, a policy of reviving German claims against Poland and of developing the militarism necessary to pave the way for the conquest of the peace-loving nations of Europe.

63. The Polish nation nourishes no hatred against any nation, not even the German nation. This is evident from the Polish Government's repatriation of all German prisoners. Only those have been detained who

were sentenced by courts for major war crimes. Our friendly relations with the German Democratic Republic, and with all peaceful elements in Germany, are evidence of our support of and respect for the legitimate rights of the German nation to be united along democratic and peaceful principles. The Polish people considers itself bound to carry out the testament of all those who perished in concentration camps and in mass executions; that testament is that the vital interests of all nations, including the German nation, demand that there shall never again be a revival of Hitlerism or fascism.

64. The draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee is designed to extend the illegal and harmful action of the so-called *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War and to spread hatred and hostility among nations. The Polish delegation will vote against that draft resolution as being in total contradiction with the principles and purposes for which our Organization was set up.

65. It is for these reasons that the Polish delegation whole-heartedly supports, and will vote for, the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, which calls for the discontinuation of this commission. Only such a step can end the illegal practice of our Organization in dealing with the non-existent problem of war prisoners. This commission must be discontinued in the best interests of peaceful co-operation among nations.

66. Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR considers it necessary to explain its vote on the question under discussion. It has already had an opportunity to state its views on all the aspects of the item known as "Measures for the peaceful solution of the problem of prisoners of war", and I shall therefore be very brief.

67. The inclusion of this item in the agenda of the eighth session of the General Assembly can only be considered as yet another attempt to increase international tension. The cessation of hostilities in Korea was an important contribution to the reduction of tension in international relations. The signing of the Korean armistice increased the hopes of many millions of people throughout the world not only that a peaceful settlement of the Korean question could be achieved, but also that a way might be found to settle other outstanding issues. The cessation of hostilities has created more favourable conditions for further action to avert the threat of a new world war. Obviously, however, the prospect of a reduction in international tension does not please certain aggressive circles in the United States and some other countries. Those circles are still gambling on a new world war, thereby poisoning the international atmosphere and helping to bring about a further increase in international tension—a policy which conflicts with the urgent and vital interests of peace-loving peoples. That policy alone can account for the inclusion in the General Assembly's agenda of the so-called question of prisoners of war.

68. When the agenda of the eighth session of the General Assembly was adopted, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, like the delegations of the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia, categorically opposed the inclusion of this item as constituting a violation of Article 107 of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations Charter excludes the possibility of such questions being considered by the General Assembly, as

being outside the competence of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Anglo-American majority voted for the inclusion of the item in the agenda, in clear violation of the United Nations Charter and of Article 107 in particular.

69. What was the purpose of including this item in the agenda? That purpose is perfectly clear to us. The prisoner-of-war question had to be brought up in the General Assembly in order to distract the attention of the Japanese and German peoples, and of world public opinion, from the United States policy of subjugating Japan and west Germany economically and politically, and remilitarizing them, converting Japan in the East and west Germany in Europe into American bases, and using their military forces in a future war.

70. Fabricated reports alleging that a considerable number of prisoners of war have not been repatriated and are still in the USSR are appearing in the Press in the United States and in a number of other countries. The report of the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War makes the same allegation. Fabulous figures are cited about members of the former German and Japanese armed forces which fought against the Soviet Union who have allegedly not been repatriated.

71. The whole world knows of the tremendous suffering and hardship which the nazi clique in Germany, the fascist clique in Italy and the militaristic clique in Japan inflicted on other peoples and on their own peoples during the Second World War. Despite the tremendous hardship inflicted on the Byelorussian people and indeed on all the peoples of the Soviet Union, the Government of the Soviet Union, prompted by humanitarian motives, began to fulfil its international obligations with regard to prisoners of war immediately after the end of the Second World War. This was reported in detail in the Press on several occasions. The whole world knows that the Soviet Union completed the repatriation of German, Japanese and other prisoners of war a very long time ago; this was reported in the Press as far back as 1950.

72. The data furnished by the so-called *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War were prepared with a specific political aim in view. It is clear that the only reason for raising this question again at this session, as at the fifth session of the General Assembly, is to launch a hostile and slanderous attack against the Soviet Union. The so-called prisoners-of-war issue is no problem at all. It was fabricated in order to provide an opportunity for a further slanderous campaign against one of the great Powers and Members of the United Nations, the Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the Second World War. This slanderous campaign against the Soviet Union has been launched by those who do not want peace and friendly understanding among nations and who consider the increased faith in and prestige of the Soviet Union undesirable.

73. The commission was established by the former Secretary-General illegally. Its entire activity has been directed towards increasing international tension and creating an atmosphere conducive to preparations for a new world war. The commission falsified data concerning German and Japanese prisoners of war alleged not to have returned from the Soviet Union, and did nothing with regard to the search for, and repatriation of, the prisoners of war who are still being held in the United States and other countries.

74. It is shameful that the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War should have shown special concern about the fate of war criminals. As can be seen from its report, the commission decided to ask the governments of a number of countries for additional information concerning prisoners of war convicted for or accused of war crimes. Obviously, such activities on the part of the commission are merely an attempt to help the fascist war criminals escape the punishment they deserve. This is a flagrant and overt attempt to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies, where the fascist criminals have paid the just penalty of their heinous crimes.

75. As I have already said, it is well known that three years ago the Soviet Union repatriated all German, Japanese and other prisoners of war, excluding those convicted of crimes and persons against whom proceedings were being taken. Furthermore, on 23 August 1953, a communiqué was issued on the negotiations between the USSR Government and a delegation representing the Government of the German Democratic Republic. The communiqué stated that, at the request of the Government of the German Democratic Republic, steps would be taken in accordance with a pre-arranged system to remit the remainder of the sentences still to be served by German prisoners of war convicted of war crimes, with the exception of those convicted of particularly heinous crimes against peace and humanity. On the basis of this agreement, 5,374 officers and men of the former German army were set free and returned to Germany.

76. As we know from official Press reports, negotiations were held in Moscow, from 31 October to 18 November 1953, between representatives of the Japanese Red Cross and of the Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The subject of those negotiations was the repatriation from the Soviet Union of those Japanese prisoners of war and civilians who had been condemned for various crimes and who had served their terms, or whose sentences had been remitted under the amnesty decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 27 March 1953, or by decision of the Supreme Court of the USSR. The Press release stated that as a result of the negotiations which had taken place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, both sides agreed as follows: Japanese prisoners of war and civilians convicted of various crimes who had served their sentences or had been amnestied under the amnesty decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 27 March 1953 or by decision of the Supreme Court of the USSR would be repatriated from the Soviet Union. They comprised 420 prisoners of war and 854 civilians. When these people had been repatriated, the 1,047 Japanese prisoners of war still remaining in the Soviet Union could be repatriated to Japan as they finished serving their sentences.

77. In view of what I have just said about the prisoner-of-war issue and the harmful activities of the so-called *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR considers that this commission is illegal and should be dissolved. My delegation cannot, therefore, support the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee and will vote against it.

78. We would request that the draft resolution on prisoners of war which the delegation of the Byelorussian

sian SSR has submitted [A/L.171] should be put to the vote first, since the two draft resolutions are mutually exclusive.

79. Dr. MAYO (United States of America): It seems here that we have become prisoners of eloquence. I will stick to the facts and be brief. The United States delegation will vote for the draft resolution of the Third Committee because of its profound conviction that a solution must be found for the tragic problem of the missing prisoners of war of the Second World War. This draft resolution consists merely of ink on a piece of paper, yet it reflects the best hope of thousands upon thousands of families in Germany, Italy, Japan and other countries. These families desire to know—and their governments are entitled to know under international law, under international conventions and under a long series of special agreements—whether their missing relatives are alive or dead. These families desire and are entitled to desire that all living prisoners of war be returned to their homes or be otherwise accounted for.

80. The report of the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War established by this Assembly in 1950 [resolution 427(V)] makes it entirely clear that the problem does exist, and which governments are responsible for obstructing its efforts to solve the problem of the prisoners of war. The report shows that prisoners believed to have been in the custody of the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and communist China are unrepatriated and unaccounted for. The report concludes that the refusal of these governments and authorities to co-operate with the commission constituted the main obstacle through which its best efforts were frustrated.

81. The commission has been attacked in these debates as a tool of the United States. This is an insult to the integrity of three distinguished persons—nationals of El Salvador, Sweden and Burma—who have served the United Nations faithfully and well. It is also a serious challenge to the spirit of co-operation within the United Nations itself.

82. The charge was made in the Third Committee and was repeated in this Assembly today, that it is not the Soviet bloc countries which are still holding prisoners of war, but the United States. The report of the *Ad Hoc* Commission is perfectly clear on this point. It states:

“In sectors where the full co-operation of governments has been given”—and this includes the United States Government—“the problem of prisoners of war no longer exists.” [A/2482/Corr.1, para. 45].

Moreover, during the debate in the Third Committee, representatives of Germany, Italy and Japan stated the views of their governments. They were entirely free to charge that the United States was withholding prisoners or withholding information about them. Since they did not do so, this is a definitive answer to these false accusations against the United States.

83. The United States delegation welcomes the return within recent months of a number of prisoners of war who had been accused of alleged war crimes. The return of every single prisoner is an occasion for rejoicing. Our delegation hopes that all the thousands of remaining prisoners will also be returned and that information will also be furnished about those who died in captivity.

84. In conclusion, may I note, as Mr. Byrnes noted in the Third Committee, that the new régime in the Soviet Union now has an opportunity to carry out the agreements which the previous régime entered into but never honoured. That new régime and its representatives here speak often of their desire to alleviate world tension and to contribute to world peace. Here is an unparalleled opportunity for alleviating world tension as well as for alleviating the sufferings of many thousands of prisoners and their families. I earnestly hope that the Soviet Union will take the opportunity.

85. The PRESIDENT: I have been requested to put the draft resolution of the Byelorussian SSR to the vote first. This is contrary to the practice of the Assembly, by which the vote is taken on the report of the Main Committee before it is taken on other proposals submitted by delegations. I shall put to the vote of the Assembly the proposal of the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR that its draft resolution should be put to the vote first.

*The proposal was rejected by 35 votes to 5, with 14 abstentions.*

86. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now vote on the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee [A/2604].

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

87. The PRESIDENT: In view of the adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution proposed by the Third Committee, which requests the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War to continue its functions, I am unable to call upon the General Assembly to vote on the draft resolution submitted by the Byelorussian SSR [A/L.171]. The members will observe that, in its single operative paragraph, that draft resolution would resolve to discontinue the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War. The Assembly having just pronounced itself in a contrary sense, I find myself unable to call upon it to decide once again with regard to the continuation or discontinuation of the commission. I am confirmed in this view by the decision of the Third Committee, to which a similar draft resolution was submitted by the same delegation, and with regard to which the Committee decided that it should not be voted upon, the Committee already having approved its draft resolution which the General Assembly has just adopted.

**Economic development of under-developed countries: reports of the Second Committee (A/2590) and the Fifth Committee (A/2602)**  
[Agenda item 26]

*Mr. Haliq (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur of the Second Committee, presented the report of that Committee (A/2590).*

88. The PRESIDENT: I should also like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the report of the Fifth Committee [A/2602], which sets out the financial implications of draft resolution B as proposed by the Second Committee.

89. As no representative wishes to explain his vote, the General Assembly will now proceed to the voting on the draft resolutions proposed by the Second Committee [A/2590].

90. The Assembly will vote first on draft resolutions A and B.

*Draft resolution A was adopted by 44 votes to none, with 6 abstentions.*

*Draft resolution B was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

91. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will vote next on the preamble and parts I, II and III of draft resolution C.

*The preamble was adopted by 50 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

*Part I was adopted by 51 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

*Part II was adopted by 49 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

*Part III was adopted unanimously.*

92. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now vote on draft resolution C as a whole.

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

### **Report of the Economic and Social Council (continued)**

[Agenda item 12]

#### **CHAPTERS II AND III: REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE (A/2599)**

93. The PRESIDENT: Representatives will observe that the Committee has recommended no draft resolu-

tion under this item and reports to the General Assembly that it has taken note of chapters II and III of the report of the Economic and Social Council. I believe that no action is required by the General Assembly on this report and, if there is no objection, we shall proceed to the next item on our agenda.

#### **The Korean question:**

#### **(b) Report of the United Nations Agent General for Korean Reconstruction: report of the Second Committee (A/2603)**

[Agenda item 18]

*Mr. Haliq (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur of the Second Committee, presented the report of that Committee (A/2603).*

94. The PRESIDENT: Since no representative wishes to explain his vote, the Assembly will now vote on the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee [A/2603].

*The draft resolution was adopted by 52 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*