

**ECONOMIC
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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Church House, Dean's Yard, London,
on Thursday, 18 April 1946, at 10.30 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. McNEIL (United Kingdom)

Continuation of the general discussion.

The Chairman stated that after a detailed examination of the Franco-Belgian proposal made at the previous meeting, he had come to the conclusion that the Committee was not competent to adopt such a motion. Since that proposal made specific reference to the "question raised by the Yugoslav Delegation" it must be considered in the light of the Yugoslav statements on this question, the essence of which was that the international agreements which required allied military authorities to hand over war criminals and quislings were both inadequate and inefficiently implemented. In stating that this question was "of such a character as to entitle the Committee to undertake investigations" the Franco-Belgian proposal was in fact asking the Committee to protest against a situation which was not its concern. Until the future refugee organization was created, the handing over of these undesirables remained the exclusive responsibility of the allied military authorities. The Committee's duty was only to recommend what assistance should be given refugees and displaced persons, and to ensure that war criminals etc. would not benefit from this assistance. For the Committee to institute investigations to specify who these war criminals and quislings were and what measures should be taken to deal with them would far exceed the type of investigation envisaged in paragraph 7 of the Economic and Social Council's Resolutions.

For these reasons therefore he found it necessary to apply the Chairman's prerogative and rule the Franco-Belgian motion out of order. He thought the Committee might usefully receive a report on the progress which the drafting sub-committee had made on the definition of the terms "refugee" and "displaced person" before proceeding with the discussion of points 6 and 7 of the Chairman's plan (E/REF/9).

The decision gave rise to considerable discussion during which certain definitions expressed the view that the Chairman had no legal right to close the debate in such a manner without the consent of the Committee. To this it was replied that the Chairman had not closed the debate, he had merely ruled a specific proposal out of order. If any delegates felt they could not accept the Chairman's ruling it would be perfectly in order for them to table a motion of censure in writing. However, if no such motion was put forward, the discussion would proceed according to the plan of work (E/REF/9).

MR. BEBLER, Yugoslavia, objected to this procedure on the grounds that a general discussion should take place until his motion calling for the immediate investigation into conditions in certain displaced persons camps had been considered. In suggesting that the Committee proceed to receive a report on the drafting sub-committee's findings, the Chairman had, he thought, prejudiced the satisfactory examination of a situation which for reasons which had been stated many times before, required urgent attention. In previous discussion it had been argued that the Committee had no right to suggest to the Economic and Social Council that a detailed investigation of the situation should be made. Article 62 of the Charter, however, made it abundantly clear that such an investigation was well within the powers and duties of the Economic and Social

Council. The question was too important and potentially dangerous to be ignored. If the Committee did not give it proper consideration, the Yugoslav Delegation would be forced to the conclusion that the Committee's attitude, and particularly that of certain Delegations, was hostile to Yugoslavia. Since the Yugoslav motion for the immediate establishment of the fact-finding sub-committee to study this question had been lost at the previous meeting, Mr. Bebler proposed the following alternative:

"The Committee decides to send immediately a Commission to visit the Yugoslav camps at Eboli and Modena in Italy in order to find out whether the assertions of the Yugoslav Delegation in the Committee correspond to facts"

Commenting on the remarks of the previous speaker MRS. VERWEY, Netherlands, observed that the Delegation for Yugoslavia had taken up an inordinate amount of the Committee's time. On the previous day the Chairman had fairly and generously interrupted the debate on future machinery to be recommended, in order to allow Mr. Bebler to table an urgent motion regarding conditions in certain displaced persons camps. In spite of the fact that this motion had been rejected after a lengthy debate, Mr. Bebler was still imposing his arguments on the Committee. If he was genuinely anxious to bring the Committee to his way of thinking he would be better advised to adopt a less obstructive attitude.

SIR GEORGE RENDEL, United Kingdom, suggested that the Committee should adjourn its meeting since it was evident that further discussion would not be very profitable. In connection with the Yugoslav Delegate's statement regarding the necessity of the Committee investigating conditions in certain displaced persons camps, he reiterated his opinion that the Committee was not a tribunal to judge war criminals and traitors, its task was rather to make practical recommendations for the future refugee organization. Towards this end, the speech made by Mr. Malin

of the I.G.C. at the eleventh meeting (E/REF/28) had been particularly valuable and it was to be hoped that the Committee could proceed to examine it without further interruption or unnecessary votes of procedure. He wished to emphasize that the amendment to the Yugoslav motion which he had proposed at the previous meeting had been designed to give the utmost measure of satisfaction to the Yugoslav Delegate. Its acceptance had, in fact, prevented the Committee from having to give a negative decision on the Yugoslav motion.

There was, however, one point in Mr. Bebler's last speech with which he must take strong exception, namely the suggestion that the Chairman had been biased. This suggestion was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Mr. McNeil was not able to reply to it, having, unfortunately, been called away from the meeting at eleven o'clock. If Mr. Bebler wished to criticize the Chairman's conduct he was perfectly entitled to move a motion of censure, in the course of the discussion of which he would have had ample opportunity of expressing his opinions and of hearing the Committee's views.

The acting Chairman, MR WINIEWISCZ, Poland, stated that the motion for adjournment proposed by the Delegate for the United Kingdom would, under Rule 31 of the Committee's rules of procedure, have priority over all other motions. After the Delegates for Yugoslavia and the United States had spoken against and for the motion respectively, the motion was put to the vote and adopted. The Acting Chairman announced that the Committee would therefore be adjourned until Tuesday, 23 April at 2 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.
