COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Monday, 17 February 1947, at 11:00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mrs. Begtrup (Denmark)
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Street (Australia)
Rapporteur: Mrs. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Members:
Mrs. New (China)
Mrs. de Echeverria (Costa Rica)
Mrs. Lefancheux (France)
Miss Basterrechea (Guatemala)
Mrs. Halid Ali (India)
Mrs. de Castillo Ledon (Mexico)
Mrs. Comza (Syria)
Mrs. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Miss Sutherland (United Kingdom)
Miss Kenyon (United States of America)
Mrs. Urdaneta (Venezuela)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:
Miss Rowe (ILO)

Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:
Miss Sendor (AF of L)
Miss Spiegel (WFTU)

Secretariat:
Mr. Humphrey
Mr. Lawason
Miss Bowerman (Secretary of the Commission)

The meeting was convened by the CHAIRMAN who called upon the Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on Communications to report.

Mrs. NEW (China) reported on the Sub-Committee's work (document E/CH.6/19).

/Mrs. URALOVA
Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out that they had not yet received the Russian or French texts of the document, and Mrs. PCPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked that discussion of this item be therefore postponed.

The CHAIRMAN agreed to postpone discussion of this item to the next meeting.

The CHAIRMAN then called the Commission's attention to two resolutions dealing with non-governmental organizations, namely the Australian resolution (document E/CN.6/18) and the Byelorussian resolution.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) amended her resolution to add the phrase "unless such agency is already in existence" after the words "setting up" in the third line of the third paragraph.

Mrs. NEW (China) regarded the two resolutions as two separate proposals, and favoured the Australian resolution which stressed the organizational aspects as against the Byelorussian resolution which stressed the need to fight for certain principles.

Mrs. PCPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the Byelorussian resolution was definite in its statement of purpose, and was guided by the principles of the Charter.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) saw difficulties in the phraseology of both resolutions, since the Economic and Social Council had already formulated a policy regarding relations with non-governmental organizations.

The Council had decided that national organizations should present their views through their governments or through any international organizations to which they might be affiliated. She was disturbed at requesting the Council to "encourage" such organizations, since it might imply a reversal of established policy.

Mrs. PCPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) claimed that the creation of such organizations could only strengthen the United Nations.
Miss KENYON (United States of America) said encouragement of this kind would not run counter to the principles of the United Nations, but would be a departure from the Economic and Social Council's policy. While she felt that the suggestions contained in the resolutions might serve as a valuable addition, they should remain in the form of suggestions rather than requests. The initiative for forming co-ordinating agencies would have to rest with the organizations themselves in each Member country.

Mrs. PASTERRECHTA (Guatemala) asked the sponsors of the resolutions to explain their texts, since she could discern no difference between the two resolutions.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) recalled the declaration of 5 November 1943 issued by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Generalissimo Stalin regarding the treatment of enemy nations. She also called the Commission's attention to Article I of Chapter 2 of the United Nations Charter calling upon all Member Nations to wage active war against the remnants of Fascism. She further reminded members of the resolution passed by the General Assembly regarding non-recognition of Franco Spain, as well as the resolution calling for the outlawing of genocide.

On the basis of these documents she felt it would be strange if the Commission were to disregard the principles contained in her resolution. In the struggle against Fascism it was the children who were especially endangered, and it was therefore women's primary duty to fight Fascism. According to the Australian resolution, any women's organization might be given consultative status. She disagreed that organizations not engaged in the fight against Fascism should be given such status. To do so would be to depart from the basic premise of achieving a lasting peace. The words "the fight for the full elimination of the remnants of Fascism and the establishment of a democratic peace among peoples" which were included in her resolution, but left out of the Australian resolution, represented the essential difference between the two texts. In her view the fight against Fascism was as basic a task as the fight for equal status for women.
Mrs. STREET (Australia) believed the most effective way of fighting Fascism and establishing a lasting peace was to raise the status of women and afford them full participation in the affairs of their countries.

Basically all women were in favour of peace. Moreover, in her own country and others which had not been invaded or occupied, and where people did not appreciate the desperate conditions created by Fascism, many did not understand the phrase "elimination of the remnants of Fascism". Instead, they often associated it with a political party with which many organizations would frequently not co-operate. The phrase would create division rather than unity.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of one of the invaded countries, doubted the wisdom of adopting the Byelorussian draft. The fight against Fascism and the establishment of a democratic peace constituted two of the fundamental principles of the Charter. If they were to be mentioned in the present resolution, it might be equally appropriate to mention them in the text of every resolution adopted by United Nations organs.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) agreed with the Chairman. The specific mention of some of the principles of the Charter was inappropriate; the Charter was a nobly conceived document which contained a great deal more than that. It might be advisable to modify the appropriate phrase of the Byelorussian draft so as to admit "organizations which fight for the implementation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" - without mentioning any particular principles.

As regards the observation of the Member from the United States, she was of the opinion that the Australian proposal had in view voluntary and democratic organizations not subject to dictation by governments. The phrase "encourage the setting up" did not seem to imply any undue governmental actions, or the establishment of any governmental bodies which might control women's organizations.
Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) did not think that the fight for the full elimination of the remnants of Fascism could discourage women's participation in the proposed co-ordinating non-governmental organizations. The women of the non-invaded countries should be made to realize the significance of the scourge of Fascism, which her country had borne in full. If women all over the world could understand that Fascism was not just another political movement, they would accept with enthusiasm the principle outlined in the Byelorussian text.

If, as the CHAIRMAN had suggested, the fight against Fascism was one of the fundamental ideas of the Charter, what objection could there be to mentioning it specifically? That idea should be mentioned again and again, so that the women of the world might become fully aware of its importance.

Mrs. NEW (China) said she wished to protect the new generation from thinking in terms of warfare and invasion. The new generations should feel secure and should think in terms of reconstruction, construction, freedom, and justice. Positive principles should prevail, rather than the negative idea of fighting against something.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) agreed with the Chairman that the fight against Fascism was one of the principles of the Charter. She favoured the Byelorussian text for the very reasons which had caused the Member from Australia to oppose it. Her own country, France, had borne the brunt of the invasion; if there were women in the world who did not understand what Fascism meant and who might be repelled by the idea of fighting for its elimination, then repetition of that principle was necessary.

DECISION: The draft resolution on relations with non-governmental organizations presented by the Member from the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was rejected by seven votes to five.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) said that for purposes of clarity the words "are formed and" in the last paragraph of her draft proposal (document E/CN.6/18) should be deleted.
Miss KENYON (United States of America) expressed sympathy for the objectives of the Australian proposal, but had some reservations as regards the use of the word "encourage" in the third paragraph. The organizations contemplated in the resolution should be purely voluntary, and the government action suggested by the present draft was undesirable. The resolution should simply recommend that the Economic and Social Council give full consideration to any application for consultative status of co-coordinating agencies of non-governmental organizations. The free and voluntary character of the organizations should be made clear.

She suggested the following substitute text for the third paragraph of the Australian proposal:

"The Commission therefore expresses the hope that the Economic and Social Council give full consideration to any applications which may be submitted by such national co-coordinating agencies in order that the Commission on the Status of Women may be able to have an opportunity of consulting with representatives of any such organizations which the Council may accredit for consultation."

Mrs. STREET (Australia) was not prepared to accept the United States text, but suggested instead the deletion of the phrase "recommend to the Member States that" in the Australian draft.

After the CHAIRMAN had expressed doubt whether the Economic and Social Council had the right to encourage the formation of any national organizations, Mrs. STREET (Australia) said that her original text should be acceptable with the understanding that no infringement was intended of the free and voluntary nature of the organizations. It was not the policy of the Economic and Social Council to consult with national organizations without the endorsement of the Governments of the appropriate Member States. No more than such an endorsement need be implied by the word "encourage."

Miss KENYON (United States of America) did not wish to press her proposal provided it were fully understood that the Australian draft did not infringe on the free and voluntary nature of the organizations.

/DECISION:
DECISION: The Australian draft proposal regarding co-ordinating agencies of non-governmental organizations, as amended by the sub-committee (document E/CN.6/18) and with the drafting changes submitted by the Member from Australia, was adopted by nine votes to two with three abstentions.

It was agreed that the Secretariat be authorized to redraft the third paragraph for clarity, so that the phrase "each within their own country" should follow the word "encourage".

The meeting rose at 12:50 p.m.