

pletely free of military control? Yet the Unified Command is offering this very kind of free, impartial investigation.

Double Standards Used

I should like to digress for a moment to point out to members of the Committee a remarkable instance of the double standards employed by Mr. Vyshinsky in giving us the other day a lurid picture of brutality in the prisoner of war camps under the control of the Unified Command. He quoted from a report of the International Committee of the Red Cross in an effort to substantiate his tale. We, on our side, have great confidence in the International Committee of the Red Cross. We understood, prior to Mr. Vyshinsky's remarks the other day, that — to use his own words — he regarded it as “a tool of the American imperialists, the war-mongers”. But he quotes the International Committee of the Red Cross in support of a particular argument which he is presenting. Nevertheless, neither Mr. Vyshinsky nor the Communist negotiators at Panmunjom will accept that organization as a fit body to interview prisoners of war with a view to learning their wishes concerning repatriation. Would that I could interpret his reference to the judgment of the International Committee of the Red Cross as an indication that the organization may be accepted in the future — the near future, I trust — as one commanding the confidence of the Communists for investigating the desires of prisoners of war with respect to repatriation.

It may be worth while to examine the more specific charge of the Communist truce delegation that the terms offered by the Unified Command contradict the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war. Incidentally, the other day, Mr. Vyshinsky complained of what he called, in substance, the traditional policy of the United States in signing agreements or conventions and not ratifying them. He went on to say that the United States had not ratified the Geneva Convention of 1949. That is true. But what are the other facts? They are that only seventeen countries have ratified the Convention and that the Soviet Union is not among them. If the serious charge were to be made against the United States Government that it had not ratified the Convention, I think it would have been fair if Mr. Vyshinsky had added why — and, doubtless, there are good reasons — the Soviet Union itself had not ratified the Convention.

I should like to underline the fact that it is a generally accepted rule that the terms of an international agreement or convention are to be interpreted in the light of the intentions of the drafters and the preparatory work which preceded its conclusion.

Our main concern when the Geneva Convention was under consideration was, surely, the welfare of the individual prisoner. That

was stated here very ably the other day by the representative of Sweden. The Convention's purpose is essentially humanitarian; it is inspired by respect for human personality and dignity. In the preliminary remarks to the Second Revised Edition of the Four Conventions of 1949, the International Committee says that it has “laboured unremittingly for the greater protection in international law of the individual against the hardships of war”. That clearly indicates the purpose which brought together the persons at that conference; it clearly underlines the character of the debates, without going into them in full; it clearly indicates the main purpose of the Conventions. Since the Conventions themselves were designed for the protection of the individual, no single article can be interpreted in such a way as to cause hardship for him. We still, therefore, await Mr. Vyshinsky's answer to the five questions put to him so aptly the other day by the representative of the United Kingdom, as to whether the Soviet Union would really condone the practice of forcible repatriation. I think Mr. Vyshinsky has perhaps answered the first of Mr. Lloyd's questions, but we must have an answer to the other four before we can end this debate. The questions which Mr. Lloyd put — and I have examined them again very carefully — are neither rhetorical nor hypothetical: they are fundamental to the settlement of this whole issue.

Communist Record

Now what is the record of the Communist Command as regards the Geneva Convention, which, it seems, has suddenly become the guide and standard by which they wish the prisoner of war issue to be solved? This is their record. They have refused to follow the provisions of article 23, concerning the disposition of prisoner of war camps. That, too, is contrary to international law and morality. They have refused to grant prisoners of war facilities for communication with their families, as provided for in articles 70 and 71. That, too, is a very important fact in considering the international law and morality of the situation. They have refused to allow the receipt of relief parcels, as provided for in article 72.

Hence, here again we find Mr. Vyshinsky's double standard technique. He endorses with fervour and rhetoric some articles of the Geneva Convention — as, in fact, have the Communist negotiators at Panmunjom. But neither he nor they offer any explanation for their disregard of other provisions of the same convention, such as those I have just noted. Surely, if the letter of the law of two articles is so sacrosanct to Mr. Vyshinsky, I must presume that the letter of the law of these other articles is equally sacrosanct. Perhaps Mr. Vyshinsky could explain this. I offer it to him, at least, as one further question for him to answer; and I shall have some other questions for him in another context.