

treaty on human rights has occupied the various organs concerned. Since 1951, two draft Covenants on Human Rights have been under preparation, one on Civil and Political Rights, the other on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Recently, discussion has centred on the difficult problem of measures of implementation, particularly on the desirability of including a federal state clause which would meet the constitutional requirements of non-unitary states; and on the inclusion of an article on the "right of self-determination".<sup>1</sup>

At its sixteenth session in the summer of 1953, ECOSOC requested the Commission on Human Rights to complete the drafting of the Covenants on Human Rights during its tenth session in 1954, and invited member states, the Specialized Agencies, and the non-governmental organizations concerned to submit their comments on the draft Covenants. It also transmitted to member governments and Specialized Agencies for their comments the three proposals presented to the Commission last year by the United States for a Human Rights Action Programme. These proposals were brought forward by the United States Representative when it was announced that the United States would not sign the two Covenants on Human Rights. They would call for biennial reports from member states on developments and progress in the field of human rights; provision of technical assistance to governments to help in the eradication of discrimination and protection of minorities within their own territories, and the initiation by the Commission on Human Rights of a series of studies on a world-wide basis of specific aspects of human rights. The expert advisers appointed by the Secretary-General to carry out these studies would have access to information made available to the United Nations by member states, by Specialized Agencies and non-governmental organizations having consultative status; and to the information supplied to the Commission by the Secretary-General regarding communications about human rights received from private sources.<sup>2</sup>

A number of resolutions on human rights were debated during the eighth session of the General Assembly, and some of them were not adopted but were referred to the Commission for further consideration. Thus, it proved impossible to agree whether a federal state clause should be included in the Covenants, chiefly because some delegations sought to represent such a clause as a device to evade full implementation of the Covenants. During the debate the Canadian Representative, who supported the reference to the Commission, pointed out that, owing to the subjects dealt with by the Covenants, in the absence of a federal state clause it would be impossible for Canada to ratify the Covenants "short of a drastic overhaul of its basic constitutional arrangements". The Assembly also referred to the Commission on Human Rights for consideration a resolution suggesting the addition to the Covenants of provisions recognizing the right of petition. Another resolution, requesting the Commission to study at its tenth session the United States Human Rights Action Programme, together with the comments and debates thereon, was adopted by a vote of 47 in favour (including Canada) 5 against (Soviet bloc) and 6 abstentions (Arab states and India).

<sup>1</sup>See "Self-Determination of Peoples" below, page 49.

<sup>2</sup>See *Canada and the United Nations 1952-53*, pp. 53-54.