

Non-Governmental Organizations

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) maintains a system of consultation with a large number of non-governmental organizations (N.G.O.'s), to which it accords special recognition; these organizations, which do not represent governments, have in many cases a very large international membership. The Council and its bodies are enabled by this means to secure expert information and advice from organizations having special competence, and to obtain the views of organizations which represent important elements of public opinion. Under the arrangements worked out by the Council with the assistance of its N.G.O. Committee, organizations granted consultative status are classified according to three categories: Category A organizations, which have a basic interest in most of the activities of the Council; Category B organizations, which have a special competence in only a few specialized fields; and organizations which are listed in a special register because they have a significant contribution to make to the work of the Council, but are not, in the Council's opinion, qualified for listing in either of the other two categories.

One of the main tasks of the N.G.O. Committee during the period under review was to complete a survey of the more than 200 organizations in consultative relationship with the Council and to confirm or revise their classifications. No change was made in the very small list of nine organizations in Category A.¹ The Committee did, however, raise a number of organizations from the register to Category B and it reclassified some Category B organizations for listing in the register.

Two problems considered by ECOSOC were of particular interest. The first was the reconsideration of a decision taken at the eleventh session in 1950 to withdraw consultative status from the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, and the International Organization of Journalists. The Soviet Delegation had objected very strongly to this decision, which it regarded as discriminatory, and had requested that their original status be restored, and further that Category A status be given to the World Federation of Democratic Youth. At the thirteenth session of ECOSOC in 1951, the United States and United Kingdom Delegations replied to Soviet charges by pointing out that these organizations had made no contribution to the work of the Council, and that they were political and propagandist bodies whose activities were not related to the economic and social work of the United Nations. It was decided to maintain the original decision. (However, ECOSOC includes in its register organizations which are in consultative status with Specialized Agencies; the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Organization of Journalists are still in consultative status with UNESCO.)

The second important question faced by the Council was the request of the International Islamic Economic Organization to be

¹The nine organizations in Category A are: International Chamber of Commerce; International Confederation of Free Trade Unions; International Co-operative Alliance; International Federation of Agricultural Producers; International Federation of Christian Trade Unions; International Organization of Employers; Inter-Parliamentary Union; World Federation of Trade Unions; World Federation of United Nations Associations.