

Southern Africa were accomplices of the regimes and therefore contributed to the denial of human rights. There was no agreement, however, as to what activities constituted assistance and how such activities contributed to the denial of human rights. A special *rapporteur* was appointed to evaluate, as a matter of urgency, the importance and source of political, military, economic and other assistance given by certain states and the direct or indirect effects of such assistance. The Third Committee had before it this year an interim report of the *rapporteur*. While not contesting the facts presented in the report, Canada took issue with it on two fundamental points. First, the report assumed that all links with such regimes, even normal diplomatic and commercial relations, constituted assistance. Secondly, the report limited itself to establishing that such links existed, without attempting to establish whether they contributed to the denial of human rights. Canada therefore abstained on this resolution.

Since the 1973 overthrow of the Allende Government, Chile has been a centre of concern at the United Nations. At the thirty-first session, the mandate of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group, established in 1975 to investigate human rights in that country, was once again extended, in the hope that an agreement permitting an inspection visit could be reached with the Government of Chile.

Although the Third Committee saw little of the controversy of the previous session, movement on most human rights issues remained minimal. The central problem in dealing with social and humanitarian issues is the absence of a common philosophical ground of agreement on which to base resolutions. Western countries, with long and established traditions of liberalism, promote conceptions of civil and political rights that stress individualism and freedom from extraneous constraints. The non-aligned states, whose solidarity became a political reality in the Third Committee at the thirty-first session, tend to emphasize the economic rights of underdeveloped countries and the social rights of peoples or groups. A Swedish draft resolution on political prisoners, for example, represented a genuine Western attempt to meet the concerns of a majority of states, but it posed obvious embarrassments to many countries in which collective concern for economic development is greater than respect for those civil and political rights that are fundamental to Western societies. Given the preponderant influence of the non-aligned, it will henceforth be necessary to combine West-

ern and Third World views of rights into a consistent and acceptable basis for future resolutions and agreements. We are to avoid the situation of near-paralysis plaguing the Declaration on Racial Intolerance, which has been in the system since 1962 with no sign of nearing completion.

### Administrative questions

The scale of assessment was one of the most important and difficult items on the Assembly's Administration and Budget (Fifth) Committee. The scale recommended by the Committee for contributions, apportioning a share of United Nations expenses to each member according to a complicated formula which incorporates several criteria, including national income. In normal circumstances the scale is revised every three years. The inevitable problem of comparability and timeliness of statistics has rendered the Committee's task a difficult one. Recent international monetary fluctuations and economic instability have added to its complexity. At the first session, for example, a number of states whose national income had recently risen dramatically from oil revenues were opposed to the proposed increases in their contributions. Many other countries, including Canada, supported the Committee's proposed revision. In the end, late in the session, the Assembly adopted the scale by consensus for a one-year period during which a study of criteria of assessment would be made and the next level of assessment (for those with the lowest "capacity to contribute") currently .02 per cent of the UN budget would be reduced to .01 per cent. Canada's interim assessment, based on a resolution of the larger questions regarding a new triennial scale, had dropped from 3.05 per cent to 2.05 per cent, though Canada will remain the ninth-largest contributor to the budget.

A second important issue was the need for more office space. In 1975 the Government of Austria offered to provide office accommodation to the United Nations in the Danube Centre in Vienna, planned for completion in 1978-79 at a total cost to the Government of \$700 million. The project had first been planned to house the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the International Energy Agency, both of which were already located in Vienna in temporary headquarters. The latest Austrian proposal was made following the discovery

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