

## 26. SUPPRESSION OF THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND IN OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS<sup>1</sup>

At the fourth and fifth sessions of the Economic and Social Council resolutions were adopted which requested the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to transfer to the United Nations the functions formerly exercised by the League of Nations with regard to the Conventions for the suppression of traffic in women and children and in obscene publications. This matter was considered by the Third Committee of the General Assembly. The Soviet representative proposed the deletion of those articles in the Conventions concerning the application of the Conventions to colonies and protectorates. It was the Soviet view that the application of these Conventions to non-self-governing territories should be automatic, precisely as to metropolitan powers, since otherwise metropolitan powers would not be bound to suppress the traffic in their colonies and protectorates.

The United Kingdom and the United States argued that it was not the function of the General Assembly to amend the Conventions but merely to transfer the former functions of the League of Nations under the Conventions to the United Nations. On a roll call vote the amendment of the Soviet Union was adopted with 16 votes in favour, 12 against and 18 abstentions. The resolution as amended was then adopted by 45 in favour with 2 abstentions. The Canadian representative opposed the Soviet amendment but voted for the resolution as a whole. When this resolution was discussed in plenary session the United Kingdom submitted an amendment to omit from the report of the Third Committee those sections deleting from the Conventions the colonial application clauses. The United Kingdom representative wished to preserve, as he stated, the constitutional right of the colonies to decide for themselves whether they

<sup>1</sup> International Convention of September 30, 1921, on the traffic of women and children, Convention of October 11, 1933, on the traffic in women of full age, and Convention of September 12, 1933, on the traffic in obscene publications.