

We are not concerned here at this stage with what people read. What matters is whether or not there are slave labourers. We are still waiting for relevant evidence that the situation reported in the Ad Hoc Committee's report has been remedied!

To our mind the existence of forced labour can be regarded as an integral part of any system which is not founded on a truly democratic basis and where as a consequence fundamental freedoms cannot be recognized both in theory and in practice.

We fully endorse the condemnation by the Economic and Social Council of the existence of systems of forced labour. As long as such systems exist it will be for the United Nations to take appropriate action with a view to bringing about their elimination and at the same time genuine respect for one of the fundamental human rights.

In a period of history which has witnessed the abolition of slavery, the admirable work of the International Labour Organization, the proclamation of fundamental freedoms in the United Nations Charter and more emphatically in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the situation described in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee is all the more disturbing. This situation cannot be ignored by any delegation which is sensitive to the sufferings of millions of human beings. That is why, Mr. Chairman, we call upon these delegations to give their full support of resolution A/C.3/L456 which is before the Committee.

Voting Results

Following is the text of the resolution (U.N. Doc. A/RESOLUTION/287) which was adopted by the Third Committee on December 15 by a vote of 31 in favour (including Canada) to 5 against, with 12 abstentions and adopted on December 17 in a plenary session of the General Assembly on the report of the Third Committee (U.N. Doc. A/2878) by a vote of 41 in favour to 5 against, with 10 abstentions:

Text of Resolution

The General Assembly,

Having noted Economic and Social Council resolution 524 (XVII) of 27 April 1954 concerning the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour,

1. Endorses the condemnation by the Economic and Social Council of the existence of systems of forced labour which are employed as a means of political coercion or punishment for holding or expressing political views, and which are on such a scale as to constitute an important element in the economy of a given country;