

human rights did not mean that, it did not mean much. Professor Koretsky wanted to fight the remnants of fascism and to prevent its rebirth, but that cannot be done without interfering in the internal affairs of governments. The struggle for human rights has always been and always will be a struggle against authority. There was perhaps something paradoxical about what the United Nations was trying to do, for the international bill of rights was being drafted by the representatives of governments. These were some of the things that I would have liked to say to Professor Koretsky, had I not been the servant of the committee; for I did not think that he was very effectively answered by the members.

"In 1947 it was an easy assumption in the West that the Soviet Union would never accept a binding convention on human rights, and Russian diplomats confirmed this by their off-the-record remarks. It was in the logic of the Cold War, however, that later, after the United States had turned against the covenants for reasons grounded in internal politics and countries like the United Kingdom were worried by the provisions put into them on the self-determination of peoples, the Soviet Union should attempt to fill the vacuum and become a champion of the covenants."

In the meantime, the drafting committee finished its work and the Universal Declaration went in September 1948 to the Third Committee of the General Assembly, which deals with social, cultural and humanitarian questions. All delegations are represented on this standing committee, and a first vote is taken here, to be followed by a final vote in the General Assembly. Charles Malik of the Lebanon, who was knowledgeable because he had been rapporteur of the Human Rights Commission, was in the chair. But there was lengthy debate before it was agreed to deal only with the Declaration, and leave until later the work on a covenant (which turned into two covenants: the first, on civil and political rights, and the second, on economic, social and cultural rights). Even so, the committee held 81 meetings to debate amendments to the draft Declaration. Humphrey comments:

"Several delegations regretted that the covenant would not be adopted at the same time as the Declaration. New Zealand in particular was against adopting any declaration until the convention was ready. Had their advice been followed, the adoption of the Declaration might have been postponed indefinitely. It should have been clear, even in 1948, that reaching agreement on a convention setting forth precise legal obligations would be infinitely more difficult than drafting a Declaration, and that it would take a long time to complete.

"In the meantime, it would be nothing short of a miracle if, in the rapidly changing atmosphere at the United Nations, the convention did not become a focus of political controversy, and that is what did happen. By 1950, the burning issue of the self-determination of peoples had, for example, become a principal theme in the human rights debates. The covenants ran into rough weather, and it was not until 1966 that they were completed and opened for signature, 19 years after the first session of the Human Rights Commission, and it was 10 more years before they came into force.