

At the ninth session of the General Assembly in 1954, ECOSOC's decision was criticized by a number of delegations since they believed the resolutions should have been transmitted to the Assembly. As a result, a resolution was approved by 41 votes in favour, 11 against (Western European and Commonwealth countries), with 3 abstentions (Canada, Chile and Mexico), requesting the Commission on Human Rights to "complete its recommendations", and also requesting that the Council transmit them to the tenth session of the General Assembly. While making clear Canada's adherence to the concept of self-determination, the Canadian Representative expressed strong doubts as to the propriety of the General Assembly addressing itself directly to a Commission which reports to the Economic and Social Council, a procedure which could be held to affect the Council's position and status.

The Human Rights Commission, at its eleventh session in 1954, voted again, with only minor changes, in favour of the two draft resolutions proposing the establishment of the commissions mentioned above, and the two resolutions were submitted by ECOSOC to the tenth session of the General Assembly, together with a third draft resolution originated by the Council itself. This alternative resolution, proposed by the United States, reflected the view of a majority of the governments represented on the Council that the concept of self-determination should be more fully studied before any decision was taken to set up new machinery to speed the realization of "the right of self-determination" proclaimed by the Soviet bloc and Arab, Asian and Latin American countries in the United Nations. The alternative resolution provided for the establishment of an *ad hoc* commission of five persons to be appointed by the Secretary-General "to conduct a thorough study of the concept of self-determination".

These recommendations of ECOSOC and of its Commission on Human Rights are closely related to Article 1 of the Draft International Covenants on Human Rights, which attempts, in accordance with the wishes of a majority of the member governments, to formulate the concept of self-determination as a collective right of "peoples" and "nations".

As a result of a prolonged debate on the question of self-determination in the context of Article 1 of the Draft Covenants, the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee had no time left during the 1955 session of the General Assembly for a thorough discussion of the related item entitled "Recommendations concerning International Respect for the Right of Peoples and Nations to Self-determination". A proposal by the delegate of Afghanistan that consideration of the item be postponed to the eleventh session of the General Assembly was accordingly adopted without opposition.

The Canadian view is that unqualified acceptance of self-determination as a "right" would lead to serious difficulties in the absence of any generally agreed criteria for applying the principle (which in itself is open to varying interpretations). Speaking in the Third Committee, the Canadian Representative summed up the position as follows: "It seems to us that the very notion of who is entitled to self-determination and what it means—or when and how it should be asserted—is still too loose, too vague, to be defined with the desirable accuracy. In these circumstances, we find it impossible to declare our unreserved acceptance of self-determination, either as a right or as a principle". He went on to say: "While we believe that the United Nations can and should help to solve this problem, we do not delude ourselves that our organization will have the final word. We do not forget that the organization is based on the principle of 'the sovereign equality of all its members' and that in matters of such fundamental importance as 'the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and nation' there can be no really effective action