

Annual Report of the representative of the ISSW to the U.N. in Geneva

Period from July 1972 to May 1973.

Resume of Conferences

1. ECOSOC:

The 53rd session of the ECOSOC was held in Geneva from the 3rd to the 28th of July, 1972. Among the principal decisions taken by the Council were : the preparation of a study about multinational societies, an appeal to interested governments to put an end to the traffic of manual African labourers, toward Europe and very large recommendations on agrarian reform. In addition, the elimination of poverty of the masses and of unemployment in developing countries, was treated; also the Council recommended to these governments to define the measure of the poverty of the masses and of the unemployment characterizing their economy, and to prepare a program to eliminate these conditions. Regarding governments of industrialized countries, they have been invited to increase their contributions to fight against these problems. Finally, in relation to family planning, the member States were solicited to provide information and practical ways of making information available to all people by 1980.

Concerning the several approved resolutions elaborated during the session entitled "Status of the Women" (see report of activities 1972), the Council asked its members, specialized institutions and NGOs to present at regular intervals information relative to the Status of the Women, i.e. abolition of slavery, and repression of traffic in human beings.

2. The Special Committee on Disarmement, formed out of the General Conference of NGOs, organized in Geneva an international meeting from the 25th to the 29th September.

The representatives of 86 NGOs examined the political, economic and social problems posed for the realization of a general and complete disarmement, and the manner to attract public opinion to this subject. They emphasized the nefarious consequences of new arms for the preservation of the environment, and the particular responsibilities pertaining to the NGOs to inform the public opinion on this area. Notably the organization of a World Disarmement Week, as well as an urgent appeal to the General Assembly of the U.N. and to the international community to hold a World Conference on Disarmement as soon as possible.

3. The 3rd Meeting of the "COIDIEA" (NGOs directly concerned by childhood and adolescence) was held in Geneva on the 16th February, 1973. It was organized by the International Union for Child Welfare, that is going to hold its Board for the year 1973.

Within the activities report of each member organization attending the meeting, one should keep in mind that:

- "The Union mondiale des Organismes pour la Sauvegarde de l'Enfance et de l'Adolescence" (UMOSEA) will organize a meeting in 1974 on "the evolution of specialized institutes for children and adolescents". The attending members sent out an appeal for directly concerned people (i.e. social workers, educators, etc.) who could be associated with preliminary studies.
- The international federation of Schools of parents and educators is presently conducting a study on the family conflicts between youth and adults, which is going to lead to a comparative international study.
- The international association for youth magistrates is preparing its 1974 congress to be held in Oxford (G.B.) on the theme "laws of minors in a changing world". This association is equally interested in the subject of the collaboration of the youth magistrates with different specialists.
- the international association of educators for maladapted children is also thinking about having a congress in 1974 on the theme "the educator and the new behaviour of youth in difficulty" which will take place in French Switzerland with the decentralization of the working groups for different cities.
- The international Union for Child Welfare opens its international journal in the form of a debate. All Organizations interested in the following subjects are invited to attend.

Post-disaster programs on the behalf of children
the migrants and their children
adoption

These are the subjects which currently concern the IUCW.

The members of the IFSW are strongly encouraged to take part in one or another of the above mentioned programs and in particular to send their letters to the IUCW Journal, which offers a very valuable platform for the exchange of ideas between professionals on social problems. The subject of the professional secret was then taken up under the heading of the professional secret of the educators. The IFSW took this opportunity to speak about the ruling agreements of this problem on the professional level. This subject being very complex, it was decided to hold it over to the next year's meeting which will be held in Geneva the 22nd and 23rd of February, 1974. After many speeches concerning the particular problems of the child, one spoke about the initiative which was proposed to the U.N. concerning an International Convention on Adoption. About this subject, the members suggested the creation of a working group among the COIDIEA of which the IFSW could take part; this group could be formed after the realization of a pre-study presently undertaken by the IUCW.

The migrant workers children equally concerned the present members, in view of a future study which would go together with the different meetings organized on the subject by the NGOs and with the International Conference of Labor in 1975.

Finally, the group is going to ask the approval of the Secretary General of the U.N. in order to celebrate the International Year of the Child in 1976. It will also take up on the agenda of the next year's meeting "the role and action of the NGOs regarding the problem of the environment".

One must emphasize the importance of this meeting of NGOs concerned by the same problems, which go in the same direction as the recommendations of the ECOSOC special committee for the NGOs, encouraging this kind of union. It is noted here that much more concrete actions can be undertaken when the efforts are united and co-ordinated.

4. The Conference Board of the NGOs

(having consultant status to the ECOSOC) after several closed meetings opened its 16th of May assembly where all members of the Conference were invited to participate.

- Essentially they concerned themselves with the consultant status of the NGOs, relative to the attitude of the special Committee. The terms of the relationship between the NGOs and the U.N. are not well defined, and certain governmental delegations of the Special Committee simply ignored the speeches given before them by the NGOs. This was particularly irritating to some members of the Board. At the same time, the council gave encouragements so that the activity and the reunion of NGOs would be better coordinated. And that at the national level the branches of the organizations concerned by the same problems should work together in the field with the support of the governments.

In addition, this relationship should be equally developed on a regional level between the different regional commissions of the ECOSOC and the sections of the NGOs. For the IFSW this implies the putting to work of the continental vice-presidents.

The program held forth another important point : preparation of the World Conference on Population in 1974. The NGOs look forward to organizing a debate parallel with the Conference where every organization, group or individual can speak on the problem of Population and where the experts, individual or NGO, will equally come to be heard. Due to this experience, one hopes to make up an organization committee where the different interests and races will be representative and which will in particular treat the financial aspect of the operation.

Finally, they spoke about the World Assembly of NGOs concerning global Environment which will take place in Geneva from the 15th to the 17th of June, 1974 and where different personalities of the UNDP will participate as speakers, such as Mr. Strong, Mr. Tolba, Mr. Thacher, etc. Of course, they will talk about relations between NGOs and UNDP concerning the problems of the environment.

B. Present Problems

In addition to the Conferences which I attended, certain facts and actions were touched upon whose importance I would like to underline in this report.

1. Two resolutions have been adopted in January 1973 by the General Assembly; One concerns prevention of crime and delinquency. Among other things it was suggested that there be a reunion of a Conference of Ministers concerned with social policy to examine the subject on an international level.

The other demand of the commission of social development to study the problem of adoption and of family placement, and proposed the organization of a conference whose purpose it would be to set up an international convention on legislation for adoption.

2. The ECOSOC in charge of the NGO adopted several resolutions in February of this year concerning the NGOs.

Among other things it was recommended that:

- The member states take into account the practical contributions of the experience and the special knowledge of the NGO nationals when they set up their program of social development.
- The civil servants of the Organisation of the UN posted in regions and countries take the initiative in setting up close relations with the NGOs, on the technical side as well as on operational planning.
- The NGOs stir up in the population a better understanding of the efforts of development taken up in their area, and that they should participate in them. In the closing meeting among other things, it was demanded that the UN adopt a more positive attitude towards youth and that the UN finance participation of young people at certain reunions held in Geneva.

3. The problem of the integration of women in development has been examined in November 1972 by the commission of social development. In discussing the role of the women in rural societies, it gave forth certain ideas that could interest the IFSW during their congresses in 1973 and 1974 (see annex).

4. The UN fund for population asked the NGOs to assist the world conference and the population year in 1974. It was suggested that this theme should be taken up during their reunions or congresses and that co-operation with governments at a national level to launch a campaign in favour of this world year.
5. The UN development programme should make intense effort to the interest the NGOs in its activities and to obtain their collaboration. It published for them a bulletin entitled "Engagement" which is an excellent instrument for exchanging information and which is trying to underline the concrete results of this collaboration.

In this fashion, and to support the subject of the 1974 conference, it should be interesting that the IFSW get in touch with the UNDP offices in particular for the developing countries, and at the particular level of vice-presidents for the interested continents.

In addition, one might be getting closer to the subjects that were suggested by the president concerning the social service methods for the promotion of the participation of youth in development activities.

6. The 10th December, 1973 - The universal declaration of the rights of man will celebrate its 25th anniversary. In this perspective the secretary general of the UN foresees that the concerned NGOs shall be associated with this celebration. Therefore, he recommends to them to organize activities on their side, each one according to their interests. If IFSW sees any action on this subject, they should notify the appropriate service (Service of Information).

In conclusion, these different objectives should all concern the IFSW at different levels. It would be useful to establish priorities - at the same time including the relative preoccupation of the activities concerning social service of children and young people such as were described by the President.

R A P P O R T

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de la représentante ad interim de la Fédération internationale des assistants sociaux à la 29ème session de la

COMMISSION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Genève, 26 février - 6 avril 1973

Présidence : M. Radhika Krishna Ramphul (Maurice)

L'ordre du jour de cette session, particulièrement longue puisqu'elle comptait une semaine de plus qu'habituellement, était chargé : 24 objets (annexe 1); quelques-uns d'entre eux furent d'emblée renvoyés à une séance ultérieure : l'étude du droit en vertu duquel nul ne peut être arbitrairement arrêté, détenu ou exilé; la question d'un code international d'éthique policière; la question des mesures à prendre contre les idéologies et pratiques fondées sur la terreur, par exemple; d'autres le furent après un premier débat, comme l'objection de conscience.

Par cette énumération, nous touchons déjà l'un des aspects des travaux de la Commission. Il semble qu'un sujet tel que les droits de l'homme devrait pouvoir être discuté sans connaître les tensions entre groupes politiquement opposés et pourtant, très fréquemment, des considérations de caractère politique ont dominé l'aspect humanitaire des problèmes abordés.

Le premier jour déjà, sur proposition du Pakistan, un télégramme a été envoyé au gouvernement d'Israël pour "le condamner de ce massacre d'innocents" (l'attaque de l'avion Lybyen), malgré les réserves et les oppositions faites à ce sujet et dont les auteurs ont toutefois obtenu qu'elles figurent au procès-verbal. (annexe 2)

La discrimination raciale et l'apartheid ont fait l'objet de longues discussions au cours desquelles on a vu les pays de l'Est, ainsi que des pays africains ou asiatiques s'opposer violemment aux déclarations des autres pays. Ils se sont cependant entendus pour proposer à l'ECOSOC un projet de convention sur l'élimination et la répression du crime d'apartheid.

Un point important de l'ordre du jour avait pour objet une résolution, - qui a été adoptée à l'unanimité, - concernant une Decennie de la lutte contre le racisme et la discrimination raciale, commençant le 10 décembre 1973, jour du 25ème anniversaire de la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme. Si, pendant un quart de siècle environ, la Commission a surtout servi, selon la formule de l'un de ses membres, de "laboratoire fabricant

des conventions", elle doit maintenant se préoccuper de leur application. Ce sera l'objet principal de cette décennie. Il a été relevé à cette occasion le rôle que les ONG ont à jouer dans ce domaine en mobilisant l'opinion publique. Certains orateurs ont proposé qu'elles établissent leur propre programme qui serait coordonné avec celui des Nations Unies. (Annexe 3)

Sur la base d'un rapport de l'UNESCO, l'enseignements des droits de l'homme dans les universités a été discuté; mais, encore, l'unanimité n'a pu être faite. Quelques membres de la Commission ont proposé que l'UNESCO continue à préparer la documentation nécessaire; d'autres ont fait remarquer que cet enseignement risquerait de constituer une immixtion injustifiée dans les programmes des universités. Un compromis a été trouvé en proposant qu'il soit donné dans le cadre de l'Université des Nations Unies dont la création a été décidée l'année dernière (sauf erreur) par l'Assemblée générale, ce qui en limite bien la portée. Finalement, la résolution adoptée a la teneur suivante : "La Commission..... prie l'UNESCO de continuer à étendre ses activités en ces matières et notamment à encourager l'enseignement et la recherche sur les droits de l'homme dans les universités et, à cette fin, à accélérer la préparation de matériels adéquats destinés à l'enseignements universitaire des droits de l'homme dont pourraient s'inspirer les universités et instituts où sont enseignés les diverses disciplines juridiques, scientifiques, techniques et autres; signale à l'attention du Conseil économique et social qu'elle est favorable à l'organisation d'un centre d'enseignements et de recherche dans le domaine des droits de l'homme, dans le cadre de l'Université des Nations Unies créée par la résolution 2951 de l'Assemblée générale.

L'étude de la question des droits de l'homme en rapport avec les progrès de la science et de la technique avait été préparée par un important et fort intéressant rapport de 238 pages du Secrétariat des Nations Unies. On y aborde, entre autres, les techniques d'enregistrement ~~et autres~~, portant atteinte à la vie privée des individus, (dispositifs acoustiques et optiques, microphone à rayon laser, par exemple). L'examen de cette question a aussi été renvoyée à la prochaine séance. (Ajoutons qu'elle embarrasse un des Etats représenté (l'URSS pour ne pas la nommer) soutenu par un groupe d'Etats du tiers monde qui ont besoin, à leur tour, de son appui dans des domaines qui n'ont rien à voir avec les droits de l'homme....)

La Commission des droits de l'homme et les ONG.

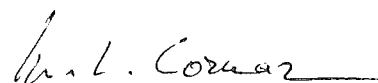
Au cours de la session, plusieurs ONG ont présenté des communications écrites (annexe 4 : quelques exemples), quelques-unes orales; nous avons entendu celle du représentant du Conseil

Oecuménisme des Eglises qui a montré la grande place qu'a, dans son programme d'activités, la lutte pour le respect des droits de l'homme. Si la collaboration des ONG n'a été que très rarement mentionnée par un membre de la Commission, il faut relever l'une des interventions de la représentante de l'UNESCO sur le rôle important des ONG au sein de son organisation qui tend de plus en plus à faire appel à elles. Elle estime toutefois que toutes les ONG n'ont pas encore pris suffisamment en considération les efforts des Nations Unies en faveur du respect des droits de l'homme et qu'elles doivent être stimulées dans ce sens. Il importe d'autre part que les ONG qui ont une activité dans ce domaine la fassent mieux connaître dans les milieux des Nations Unies.

Nous ne voudrions pas que ce rapport donne une impression trop négative des travaux de la Commission. Un grand nombre de résolutions ont été prises, des projets de résolutions et de conventions ~~reçus~~ seront soumis à l'ECOSOC. L'essentiel est maintenant qu'elles ne restent pas lettre morte. La volonté de nombreux membres de la Commission est d'effectuer un travail positif et efficace.

Notre rapport est très fragmentaire. Du fait que nous n'avons pu assister qu'à un nombre restreint de séances, il ne peut que donner quelques exemples parmi les nombreuses questions discutées. Nous n'avons pas voulu l'allonger en puisant nos renseignements dans la masse énorme de documents préparés pour cette session et nous préférons donner (annexe 5) la liste de quelques rapports qui nous sont parvenus et que nous avons trouvés particulièrement intéressants. Nous en recommandons la lecture à tous ceux qu'intéressent les questions traitées.

On peut conclure en disant qu'il y a encore beaucoup à faire pour que nous vivions dans un monde où, réellement, les droits de l'homme seront respectés. Nous pouvons certainement y apporter notre contribution en tant que Fédération internationale des assistants sociaux, mais aussi en tant qu'individu, chacun dans sa sphère d'activité.



M.-L. Cornaz

Lausanne, le 27 avril 1973

Annexes 1) *ment*,
2) liste des participants