Several documents have been combined in this section to give readers a better idea of how Eleanor Roosevelt developed her speech. They include a detailed State Department outline, an early draft of the speech with State Department corrections, the State Department’s published version, a set of extemporaneous remarks, and the French version of the speech.

**Outline**

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote her speech using the following State Department outline as a basis. State Department officials made suggestions but she had the final word on the text.
THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

I. The principal issue of our time is the preservation of human freedom.

A. I have chosen to discuss this issue

in Europe because this has been the scene of the
great historical battles between freedom and
tyranny;--

at the Sorbonne and in France, because here in this
soil the roots of human freedom have long ago struck
depth and have been richly nourished;--

on the eve of the General Assembly, because the issue
of human liberty is decisive for the settlement of
outstanding political differences and for the future
of the United Nations.

B. The struggle for human liberty concerns men everywhere.
No country or people can claim to have reached perfection.

In many countries, including the United States, we
are striving to extend to all citizens, regardless
of race, creed or economic status, the individual
rights which are fundamental to the democratic
process. We take courage from the record of per-
sistent effort and demonstrated improvement. We
are challenged by what remains to be done and welcome
the joint efforts which governments and peoples are
now undertaking not only through the United Nations,
but by persistent national and local effort.

In many countries, the struggle for freedom requires
improvement in living standards because we know that
personal dignity is difficult to attain if the basic
need for food, clothing and shelter for one's self
and one's family cannot be met.

In other countries, unfortunately, the principal
obstacle to freedom is government itself. In these
countries we find the age-old struggle between the
spirit of man and the lust for power of a privileged
and ruthless minority. We know the struggle continues
not only because of the evidence we continually have
of men fighting for their freedom, but also because
we see the desperate and violent methods used by
frightened authorities in their efforts to crush the
aspirations of their own people.

II. We
II. We must keep always in mind our heritage of freedom and reflect upon its meaning, lest by forgetfulness or neglect we lose what has been so hardly won.

A. The heritage of all free peoples is one of vigorous thought and courageous action. We cherish your Encyclopedists, your Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau; John Milton, John Locke and John Stuart Mill from across the Channel; our own Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. Other lands and other peoples have made their contributions as well. No single race or century can claim pre-eminence; all have shared.

B. Let us not be confused about what freedom is; basic human rights are simple and easily understood:

- free speech and a free press
- freedom of religion and worship
- free assembly
- government subject to the will of the governed
- government which can be changed by peaceful process
- government which acts through legal process
- government which punishes only those who it finds are guilty of an offense

C. Democracy and freedom are processes by which men may seek diverse ends and yet live peaceably with each other. Without these rules, life becomes "nasty, brutish and short". Among free men, the end cannot justify the means. A monolithic society -- a single political party -- the prostitution of schools, press, radio, the arts, the sciences and the church -- all to support tyranny and to maintain a handful of despots in power -- these are the age-old chains against which men have struggled for three thousand years. They are the signs of reaction, retreat and retrogression.

D. We must actively oppose the effort being made by the forces of reaction to capture the great words of our free tradition and thereby to confuse the struggle. Democracy, freedom, human rights are not, after these many centuries, to be redefined by fiat or ukase, to mean suppression and dictatorship.

E. The deliberate denial and perversion of human rights cannot be ignored nor sanctified by acquiescence or approval in the United Nations. The United Nations must hold fast to the heritage of freedom won by the struggle and suffering of its peoples; it must help us to pass it on.

III. Human
III. Human Rights in the United Nations

A. The United Nations Charter is distinguished by its preoccupation with the rights and welfare of the individual.

The keynote is set in the Preamble -- "We the peoples of the United Nations determined ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

One of the purposes of the United Nations is declared in Article 1 to be "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

This thought is repeated at several points and notably in Articles 55 and 56 the Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation with the United Nations for the promotion of "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

The Commission on Human Rights is the only Commission specifically mentioned in the Charter.

B. The Human Rights Commission was charged as its first and most important task to prepare an international bill of rights.

The first fruit of its labors on this task is the draft International Declaration of Human Rights, approved at the Commission's third session and transmitted to the General Assembly by the Economic and Social Council. This Declaration gives expression to the civil, political, and social rights common to most of the Members of the United Nations. It reflects the views of all but four members of the Commission who abstained from voting -- the U.S.S.R., Eyelorussia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia.

It is
It is proposed that the General Assembly adopt this Declaration "as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction."

The General Assembly can take an important step forward by approving this Declaration.

The companion to the Declaration is the Covenant on Human Rights which would state in the form of international obligations the principal civil and political rights commonly aspired to by the Members of the United Nations. Its completion is the next great task of the Human Rights Commission.

IV. Human Rights in the United States

A. From the beginning of our history the peoples of the United States have jealously safeguarded the rights which assure their freedom. This has been true from the Mayflower Compact through the colonial charters and constitutions, through the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the ratification of the Charter of the United Nations.

Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, the right to a fair trial, the right to be secure in our homes -- these and many other rights have been carefully nurtured and vigorously defended from encroachment.

B. The picture is not one of uniform progress or of universal enjoyment of rights.

Slavery was long an institution in our country as in others. After a great civil struggle it was abolished, some three-quarters of a century ago. The resulting problems have not yet been fully met but we continue to make steady progress. Both major political parties in our country have pledged themselves to achieve even greater progress in meeting these problems.
We in the United States have a large measure of freedom, as great, we believe, as anywhere else in the world — and we do not propose to surrender or compromise one whit of it.

We do not claim perfection. We confess that we have our bigots. But respect for rights and freedom is the general rule. Their violation is newsworthy. But we need make no apology for our still imperfect performance to those whose record is one of ruthless suppression.

C. The United States honors its obligations under the Charter and will continue to do so.

This we do because we know that without the preservation and development of basic human rights, free and democratic governments cannot survive and the United Nations must fail.

V. The future must see the broadening of human rights throughout the world.

A. People who have glimpsed freedom will never be content until they have secured it for themselves.

In a true sense, human rights are a fundamental object of law and government in a just society. Human rights exist in the degree they are respected by the people toward each other, and by government toward its citizens.

B. The world at large is aware of the tragic consequences for human beings ruled by totalitarian systems. The first step making possible such systems is the compromise of human right. There can be no safe compromise of the principle of human rights. The propaganda we have witnessed in the recent past, like that we perceive in these days, seeks to impugn, to undermine, and to destroy the liberty and independence of peoples. Such propaganda poses to all peoples the issue whether to doubt their heritage of rights and therefore to compromise the principle by which they live, or try to accept the challenge, redouble their vigilance and stand steadfast in the struggle to maintain and enlarge human freedoms.

C. People
C. People who continue to be denied the respect to which they are entitled as human beings will not acquiesce forever in such denial.

D. The Charter of the United Nations is a guiding beacon along the way to the achievement of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. The immediate test is not only the extent to which human rights and freedoms have already been achieved, but the direction in which the world is moving. Is there a faithful compliance with the objectives of the Charter if some countries continue to curtail human rights and freedoms instead of to promote the universal respect for and observance of human rights and freedoms for all as called for by the Charter?

E. How shall our Century be known? Perhaps as the Century of Science. But let us be vigilant that it not become the century of reaction. The 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in the western world, have pointed the way to increasing freedom and governments restrained by law. Are we to throw this away in the 20th century because of the false prophecy of those who have never known freedom and of those who practice suppression because of the terror in which they live, with the knowledge that men in time will destroy their tyrants?
**Draft**

Eleanor Roosevelt’s draft was initially more expansive than the outline and contained more of her own views. The State Department asked her to modify some passages particularly those dealing with the Soviet people and her description of racial discrimination in the United States
THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

I have come this evening to talk with you on the greatest issue of our time—that is the preservation of human freedom. I have chosen to discuss it here in France, at the Sorbonne, because here in this soil the roots of human freedom have long ago struck deep and here they have been richly nourished. It was here the Declaration of the Rights of Man was proclaimed, and the great slogans of the French Revolution—liberty, Equality, Fraternity—fired the imagination of men. I have chosen to discuss this issue in Europe because this has been the scene of the greatest historic battles between freedom and tyranny. I have chosen to discuss it in the early days of the General Assembly because the issue of human liberty is decisive for the settlement of outstanding political differences and for the future of the United Nations.

The decisive importance of this issue was fully recognized by the founders of the United Nations at San Francisco. Concern for the preservation and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms stands at the heart of the United Nations. Its Charter is distinguished by its preoccupation with the rights and welfare of individual men and women. The United Nations has made it clear that it intends to uphold human rights and to protect the dignity of the human personality. In the Preamble to the Charter the keynote is set when it declared: "We the people of the United Nations determined ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger
larger freedom". This reflects the basic premise of the Charter that the peace and security of mankind are dependent on mutual respect for the rights and freedoms of all.

One of the purposes of the United Nations is declared in Article I to be: "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

This thought is repeated at several points and notably in Articles 55 and 56 the Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation with the United Nations for the promotion of "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

The Human Rights Commission was given as its first and most important task the preparation of an International Bill of Rights. The General Assembly which opened its third session here in Paris a few days ago, will have before it the first fruit of the Commission's labors in this task, that is the International Declaration of Human Rights.

This Declaration was finally completed after much work during the last session of the Human Rights Commission in New York in the Spring of 1948. The Economic and Social Council has sent it without recommendation to the General Assembly, together with other documents transmitted by the Human Rights Commission.
It was decided in our Commission that a Bill of Rights should contain two parts:

1. A Declaration which could be accepted by the government representatives in the General Assembly. This Declaration would have great moral force, and would say to the peoples of the world "this is what we hope human rights may mean to all people in the years to come". We have put down here the rights that we consider basic for individual human beings the world over to have. Without them, we feel that the full development of individual personality is impossible.

2. The second part of the Bill, which the Human Rights Commission has not yet completed because of the lack of time, is a Covenant which we feel should be presented to the nations of the world. Each nation, as it is prepared to do so, would ratify this Covenant and the Covenant would then have the weight of a treaty between the United Nations and each ratifying nation. Each nation ratifying would then be obligated to change its laws wherever they did not conform to the points contained in the Covenant.

This Covenant, of course, would have to be a simpler document. It could not state aspirations, which we feel to be permissible in the Declaration. It could only state rights which could be insured by law and it must contain methods of implementation, and no state ratifying the Covenant, could be allowed to disregard it. The methods of implementation
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implementation have not yet been agreed upon, nor have they been given adequate consideration by the Commission at any of its meetings. There certainly should be discussion on the entire question of this world Bill of Human Rights and there may be acceptance by this Assembly of the Declaration if they come to agreement on it. (If it is accepted it will, I think, oblige every nation in the coming months to educate its people so that they will be better prepared to accept the Covenant with a deeper understanding of the problems involved when that is presented, we hope, a year from now.

The Declaration has come from the Human Rights Commission with unanimous acceptance except for four abstentions—the USSR, Yugoslavia, Ukraine and Byelorussia. The reason for this is a fundamental difference in the conception of human rights as they exist in these states and in certain other Member States in the United Nations.

In the discussion before the Assembly, I think it should be made crystal clear what these differences are and tonight I want to spend a little time making them clear to you. It seems to me there is a valid reason for taking the time today to think carefully and clearly on the subject of human rights, because in the acceptance and observance of these rights lies the root, I believe of our chance for peace in the future, and for the strengthening of the United Nations organization to the point where it can maintain peace (in the future).

We must not be confused about what freedom is; basic human rights are simple and easily understood: freedom of speech and a free press; freedom
freedom of religion and worship; freedom of assembly and the right of petition; the right of men to be secure in their homes and free from unreasonable search and seizure and from arbitrary arrest and punishment.

We must not be deluded by the efforts of the forces of reaction to prostitute the great words of our free tradition and thereby to confuse the struggle. Democracy, freedom, human rights have come to have a definite meaning to the people of the world which we must not allow any nation to so change that they are made synonomous with suppression and dictatorship.

There are basic differences that show up even in the use of words between a democratic and a totalitarian country. For instance "democracy" means one thing to the USSR and another to the USA. I have served since the first meeting of the Nuclear Commission on the Human Rights Commission, and I think this point stands out clearly.

The USSR representatives assert that they already have many things which we, in what they call the "Bourgeois democracies" cannot achieve because their government controls the accomplishment of these things. Our government seems powerless to them because, in the last analysis, it is controlled by the people. They would not put it that way—they would say that the people in the USSR control their government by allowing their government to have certain absolute rights. We, on the other hand, feel that certain rights can never be granted to the government, but must be kept in the hands of the people.

For
For instance, the USSR will assert that their press is free because the state makes it free by providing the machinery, the paper, and even the money for salaries for the people who work on the paper. They state that there is no control over what is printed in the various papers that they subsidize in this manner, such for instance, as a trade union paper. But what would happen if a paper were to print ideas which were critical of the basic policies and beliefs of the communist government? I am sure some good reason would be found for abolishing the paper.

(It is true that there have been many cases where newspapers in the USSR have criticized officials and their actions and have been responsible for the removal of those officials, but in doing so they did not criticize anything which was fundamental to communist beliefs. They simply criticized methods of doing things, so one must differentiate between things which are permissible, such as criticism of any individual or of the manner of doing things, and the criticism of a belief which would be considered vital to the acceptance of communism.)

What are the differences, for instance, between trade unions in the totalitarian states and in the democracies? In the totalitarian state a trade union is an instrument used by the government to enforce duties, not to assert rights. Propaganda material which the government desires the workers to have is furnished to the trade unions to be circulated to their members. The representatives of the trade unions are required to sit on the board of management of each enterprise to share responsibility for the operation of that enterprise.
Our trade unions, on the other hand, are solely the instrument of the workers themselves. They represent the workers in their relations with the government and with management and they are free to develop their own opinions without government help or interference. The concepts of our trade unions and those in totalitarian countries are drastically different. There is little mutual understanding.

I think the best example one can give of this basic difference of the use of terms is "the right to work". The Soviet Union insists that this is a basic right which it alone can guarantee because it alone provides full employment by the government. But the right to work in the Soviet Union means the assignment of workers to do whatever task is given to them by the government without an opportunity for the people to participate in the decision that the government should do this. A society in which everyone works is not necessarily a free society and may indeed be a slave society; on the other hand, a society in which there is widespread economic insecurity can turn freedom into a barren and vapid right for millions of people. We in the United States have come to realize it means freedom to choose one's job, to work or not to work as one desires. We, in the United States, have come to realize, however, that people have a right to demand that their government will not allow them to starve because as individuals they cannot find work of the kind they are accustomed to doing and this is a decision brought about by public opinions which came as a result of the great depression in which many people were out of work, but we would not consider in the United
United States that we had gained any freedom if we were compelled to follow a trade assignment to work where and when we were told. The right of choice would seem to us an important, fundamental freedom.

I have great sympathy with the Russian people. (Through revolution they had to do away with an absolutist government which gave practically no opportunity to the great mass of people. There is no question in my mind but that the greater part of the people in communist controlled territories today consider that they have more opportunity for advancement and greater security than they ever had in the past. Because I feel that the majority of the Soviet people feel this, I would not countenance the slightest effort to make the people within the USSR' countries believe anything different. I feel confident that if the fundamental freedoms are accepted for all people, then, as time goes on, the people of the totalitarian states will decide for themselves if certain changes in government practice would be useful to them. In which case they will bring them about by peaceful processes, if laws and not force rule the lands. If the world is allowed to be free, if we believe that the democracies have something better to offer in the democratic form of government and way of life, then we must believe that given freedom of intercourse and of action the peoples of the world will be able to know and make up their own minds without any undue effort on our part or on the part of other democracies to convince them.)

The people of Russia have always loved their country. They are patriotic and defend it valiantly against invasion. (They have been through
The people of Russia have always loved their country. They are patriotic and defend it valiantly against invasion. They have been through a period of revolution as a result of which they were for a time cut off from outside contacts. They have not lost their resulting suspicion of other countries, and the great difficulty is today that their government seems to believe that force alone will bring them respect, in the democratic, international respect and action which is reciprocal. We do not think others should treat us differently from the way they wish to be treated. It is interference in other countries that especially stirs up antagonism against the Soviet Government. If it wishes to feel secure in developing its economic and political theories within its territory, then it should grant to others that same security. We believe in the freedom of people to make their own mistakes. We do not interfere with them and they should not interfere with others.

The basic problem confronting the world today, as I said in the beginning, is the preservation of human freedom for the individual and consequently for the society of which he is a part. We are fighting this battle again today as it was fought at the time of the French Revolution and at the time of the American Revolution. The issue of human liberty is as decisive now as it was then. I want to give you my conception of what is meant in my country by freedom of the individual.

Long ago in London during a discussion with Mr. Vishinsky, he told me there was no such thing as freedom for the individual in the world. All freedom of the individual was conditioned by the rights of other individuals.
through a period of revolution where many countries, including the USA, cut them off from outside contacts. They are still suspicious and the great difficulty today is that their government seems to believe that force alone will bring them respect. Neither some of our press nor some of our diplomats, turned authors, contribute to quieting their suspicions.

We, in the democracies, believe in a kind of international respect and action which is reciprocal. We do not think others should treat us differently from the way they wish to be treated. It is interference in other countries that especially stirs up antagonism against the Soviet Government. If it wishes to feel secure in developing its economic and political theories within its territory, then it should grant to others that same security. We believe in the freedom of people to make their own mistakes. We do not interfere with them and they should not interfere with others.

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Long ago in London during a discussion with Mr. Vishinsky, he told me there was no such thing as freedom for the individual in the world. All freedom of the individual was conditioned by the rights of other individuals.
individuals. That, of course, I granted. I said: "We approach the question from a different point of view; we here in the United Nations are trying to develop ideals which will be broader in outlook, which will consider first the rights of man, which will consider what makes man more free; not governments, but man."

The totalitarian state typically places the will of the people second to decrees promulgated by a few men at the top.

Naturally there must always be consideration of the rights of others; but in a democracy this is not a restriction. Indeed, in our democracies we make our freedoms secure because each of us is expected to respect the rights of others and we are free to make our own laws.

Freedom for our peoples is not only a right, but also a tool. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of information, freedom of assembly--these are not just abstract ideals to us; they are tools with which we create a way of life, a way of life in which we can enjoy freedom.

Sometimes the processes of democracy are slow, and I have known some of our democratic leaders to say that a benevolent dictatorship would accomplish the ends desired in a much shorter time than it takes to go through the democratic processes of discussion and the slow formation of public opinion. But there is no way of insuring that a dictatorship will remain benevolent or that power once in the hands of a few will be returned to the people without struggle or revolution.

This
This we have learned by experience and we accept the slow processes of democracy because we know that short-cuts compromise principles on which no compromise is possible.

The final expression of the opinion of the people with us is through free and honest elections, with valid choices on basic issues and candidates. The secret ballot is an essential to free elections but you must have a choice before you. I have heard my husband say many times that a people need never lose their freedom if they kept their right to a secret ballot and if they used that secret ballot to the full.

Basic decisions of our society are made through the expressed will of the people. That is why when we see these liberties threatened, instead of falling apart, our nation becomes unified and our democracies come together as a unified group in spite of our varied backgrounds and many racial strains.

In the United States we have a capitalistic economy. That is because public opinion favors that type of economy under the conditions in which we live. But we have imposed certain restraints; for instance, we have anti-trust laws. These are the legal evidence of the determination of the American people to maintain an economy of free competition and not to allow monopolies to take away the people's freedom. (Certain government agencies like the post office are examples of socialized methods and many of our welfare laws now accepted by all political parties were once attacked as smacking of socialism.)
Our trade unions grow stronger because the people come to believe that this is the proper way to guarantee the rights of the workers and that the right to organize and to bargain collectively keeps the balance between the actual producer and the investor of money and the manager in industry who watches over the man who works with his hands and who produces the materials which are our tangible wealth.

(In the United States we are old enough not to claim perfection. We recognize that we have problems of discrimination but we find steady progress being made in the solution of these problems. In large areas of our country discrimination has already been practically eliminated. In the South in the past few years great changes have also come about. But in the part of the country where slavery was, for so long a basic institution, one cannot expect too quickly a complete change in custom and opinion to a new concept of equality. Through normal democratic processes we are coming to understand our needs and how we can attain full equality for all our people. Free discussion on the subject is encouraged. Our Supreme Court has recently rendered decisions to clarify a number of our laws to guarantee the rights of all. We make no apology for our performance to those whose record is one of ruthless suppression. We have as large a measure of freedom, as great we believe, as anywhere else in the world, and we do not propose to surrender or compromise one whit of it. Free discussion on this subject is allowed in the USA and gradually the Supreme Court is rendering decisions which will change many aspects of the rights of minorities within our country.)

The
Our trade unions grow stronger because the people come to believe that this is the proper way to guarantee the rights of the workers and that the right to organize and to bargain collectively keeps the balance between the actual producer and the investor of money and the manager in industry who watches over the man who works with his hands and who produces the materials which are our tangible wealth.

(In the United States we are old enough not to claim perfection. We recognize that our minorities have not yet achieved the full rights which this Bill will make the essential rights of every human being. One must remember that in a Republic the people choose their representatives and those representatives respond to public opinion. Discrimination against minorities is caused by bigotry and frequently is the result of ignorance and illiteracy. Economic inequalities also make for discrimination against minorities but in the United States it is safe to say, I think, that as educational levels rise we will definitely see progress in eliminating this evil. The goal is in sight and if the Covenant is agreed upon and our leaders can achieve its ratification throughout the United States then this International Act will have helped to speed the educational fight now being made to achieve human rights for all. In New York State, for instance, discrimination has been made a criminal offense and even in the south in the past few years great changes have come about. However, free discussion on this subject is allowed in the USA and gradually the Supreme Court is rendering decisions which will change many aspects of the rights of minorities within our country.)
The USSR (takes great pride in having) reached a point where all races within her borders are officially considered equal and have equal rights and they insist they have no discrimination where minorities are concerned.

This is a laudable (accomplishment) but there are other aspects of the development of freedom for the individual which are essential before the mere absence of discrimination is worth much, and these are lacking in the Soviet Union. Unless they are being denied freedoms which they want and which they see other people have, people do not usually complain of discrimination. It is these other freedoms—the basic freedoms of speech, of the press, of religion and conscience, of assembly, of fair trial and freedom from arbitrary arrest and punishment, which a totalitarian government cannot safely give its people and which give meaning to freedom from discrimination.

It is my belief, and I am sure it is also yours, that the struggle for democracy and freedom is a critical struggle, for their preservation is essential to the great objective of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security.

Among free men the end cannot justify the means. We know the patterns of totalitarianism, the single political party—the control of schools, press, radio, the arts, the sciences, and the church to support autocratic authority; these are the age-old patterns against which men have struggled for three thousand years. These are the signs of reaction, retreat and retrogression.
The United Nations must hold fast to the heritage of freedom won by the struggle of its peoples; it must help us to pass it on to generations to come.

The development of the ideal of freedom and its translation into the everyday life of the people in great areas of the earth is the product of the efforts of many peoples. It is the fruit of a long tradition of vigorous thinking and courageous action. No one race and no one people can claim to have done all the work to achieve greater dignity for human beings and greater freedom to develop human personality. In each generation and in each country there must be a continuation of the struggle and new steps forward must be taken since this is pre-eminently a field in which to stand still is to retreat.

The field of human rights is not one in which compromises on fundamental principles are possible. The work of the Commission on Human Rights is illustrative. The Declaration of Human Rights provides: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own." The Soviet representative said he would agree to this right if a single phrase was added to it—"in accordance with the procedure laid down in the laws of that country". It is obvious that to accept this would be not only to compromise but to nullify the right stated. This case forcefully illustrates the importance of the proposition that we must ever be alert not to compromise fundamental human rights merely for the sake of reaching unanimity and thus lose them.

As
As I see it, it is not going to be easy to attain unanimity with respect to our different concepts of government and human rights. The struggle is bound to be difficult and one in which we must be firm but patient. If we adhere faithfully to our principles I think it is possible for us to maintain freedom and to do so peacefully and without recourse to force.

The future must see the broadening of human rights throughout the world. People who have glimpsed freedom will never be content until they have secured it for themselves. In non-self-governing territories and among colonial peoples the unrest prevalent today proves this thesis. In a true sense, human rights are a fundamental object of law and government in a just society. Human rights exist to the degree that they are respected by people in relations with each other and by governments in relations with their citizens.

The world at large is aware of the tragic consequences for human beings ruled by totalitarian systems. If we examine Hitler's rise to power, we see how the chains are forged which keep the individual a slave and we can see many similarities in the way things are accomplished in other countries. Politically men must be free to discuss and to arrive at as many facts as possible and there must be at least a two party system in a country because when there is only one political party, too many things can be subordinated to the interests of that one party and it becomes a tyrant and not an instrument of democratic government.
The propaganda we have witnessed in the recent past, like that we perceive in these days, seeks to impugn, to undermine and to destroy the liberty and independence of peoples. Such propaganda poses to all peoples the issue whether to doubt their heritage of rights and therefore to compromise the principles by which they live, or try to accept the challenge, redouble their vigilance and stand steadfast in the struggle to maintain and enlarge human freedoms.

People who continue to be denied the respect to which they are entitled as human beings will not acquiesce forever in such denial.

The Charter of the United Nations is a guiding beacon along the way to the achievement of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. The immediate test is not only the extent to which human rights and freedoms have already been achieved, but the direction in which the world is moving. Is there a faithful compliance with the objectives of the Charter if some countries continue to curtail human rights and freedoms instead of to promote the universal respect for and observance of human rights and freedoms for all as called for by the Charter?

The place to discuss the issue of human rights is in the forum of the United Nations. The United Nations has been set up as the common meeting ground for nations, where we can consider together our mutual problems and take advantage of our differences in experience. It is inherent in our firm attachment to democracy and freedom that we stand always ready to use the fundamental democratic procedures of honest
honest discussion and negotiation. It is now as always our hope that
despite the wide differences in approach we face in the world today,
we can with mutual good faith in the principles of the United Nations
Charter, arrive at a common basis of understanding.

We are here to join in the meetings of this great international
Assembly which meets in your beautiful capital City of Paris.
Freedom for the individual is an inseparable part of the cherished
traditions of France. As one of the delegates from the United States
I pray Almighty God that we may win another victory here for the rights
and freedoms of all men.
The English Version

The State Department published the following version of Eleanor Roosevelt’s Sorbonne speech.
The Struggle for Human Rights

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

I have come this evening to talk with you on one of the greatest issues of our time—that is the preservation of human freedom. I have chosen to discuss it here in France, at the Sorbonne, because here in this soil the roots of human freedom have long ago struck deep and here they have been richly nourished. It was here the Declaration of the Rights of Man was proclaimed, and the great slogans of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, fraternity—fired the imagination of men. I have chosen to discuss this issue in Europe because this has been the scene of the greatest historic battles between freedom and tyranny. I have chosen to discuss it in the early days of the General Assembly because the issue of human liberty is decisive for the settlement of outstanding political differences and for the future of the United Nations.

The decisive importance of this issue was fully recognized by the founders of the United Nations at San Francisco. Concern for the preservation and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms stands at the heart of the United Nations. Its Charter is distinguished by its preoccupation with the rights and welfare of individual men and women. The United Nations has made it clear that it intends to uphold human rights and to protect the dignity of the human personality. In the preamble to the Charter the keynote is set when it declares: "We the people of the United Nations determined . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of


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men and women and of nations large and small, and 
... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom." This reflects the basic premise of the Charter that the peace and security of mankind are dependent on mutual respect for the rights and freedoms of all.

One of the purposes of the United Nations is declared in article 1 to be: "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

This thought is repeated at several points and notably in articles 55 and 56 the Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation with the United Nations for the promotion of "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

The Human Rights Commission was given as its first and most important task the preparation of an International Bill of Rights. The General Assembly which opened its third session here in Paris a few days ago will have before it the first fruit of the Commission's labors in this task, that is the International Declaration of Human Rights.

This Declaration was finally completed after much work during the last session of the Human Rights Commission in New York in the spring of 1948. The Economic and Social Council has sent it without recommendation to the General Assembly, together with other documents transmitted by the Human Rights Commission.

It was decided in our Commission that a Bill of Rights should contain two parts:

1. A Declaration which could be approved through action of the Member States of the United Nations in the General Assembly. This Declaration would have great moral force, and would say to the peoples of the world "this is what we hope human rights may mean to all people in the years to come." We have put down here the rights that we consider basic for individual human beings

the world over to have. Without them, we feel that the full development of individual personality is impossible.

2. The second part of the bill, which the Human Rights Commission has not yet completed because of the lack of time, is a covenant which would be in the form of a treaty to be presented to the nations of the world. Each nation, as it is prepared to do so, would ratify this covenant and the covenant would then become binding on the nations which adhere to it. Each nation ratifying would then be obligated to change its laws wherever they did not conform to the points contained in the covenant.

This covenant, of course, would have to be a simpler document. It could not state aspirations, which we feel to be permissible in the Declaration. It could only state rights which could be assured by law and it must contain methods of implementation, and no state ratifying the covenant could be allowed to disregard it. The methods of implementation have not yet been agreed upon, nor have they been given adequate consideration by the Commission at any of its meetings. There certainly should be discussion on the entire question of this world Bill of Human Rights and there may be acceptance by this Assembly of the Declaration if they come to agreement on it. The acceptance of the Declaration, I think, should encourage every nation in the coming months to discuss its meaning with its people so that they will be better prepared to accept the covenant with a deeper understanding of the problems involved when that is presented, we hope, a year from now and, we hope, accepted.

The Declaration has come from the Human Rights Commission with unanimous acceptance except for four abstentions—the U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia. The reason for this is a fundamental difference in the conception of human rights as they exist in these states and in certain other Member States in the United Nations.

In the discussion before the Assembly, I think it should be made crystal clear what these differences are and tonight I want to spend a little time making them clear to you. It seems to me there is a valid reason for taking the time today to think carefully and clearly on the subject of human rights, because in the acceptance and observance
of these rights lies the root, I believe, of our chance for peace in the future, and for the strengthening of the United Nations organization to the point where it can maintain peace in the future.

We must not be confused about what freedom is. Basic human rights are simple and easily understood: freedom of speech and a free press; freedom of religion and worship; freedom of assembly and the right of petition; the right of men to be secure in their homes and free from unreasonable search and seizure and from arbitrary arrest and punishment.

We must not be deluded by the efforts of the forces of reaction to prostitute the great words of our free tradition and thereby to confuse the struggle. Democracy, freedom, human rights have come to have a definite meaning to the people of the world which we must not allow any nation to so change that they are made synonymous with suppression and dictatorship.

There are basic differences that show up even in the use of words between a democratic and a totalitarian country. For instance "democracy" means one thing to the U.S.S.R. and another to the U.S.A. and, I know, in France. I have served since the first meeting of the nuclear commission on the Human Rights Commission, and I think this point stands out clearly.

The U.S.S.R. Representatives assert that they already have achieved many things which we, in what they call the "bourgeois democracies" cannot achieve because their government controls the accomplishment of these things. Our government seems powerless to them because, in the last analysis, it is controlled by the people. They would not put it that way—they would say that the people in the U.S.S.R. control their government by allowing their government to have certain absolute rights. We, on the other hand, feel that certain rights can never be granted to the government, but must be kept in the hands of the people.

For instance, the U.S.S.R. will assert that their press is free because the state makes it free by providing the machinery, the paper, and even the money for salaries for the people who work on the paper. They state that there is no control over what is printed in the various papers that they subsidize in this manner, such, for instance, as a trade-union paper. But what would happen if a paper were to print ideas which were critical of the basic policies and beliefs of the Communist government? I am sure some good reason would be found for abolishing the paper.

It is true that there have been many cases where newspapers in the U.S.S.R. have criticized officials and their actions and have been responsible for the removal of those officials, but in doing so they did not criticize anything which was fundamental to Communist beliefs. They simply criticized methods of doing things, so one must differentiate between things which are permissible, such as criticism of any individual or of the manner of doing things, and the criticism of a belief which would be considered vital to the acceptance of Communism.

What are the differences, for instance, between trade-unions in the totalitarian states and in the democracies? In the totalitarian state a trade-union is an instrument used by the government to enforce duties, not to assert rights. Propaganda material which the government desires the workers to have is furnished to the trade-unions to be circulated to their members.

Our trade-unions, on the other hand, are solely the instrument of the workers themselves. They represent the workers in their relations with the government and with management and they are free to develop their own opinions without government help or interference. The concepts of our trade-unions and those in totalitarian countries are drastically different. There is little mutual understanding.

I think the best example one can give of this basic difference of the use of terms is "the right to work." The Soviet Union insists that this is a basic right which it alone can guarantee because it alone provides full employment by the government. But the right to work in the Soviet Union means the assignment of workers to do whatever task is given to them by the government without
an opportunity for the people to participate in the decision that the government should do this. A society in which everyone works is not necessarily a free society and may indeed be a slave society; on the other hand, a society in which there is widespread economic insecurity can turn freedom into a barren and vapid right for millions of people. We in the United States have come to realize it means freedom to choose one's job, to work or not to work as one desires. We, in the United States, have come to realize, however, that people have a right to demand that their government will not allow them to starve because as individuals they cannot find work of the kind they are accustomed to doing and this is a decision brought about by public opinion which came as a result of the great depression in which many people were out of work, but we would not consider in the United States that we had gained any freedom if we were compelled to follow a dictatorial assignment to work where and when we were told. The right of choice would seem to us an important, fundamental freedom.

I have great sympathy with the Russian people. They love their country and have always defended it valiantly against invaders. They have been through a period of revolution, as a result of which they were for a time cut off from outside contact. They have not lost their resulting suspicion of other countries and the great difficulty is today that their government encourages this suspicion and seems to believe that force alone will bring them respect.

We, in the democracies, believe in a kind of international respect and action which is reciprocal. We do not think others should treat us differently from the way they wish to be treated. It is interference in other countries that especially stirs up antagonism against the Soviet Government. If it wishes to feel secure in developing its economic and political theories within its territory, then it should grant to others that same security. We believe in the freedom of people to make their own mistakes. We do not interfere with them and they should not interfere with others.

The basic problem confronting the world today, as I said in the beginning, is the preservation of human freedom for the individual and consequently for the society of which he is a part. We are fighting this battle again today as it was fought at the time of the French Revolution and at the time of the American Revolution. The issue of human liberty is as decisive now as it was then. I want to give you my conception of what is meant in my country by freedom of the individual.

Long ago in London during a discussion with Mr. Vyshinsky, he told me there was no such thing as freedom for the individual in the world. All freedom of the individual was conditioned by the rights of other individuals. That, of course, I granted. I said; "We approach the question from a different point of view; we here in the United Nations are trying to develop ideals which will be broader in outlook, which will consider first the rights of man, which will consider what makes man more free: not governments, but man."

The totalitarian state typically places the will of the people second to decrees promulgated by a few men at the top.

Naturally there must always be consideration of the rights of others; but in a democracy this is not a restriction. Indeed, in our democracies we make our freedoms secure because each of us is expected to respect the rights of others and we are free to make our own laws.

Freedom for our peoples is not only a right, but also a tool. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of information, freedom of assembly—these are not just abstract ideals to us; they are tools with which we create a way of life, a way of life in which we can enjoy freedom.

Sometimes the processes of democracy are slow, and I have known some of our leaders to say that a benevolent dictatorship would accomplish the ends desired in a much shorter time than it takes to go through the democratic processes of discussion and the slow formation of public opinion. But there is no way of insuring that a dictatorship
will remain benevolent or that power once in the hands of a few will be returned to the people without struggle or revolution. This we have learned by experience and we accept the slow processes of democracy because we know that short-cuts compromise principles on which no compromise is possible.

The final expression of the opinion of the people with us is through free and honest elections, with valid choices on basic issues and candidates. The secret ballot is an essential to free elections but you must have a choice before you. I have heard my husband say many times that a people need never lose their freedom if they kept their right to a secret ballot and if they used that secret ballot to the full.

Basic decisions of our society are made through the expressed will of the people. That is why when we see these liberties threatened, instead of falling apart, our nation becomes unified and our democracies come together as a unified group in spite of our varied backgrounds and many racial strains.

In the United States we have a capitalistic economy. That is because public opinion favors that type of economy under the conditions in which we live. But we have imposed certain restraints; for instance, we have anti-trust laws. These are the legal evidence of the determination of the American people to maintain an economy of free competition and not to allow monopolies to take away the people's freedom.

Our trade-unions grow stronger because the people come to believe that this is the proper way to guarantee the rights of the workers and that the right to organize and to bargain collectively keeps the balance between the actual producer and the investor of money and the manager in industry who watches over the man who works with his hands and who produces the materials which are our tangible wealth.

In the United States we are old enough not to claim perfection. We recognize that we have some problems of discrimination but we find steady progress being made in the solution of these problems. Through normal democratic processes we are coming to understand our needs and how we can attain full equality for all our people. Free discussion on the subject is permitted. Our Supreme Court has recently rendered decisions to clarify a number of our laws to guarantee the rights of all.

The U.S.S.R. claims it has reached a point where all races within her borders are officially considered equal and have equal rights and they insist they have no discrimination where minorities are concerned.

This is a laudable objective but there are other aspects of the development of freedom for the individual which are essential before the mere absence of discrimination is worth much, and these are lacking in the Soviet Union. Unless they are being denied freedoms which they want and which they see other people have, people do not usually complain of discrimination. It is these other freedoms—the basic freedoms of speech, of the press, of religion and conscience, of assembly, of fair trial and freedom from arbitrary arrest and punishment, which a totalitarian government cannot safely give its people and which give meaning to freedom from discrimination.

It is my belief, and I am sure it is also yours, that the struggle for democracy and freedom is a critical struggle, for their preservation is essential to the great objective of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security.

Among free men the end cannot justify the means. We know the patterns of totalitarianism—the single political party, the control of schools, press, radio, the arts, the sciences, and the church to support autocratic authority; these are the age-old patterns against which men have struggled for three thousand years. These are the signs of reaction, retreat, and retrogression.

The United Nations must hold fast to the heritage of freedom won by the struggle of its peoples; it must help us to pass it on to generations to come.

The development of the ideal of freedom and its translation into the everyday life of the people in great areas of the earth is the product of the ef-
forts of many peoples. It is the fruit of a long tradition of vigorous thinking and courageous action. No one race and no one people can claim to have done all the work to achieve greater dignity for human beings and greater freedom to develop human personality. In each generation and in each country there must be a continuation of the struggle and new steps forward must be taken since this is preeminently a field in which to stand still is to retreat.

The field of human rights is not one in which compromise on fundamental principles are possible. The work of the Commission on Human Rights is illustrative. The Declaration of Human Rights provides: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own." The Soviet Representative said he would agree to this right if a single phrase was added to it—"in accordance with the procedure laid down in the laws of that country." It is obvious that to accept this would be not only to compromise but to nullify the right stated. This case forcefully illustrates the importance of the proposition that we must ever be alert not to compromise fundamental human rights merely for the sake of reaching unanimity and thus lose them.

As I see it, it is not going to be easy to attain unanimity with respect to our different concepts of government and human rights. The struggle is bound to be difficult and one in which we must be firm but patient. If we adhere faithfully to our principles I think it is possible for us to maintain freedom and to do so peacefully and without recourse to force.

The future must see the broadening of human rights throughout the world. People who have glimpsed freedom will never be content until they have secured it for themselves. In a true sense, human rights are a fundamental object of law and government in a just society. Human rights exist to the degree that they are respected by people in relations with each other and by governments in relations with their citizens.

The world at large is aware of the tragic consequences for human beings ruled by totalitarian systems. If we examine Hitler's rise to power, we see how the chains are forged which keep the individual a slave and we can see many similarities in the way things are accomplished in other countries. Politically men must be free to discuss and to arrive at as many facts as possible and there must be at least a two-party system in a country because when there is only one political party, too many things can be subordinated to the interests of that one party and it becomes a tyrant and not an instrument of democratic government.

The propaganda we have witnessed in the recent past, like that we perceive in these days, seeks to impugn, to undermine, and to destroy the liberty and independence of peoples. Such propaganda poses to all peoples the issue whether to doubt their heritage of rights and therefore to compromise the principles by which they live, or try to accept the challenge, redouble their vigilance, and stand steadfast in the struggle to maintain and enlarge human freedoms.

People who continue to be denied the respect to which they are entitled as human beings will not acquiesce forever in such denial.

The Charter of the United Nations is a guiding beacon along the way to the achievement of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. The immediate test is not only the extent to which human rights and freedoms have already been achieved, but the direction in which the world is moving. Is there a faithful compliance with the objectives of the Charter if some countries continue to curtail human rights and freedoms instead of to promote the universal respect for an observance of human rights and freedoms for all as called for by the Charter?

The place to discuss the issue of human rights is in the forum of the United Nations. The United Nations has been set up as the common meeting ground for nations, where we can consider together our mutual problems and take advantage of our differences in experience. It is inherent in our firm attachment to democracy and freedom that we stand always ready to use the fundamental democratic procedures of honest dis-
Extemporaneous Remarks

Eleanor Roosevelt’s files contain two additional pages of extemporaneous remarks she may have made during the speech. However neither the French version nor the printed English version of the final speech included these remarks, and there is no indication of their location in the speech. Durward Sandifer, principal advisor to the US delegation to the United Nations, told his wife that Eleanor Roosevelt used comment number 3.
Extemporaneous remarks – Sorbonne speech

1. I am indeed happy to be here this evening and I am very grateful for the kind words said in appreciation of my country for the help extended, but whether that help is extended by universities or students or by our government, we, in the United States will always recognize the debt we owe to France not only for the help which she gave us in our time of need, but for the inspiration and stimulus she has given in the fields of arts and letters to the whole world.

When Professor Cassin spoke he was extremely kind to me. You will recognize that such eloquence is of great value in some one who is as passionately devoted to the rights of human beings as is Professor Cassin. I lean upon him and follow him often in the Human Rights Commission.

2. An excellent example is the fact that we give food, clothing and shelter to prisoners who commit criminal offenses but we deprive them of the one thing which gives validity to such security – the freedom of decision and movement.

3. When I was bringing up children I thought I understood well the full significance of patience. Children usually develop that quality in us, but I never knew in the faintest degree what it meant to really have patience until I served on the Human Rights Commission with the delegates from the USSR.
4. This will be accomplished I know, through the close cooperation with you here in France, for you have always fought for the freedoms and rights of human beings and will, I know, continue to do so.
The French Version

The French version of Eleanor Roosevelt’s speech differs slightly from the version published by the US State Department.
For Allen and Lehrbas and VOAMY from Tyler.

Following final revised French text Mrs. Roosevelt speech Tuesday, February eight speech Pèlerinage Sorbonne nine pm local French time. You will notice many small changes clarifying original French text but not modifying substance. These changes in French text being incorporated final English text which we will file this same channel soon as completed for simultaneous release here and Stateside.

"LA LUTTE POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME"

"Je viens ce soir causer avec vous d'une des plus importantes questions de notre époque, celle de la liberté humaine. Je suis heureuse de pouvoir faire mon petit discours ici, en France, à la Sorbonne, car le sol français connaît bien la liberté. Il y a de longues années déjà que les racines de l'arbre de la liberté courent à travers cette terre nourricière et y trouvent les éléments nécessaires à son épanouissement. C'est ici que la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme fut proclamée, et que la noble devise de la Révolution française -Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité- alluma l'imagination des hommes. J'ai décidé de parler de cette question en Europe, car c'est en Europe que se sont livrées les plus grandes batailles entre la liberté et la tyrannie. J'ai décidé de la

.../...
discuter alors que se tient la réunion de l'Assemblée Générale, car la liberté est une question décisive pour le règlement des principaux différends politiques qui partagent les peuples et les gouvernements aujourd'hui, et en conséquence, c'est une question décisive qui aura une influence sur l'avenir des Nations Unies.

L'importance capitale de la question fut pleinement reconnue à San-Francisco par les fondateurs de l'Organisation des Nations Unies. Le souci de la préservation et de la progression des droits de l'homme et de ses libertés fondamentales constitue le principe dominant de l'Organisation. Sa Charte se distingue par sa préoccupation des droits et du bien-être de l'individu. L'Organisation des Nations Unies a signifié clairement son intention de soutenir les droits de l'homme et de protéger la dignité de la personne humaine. Le Présambule de la Charte établit l'idée maîtresse en ces termes: "Nous, peuples des Nations Unies, résolus... a proclamer à nouveau notre foi dans les droits fondamentaux de l'homme, dans la dignité et la valeur de la personne humaine, dans l'égalité des droits des hommes et des femmes, ainsi que des nations grandes et petites, a favoriser le progrès social et a instaurer de meilleures conditions de vie dans une liberté plus grande." La Charte pose donc le principe que la paix et la sécurité de l'humanité sont étroitement liées au respect de chacun pour les droits et les libertés de tous.

.../...
"Un des buts des Nations Unies est exposé à l'article premier en ces mots: 'Realiser la coopération internationale en résolvant les problèmes internationaux d'ordre économique, social, intellectuel ou humanitaire, en développant et en encourageant le respect des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales pour tous sans distinction de race, de sexe, de langue ou de religion.'

"L'idée revient plusieurs fois, notamment dans le texte des articles 55 et 56, aux termes desquels les Membres s'engagent à agir, tant conjointement que separemment, en coopération avec l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour favoriser 'le respect universel et effectif des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales pour tous, sans distinction de race, de sexe, de langue ou de religion.'


Cette Déclaration fut finalement achevée, après une longue session de la Commission des Droits de l'Homme, au cours de sa réunion a New York, au printemps de 1948. Le Conseil Economique et Social a soumis la Déclaration à l'Assemblée Générale sans recommandation, ainsi que d'autres documents transmis par notre Commission.
La Commission des Droits de l'Homme décida qu'une Charte internationale des Droits de l'Homme devrait comprendre deux parties :

1. Une Déclaration, qui pourrait être présentée à l'Assemblée Générale pour l'approbation des États Membres des Nations Unies. Cette Déclaration aura une grande force morale et déclarera aux peuples du monde : "Voici ce que nous espérons voir accepté comme les droits fondamentaux de l'homme au cours des années prochaines." Nous avons énuméré ici les droits que nous considérons comme fondamentaux pour tous les êtres humains, individuellement, dans le monde entier, et sans lesquels le plein développement de la personnalité individuelle est, à notre avis, impossible.

2. Nous avons joint à la Déclaration un Pacte, qui devrait être rédigé sous forme de traité et soumis aux nations du monde. Faute de temps, la Commission des Droits de l'Homme, n'a pu terminer cette seconde partie de son travail. Chaque nation ratifierait ce Pacte lorsqu'elle serait en mesure de le faire, et il deviendrait alors exécutoire pour les nations qui y auraient adhéré. Chaque nation qui l'aurait ratifié serait ensuite tenue de modifier ses lois chaque fois que ses lois ne seraient pas conformes au Pacte.

Ce Pacte serait nécessairement un document plus simple. Il ne saurait exprimer des aspirations, alors que nous l'estimions permissible en ce qui concerne la Déclaration. Il ne pourrait
annonce que les seuls droits dont la jouissance pourrait être assurée par la loi. Il lui faudrait prévoir l'exécution de ses dispositions, et il ne serait permis à aucun État d'y déroger après l'avoir ratifiée. La Commission n'a pas encore convenu des moyens de mettre à exécution les termes du Pacte et ne les a pas étudiés suffisamment jusqu'ici au cours de ses réunions. La question tout entière de la Charte internationale des Droits de l'Homme devrait certainement être discutée, et il se peut que la Déclaration soit acceptée, par l'Assemblée Générale a sa présente réunion si l'Assemblée convient de ses termes. L'Acceptation de la Déclaration devrait, je crois, encourager chaque nation à en discuter la signification avec son peuple au cours des mois suivants, de manière à le préparer à accepter le Pacte avec une plus grande compréhension des responsabilités qu'il impose, lorsqu'il sera présenté dans un an et accepte, ainsi que nous l'espérons.

La Déclaration internationale des Droits de l'Homme a recueilli l'unanimité des voix de la Commission dont elle est née, sauf quatre abstentions: l'Union Soviétique, la Yougoslavie, l'Ukraine et la Byelorussie. Ceci s'explique par la différence fondamentale dans la conception des droits de l'homme pratiques dans ces États, comparée à la pratique qui existe dans certains autres États membres des Nations Unies.

Dans les débats de l'Assemblée, j'estime que ces différences devraient être définies sans équivoque, et je vais ce soir tâcher de vous les présenter clairement. Il me semble qu'il existe
a l'heure actuelle d'excellentes raisons pour que nous prenions le temps de penser sérieusement et clairement à la question des droits de l'homme, car, à mon avis, c'est sur la reconnaissance et le respect de ces droits que reposent notre espoir à l'avenir d'obtenir la paix et les moyens de renforcer l'Organisation des Nations Unies jusqu'au point où elle pourra maintenir cette paix.

Tout d'abord il est nécessaire que nous comprenions bien la liberté essentielle de la démocratie. Les droits fondamentaux de l'homme sont simples et faciles à comprendre : liberté de parole et liberté de la presse ; liberté de conscience et du culte ; droit d'assemblée et de pétition ; droit d'être en sûreté chez soi, et à l'abri de perquisitions et de saisies déraisonnables, d'arrestations et de sanctions arbitraires.

Ne nous laissons pas abuser par les efforts des forces de la réaction, qui cherchent à substituer les nobles expressions de notre tradition de liberté, et, de ce fait, à masquer la véritable nature du conflit. Démocratie, liberté, droits de l'homme... Ce sont les termes qui ont acquis aux yeux des peuples du monde une signification bien définie, que nous de devons permettre à aucune nation de modifier pour en faire des synonymes d'oppression et de dictature.

Entre un pays démocratique et un pays totalitaire il existe des différences fondamentales qui se révèlent même dans l'emploi des mots. Le terme 'démocratie', par exemple, a un certain sens dans l'Union Soviétique et un autre aux États-Unis, et, je
le sais, en France. J'ai participé aux travaux de la Commission des Droits de l'Homme depuis la première séance de la Commission Nucleaire, et je pense que ce point ressort clairement.

Les représentants de l'Union Soviétique proclament qu'ils ont déjà réalisé maintes choses grâce au contrôle exercé par leur Gouvernement sur tous les moyens d'accomplissement. Par contre, selon eux, les "démocraties bourgeoises" ne peuvent atteindre ces résultats à cause des défauts de leurs gouvernements. Notre gouvernement leur semble être puissant parce qu'en dernier lieu il est soumis à la volonté du peuple. Les représentants du gouvernement soviétique, eux, diraient que c'est le peuple soviétique qui exerce un contrôle sur son gouvernement, en lui déléguant, en son nom, certains droits absolus. Nous estimons, d'autre part, que certains droits ne doivent jamais être accordés au gouvernement, mais doivent demeurer de tout temps entre les mains du peuple.

L'Union Soviétique, pretend, par exemple, que sa presse est libre puisque l'État lui assure cette liberté en lui fournissant les machines, le papier et même l'argent destiné aux salaires des personnes qui contribuent à la publication de ses journaux. Ils déclarent qu'aucun contrôle n'est exercé sur ce qui est imprimé dans les différents journaux subventionnés de cette manière, tels les journaux syndicaux. Mais que se passerait-il si un journal publiait des critiques sur la politique et les convictions fondamentales du gouvernement communiste? Je suis certaine que de bonnes raisons seraient trouvées pour justifier l'abolition de ce journal.
Il est vrai qu'un grand nombre de cas se sont présentés, ou des journaux de l'Union Soviétique ont critique des fonctionnaires dans leurs actions et entraîne leur révocation, mais en formulant ces critiques ils n'ont rien vise qui touche directement les doctrines communistes. Ils ont simplement critique la manière de faire certaines choses, et il nous faut donc distinguer entre ce qui est permissible, telle la critique d'un individu ou de sa façon d'agir, et la critique d'une opinion qui serait considérée comme nécessaire à la doctrine du communisme.

Quelle est la différence, par exemple, entre les syndicats dans les états totalitaires et ceux des démocraties? Dans l'état totalitaire, le syndicat est l'instrument du gouvernement qui l'utilise pour s'assurer que chacun s'acquitte de ses obligations, et non pas pour permettre à chacun de revendiquer des droits. Le matériel de propagande que le gouvernement tient à fournir aux ouvriers est donné par lui aux syndicats pour que ceux-ci le distribuent à leurs membres.


Je crois que le meilleur exemple que l'on puisse citer de cette différence fondamentale dans l'emploi des termes est...
le terme 'le droit au travail'. L'Union Soviétique insiste sur le fait que c'est la un droit fondamental qu'elle seule peut garantir car seul son gouvernement est à même d'offrir le plein emploi. Mais le droit au travail dans l'Union Soviétique signifie que l'ouvrier se voit contraint, au gré du gouvernement, à faire un travail quelconque, sans qu'il soit permis au peuple de participer à la décision du gouvernement à ce sujet. Une société au sein de laquelle chacun travaille n'est pas nécessairement une société libre; elle peut même être une société d'esclaves. D'autre part, une société qui souffre d'un manque général de sécurité économique peut faire de la liberté un droit illusoire pour des millions d'autres humains. Aux États-Unis, nous ne rendons compte que la liberté signifie le droit pour chacun de choisir son emploi, de travailler ou de ne pas travailler, et de s'occuper selon son gout. Aux États-Unis, nous reconnaissons également aujourd'hui, que le peuple a le droit d'exiger que son gouvernement ne le laisse pas mourir de faim lorsqu'individuellement il ne peut obtenir le genre de travail auquel il est habitué. Le peuple est arrivé à cette conclusion par l'évolution de l'opinion à la suite de la grande crise économique qui causa un si grand chômage. Mais nous considérerions n'avoir acquise aucune liberté s'il nous fallait obéir à une ordre stipulant où et quand nous devons travailler. Le droit de choisir est, pour nous, une liberté importante, fondamentale.

J'exprime une grande sympathie pour le peuple russe. Il
aime son pays et l'a toujours vaillamment défendu contre l'envahisseur.
Il connut une période révolutionnaire, à la suite laquelle il se trouva, pendu un certain temps, isolé de tous contacts extérieurs. Il en est résulté de sa part une méfiance à l'égard des autres pays dont il ne s'est pas encore défait, et actuellement la grande difficulté résidant dans le fait que son gouvernement encourage cette méfiance et semble croire que seule la force peut lui assurer le respect des autres nations.

Le genre de respect et d'action internationale auxquels nous croyons dans les démocraties, est base sur la reciprocité. Nous ne pensons pas que le traitement qui nous est appliqué par les autres devrait être différent de celui dont ils voudraient bénéficier de notre part. C'est surtout l'ingérence de l'Union Soviétique dans les affaires des autres pays qui suscite un antagonisme contre son gouvernement. Si celle-ci veut assurer la libre application de ses théories économiques et politiques sur son territoire, elle devrait ceder aux autres le droit de faire de même. Nous croyons que les peuples ont le droit de commettre leurs propres erreurs. Nous ne nous mêlerons pas de leurs affaires et ils ne devraient pas se mêler des nôtres.

Le problème fondamental qui confronte le monde d'aujourd'hui, comme je l'ai mentionné au début, est celui de la préservation de la liberté de l'individu, et, par conséquent, de la société dont il fait partie. La lutte, aujourd'hui encore, est semblable à celle de la Révolution française et de la Révolution américaine. La question de la liberté humaine est aussi decisive de nos jours qu'elle l'était alors. Je

.../...
tiens a vous exprimer mon idée sur ce que l'on entend, dans mon pays, par 'liberte de l'individu'.

Il y a longtemps, à Londres, au cours d'une discussion que j'ai eue avec M. Vishinsky, celui-ci me disait que la liberté de l'individu dans le monde n'existait pas, toute liberté de l'individu dépendant des droits des autres individus. Je lui concedais ce point. Mais je lui dis: 'Nous envisageons la question de deux points de vue différents: ici, au sein des Nations Unies, nous nous efforçons de formuler des idéaux d'un horizon plus large, qui nous permettront de placer au premier plan les droits de l'homme, de déterminer ce qui rend l'homme plus libre: l'homme, et non pas les gouvernements.'

L'état totalitaire susjette la volonté du peuple aux decrets promulgués par quelques hommes au pouvoir.

Natulement, les droits d'autrui doivent toujours être pris en consideration; mais, dans une democratie, ceci ne constitue pas une restriction. En effet, dans nos democracies, nous assurons nos libertés par le fait même que nous nous attendons à ce que chacun d'entre nous respecte les droits d'autrui et que nous sommes libres de formuler nos propres lois.

La liberte, pour nos peuples, n'est pas seulement un droit; elle est également un instrument. La liberte de parole, la liberte de la presse, la liberte d'information, le droit d'assemblee -ce ne sont pas pour nous des ideales abstraites. Ce sont des instruments par lesquels nous developpons une vie democratique qui nous permet de jouir de la liberte.

La marche de la democratie est parfois lente, et je sais que...

.../...
certains de nos hommes d'État ont constaté parfois le fait qu'une dictature bienveillante aboutirait aux résultats désirés en bien moins de temps qu'il n'en faut pour procéder aux délibérations démocratiques et au lent développement de l'opinion publique. Mais rien ne permet d'assurer qu'une dictature bienveillante et que le pouvoir, une fois entre les mains d'un petit nombre, sera rendu au peuple sans lutte ou sans révolution. Cela, nous l'avons appris par l'expérience, et nous acceptons les lents procédés démocratiques parce que nous savons que les raccourcis compromettent les principes à l'égard desquels aucun compromis n'est possible.

Chez nous, l'expression finale du peuple se manifeste par des élections libres et honnêtes, permettant de choisir valablement entre les questions de principe et entre les candidats. Le scrutin secret est essentiel à de libres élections, mais il faut aussi qu'il y ait le choix. J'ai entendu dire maintes fois à mon mari qu'un peuple qui conserve son droit de voter secrètement et qui fait plein usage de ce droit ne saurait perdre sa liberté.

Les décisions de principe de notre société sont l'expression de la volonté du peuple. C'est pourquoi, lorsque nous voyons ces libertés menacées, notre nation, au lieu de se désintégrer, s'unit devant le danger, et nos démocraties forment un groupe unifié, malgré la diversité de milieux et de races qu'elles renferment.

Aux États-Unis, nous avons une économie capitalistique. Cela est du à ce que l'opinion publique est en faveur de ce genre
les rares contenus par ses frontières sont officiellement considérées comme égales et jouissent des mêmes droits, et insiste sur le fait qu'il n'y existe aucune mesure discriminatoire à l'égard des minorités.

Cet objectif est louable, mais le progrès de la liberté individuelle repose aussi sur d'autres principes essentiels qu'il est nécessaire d'observer pour que la simple absence de mesures discriminatoires ait une valeur quelconque; or ces principes font défaut dans l'Union Soviétique. Les gens n'ont pas coutume de se plaindre de mesures discriminatoires à moins de voir d'autres qui jouissent d'une liberté à laquelle ils aspirent et dont ils sont dépourvus. Ce sont ces autres libertés fondamentales: liberté de parole et de la presse; liberté de culte et de conscience; droit d'assembler et droit d'être jugé équitablement et d'être protégé contre tout arrestation et contre toute sanction arbitraire, qu'un gouvernement totalitaire ne peut accorder sans danger à son peuple, et qui font valoir l'absence de mesures discriminatoires.

Je suis convaincue, et je suis sûre que vous l'êtes également, que la lutte pour la démocratie et la liberté est une lutte nécessaire, car la préservation de ces deux principes est indispensable à l'important objectif que poursuivent les Nations Unies: le maintien de la paix et de la sécurité internationales.

Chez les hommes libres, la fin ne peut justifier les moyens. Nous connaissons les formes du totalitarisme...
-le parti politique unique, le controle de l'education, de la
presse, de la radio, des arts, des sciences et de l'eglise, dans
le but de soutenir l'autorite autoritaire; ce sont la les memes
tendances contre lesquelles les hommes ont lutt pendant trois
mille ans. Ce sont la les signes caracteristiques de la Reaction,
de la retraite et de la retrogression.

Les Nations Unies doivent rester fideles au genre de liberte
pour lequel leurs peuples ont victorieusement lutt. Les Nations
Unies doivent nous aider a transmettre ce tresor aux generations
a venir.

Le developpement de l'idéal de liberte et son adaptation a la
vie journaliere des populations d'une grande partie du monde sont
le produit des efforts de nombreux peuples. Ils sont le fruit
d'une longue tradition de pensees vigoureuses et de courageuses
actions. Aucune race ni aucun peuple ne saurait s'attribuer tout
le mérite d'avoir rendu a l'homme une plus grande dignité, et de lui
avoir procure de plus amples moyens de développer sa personnalite.
Chaque generation, dans chaque pays, doit continuer a lutter et
a faire des progres, car dans cette lutte, en particulier, cesser
d'avancer, c'est reculer.

Le domaine des droits de l'homme n'admet pas un compromis sur les
principes fondamentaux. Les travaux de la Commission des Droits de
l'Homme le demontrent pleinement. La Déclaration des Droits de
l'Homme stipule que: 'Chacun a le droit de quitter un pays
quelconque, y compris le sien.' Le représentant soviétique a
declaré qu'il serait prêt a donner son adhesion a ce droit, si la
phrase suivante était ajoutée : "conformément aux prescriptions des lois de son pays". Il est évident qu'une telle adjonction aurait pour effet non seulement de compromettre le droit en question, mais de le rendre nul. Ce cas fait ressortir clairement le fait qu'il nous faut veiller constamment à ne pas compromettre les droits fondamentaux de l'homme dans le seul but d'obtenir l'unité, et, en ce faisant, perdre ses droits.

Autant que j'en puise juger, il ne sera pas facile d'atteindre l'unité pour ce qui est de nos différents concepts de gouvernement et de droits de l'homme. La lutte promet d'être ardue ; elle demandera de nous une grande fermeté et aussi de la patience. Si nous adhérerons fidèlement à nos principes, je crois qu'il nous sera possible de maintenir la liberté, de la faire pacifiquement, et sans recours à la force.

L'avenir doit amener l'assainissement des droits de l'homme dans le monde entier. Les peuples qui ont souffert la liberté ne seront satisfaits que lorsqu'ils en jouiront eux-mêmes. Interprétés dans leur vrai sens, les droits de l'homme constituent un objectif fondamental de la loi et du gouvernement dans une société libre. Les droits de l'homme existent dans la mesure où ils sont respectés par les peuples dans leurs relations mutuelles, et par les gouvernements dans leurs relations avec les autres gouvernements et envers leurs propres citoyens.

Le monde en général reconnaît les conséquences tragiques que supportent les êtres humains placés sous la domination de régimes
totalitaires. Si nous étudions la façon dont Hitler est parvenu au pouvoir, nous voyons comment sont forgées les chaînes qui tiennent l’homme en esclavage, et nous pouvons établir de nombreux parallèles avec ce qui se passe dans d’autres pays. L’homme doit être libre de discuter et d’obtenir le plus grand nombre d’informations possible au point de vue politique ; or, dans tout pays, il doit exister au moins deux partis politiques, car, lorsqu’il n’en existe qu’un seul, trop de choses peuvent être subordonnées aux intérêts de ce parti unique, qui devient alors un tyran et non un instrument de gouvernement démocratique.

La propagande, dont nous avons été les témoins au cours des dernières années, ainsi que celles que nous percevons actuellement, s’efforce d’attaquer, de saper et de détruire la liberté et l’autonomie des peuples. Une telle propagande amène les peuples à douter des droits qui leur ont été légués et, en conséquence, à compromettre les principes selon lesquels ils vivent ; ou bien, ils relevent le défi, redoublent de vigilance et s’efforcent de continuer la lutte pour le maintien et l’élargissement des libertés humaines.

Les peuples qui se voient refuser le respect auquel ils ont droit comme être humains ne seront pas toujours disposés à accepter ces conditions.

La Charte des Nations Unies est le flambeau qui éclaire la voie conduisant à la réalisation des droits et des libertés fondamentales de l’homme sur un plan universel. Ce qui importe maintenant, ce n’est pas seulement la mesure dans laquelle les droits et la
liberté de l'homme ont été acquises, mais la direction vers
laquelle le monde s'oriente. Les buts de la Charte seront-ils
fidèlement poursuivis si certains pays continuent à restreindre
les droits et la liberté des hommes, au lieu d'en encourager
le respect universel et l'application générale comme le stipule
la Charte ?

C'est dans le forum des Nations Unies que la question des
droits de l'homme doit être débattue. L'Organisation des
Nations Unies a été établie pour servir de lieu de réunion aux
nations, pour leur permettre d'examiner ensemble leurs problèmes
communs et tirer profit des différences de leur expérience.
C'est parce que nous sommes fermement attachés aux principes de
la démocratie et de la liberté que nous nous tenons toujours prêts
da recourir aux procédés démocratiques fondamentaux de discussion
et de négociation honnêtes. Nous espérons maintenant, comme nous
l'avons toujours fait, que malgré les divergences marquées de
points de vue auxquelles nous avons à faire face aujourd'hui
dans le monde, nous pouvons, avec une mutuelle bonne foi dans
les principes de la Charte des Nations Unies, trouver un terrain
commun d'entente.

Nous sommes ici pour prendre part aux scènes de cette grande
assemblée internationale qui se tient dans votre belle capitale.
La liberté individuelle est une partie inseparable des traditions
charies par la France. En qualité de membre de la Delegation des
Etats-Unis, je prie de Dieu de nous aider à remporter ici une autre
victoire pour les droits et la liberté de tous les hommes.