

In discharging its responsibility (under the authority of the General Assembly) for promoting conditions of economic and social development, the Economic and Social Council has assumed as one of its principal functions the supervision and co-ordination of the substantive work done by its own advisory commissions, the specialized agencies, and the Regional Economic Commissions (in Europe, Asia and the Far East, and Latin America), taking into account the work of other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. In co-ordinating the work of all these organizations, the Council has made further advances in avoiding duplication and dispersion of effort.

The Council has also broached the broader problem of simplifying the structure of international organization (in the field of economic and social activity) by integrating or establishing liaison between previously established inter-governmental organizations (probably amounting to several hundred in number) and the United Nations or the specialized agencies. The Council's discussions on this subject have stimulated the process of integration and closer co-ordination in the light of practical needs, and further progress along these lines may be anticipated.

While the Economic and Social Council could not hope to escape the effects of the East-West split that has frustrated so much of the work of the United Nations in other fields, and while the U.S.S.R. is not a member of any of the specialized agencies except the Universal Postal Union and the International Telecommunications Union, the Council has nevertheless succeeded in promoting effective collaboration in many fields (no doubt rallying a measure of creative enthusiasm behind the work of the United Nations as a whole), and in a few cases, most notably in the Economic Commission for Europe, has helped to bridge political barriers between East and West.

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), established by the Economic and Social Council in March, 1947, has been eclipsed in importance by ERP, but has nevertheless succeeded in solving certain basic technical problems. Through its complex substructure of committees and working parties the Commission has grappled with the details of economic organization, seeking ways to rationalize and standardize farm machinery; studied obstacles to intra-European trade to a point where the Secretariat is bringing about direct negotiations between some Eastern and Western European countries for barter agreements; allocated pit-props; allocated coal separately for each quality; encouraged (through detailed investigation of potential sites and markets) international collaboration in electric-power development, a field in which collaboration is essential to overcome the heavy capital and material expenditure