

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

An Address on the Second
Anniversary of the
Signing of the
Charter

1619

by

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

The annual general meeting of the Bombay Branch of the Indian Council of World Affairs was held on Thursday, June 26, at the Taj Mahal Hotel, with Sir Homi Mody in the Chair.

The Honorary Secretary's Report which was adopted showed that no less than 16 meetings of the Branch had been held during the period under review and the list of speakers showed that a forum for intelligent discussion on world problems had been provided to keen students of international affairs in the city. The Branch also rendered active assistance in connection with the Asian Relations Conference which met in Delhi in March and April this year.

Sir Homi Mody was re-elected as Chairman of the Branch and Mr. C. R. Sundaram as Honorary Secretary. Dr. J. F. Bulsara, Mrs. Zarina Currimbhoy, Mr. G. P. Hutheesing, Mr. M. R. Masani, Mrs. Pupul Jaykar and Mr. S. F. B. Tyabji were elected members of the Executive Committee.

To mark the Second anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, Mr. M. R. Masani addressed the meeting on "The Outlook for the United Nations".

In winding up the proceedings, Sir Homi Mody pointed out that the trouble with U. N. was that all the nations did not talk the same language and he did not see how, even if only one or two talked the language of aggression, collective security could be achieved. He urged the need for vigilance on the part of the Democracies and a more confident assertion of their way of life.

After the conclusion of the proceedings, Sir Homi was At Home to members of the Council.

and for these ends

To practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

To unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

To ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

To employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

These are noble words and sentiments. It is conventional on a solemn occasion like the present to indulge in pious platitudes, to indulge in wishful dreaming, and to draw a picture of a world which has abolished war and is marching to Utopia. But that would not be the truth, and I do not think that you as serious students of International Affairs would like me to follow that convention. Fortified by that old Chinese proverb which says that "the beginning

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Mr. Chairman—

This day two years ago, the representatives of 51 States with a total population of 1,700 million signed at San Francisco the Charter of the United Nations. While the Charter itself is a long document detailing the constitutional machinery through which the United Nations function, perhaps on this Anniversary of that historic occasion it would not be out of place to recall, and pledge ourselves anew to, the noble purposes set out in the preamble to the Charter :

WE THE PEOPLES OF
THE UNITED NATIONS

determined

To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

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 establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

what extent they have met the needs of Peaceful Change and Collective Security. On that basis, one can decide whether there is hope for Humanity or whether, as someone has put it, "the human race will prove to be an unsuccessful experiment nearing an unhappy end".

Peaceful Change

The organs of the UN concerned with setting up machinery for Peaceful Change are on the one hand the General Assembly and on the other the numerous subsidiary or associated bodies which have been and are still being established under the auspices of the UN. The amount of constructive work that is being done in the direction of co-operation between nations on what might be called non-political aspects of life is quite considerable. It would be impossible for me here to detail this work, but perhaps if I give just a list of these subsidiary organisations and efforts, it will give an idea of how comprehensive has been the effort at helping the nations to join hands in trying to make the world a better place to live in and in trying to establish relationships, both international and human, on a higher level. Under the Social and Economic Council of the UN, of which that very able fellow countrymen of ours, Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, is the Chairman, there are a number of offshoots. There is the F.A.O., the Food and Agriculture Organisation, with that eminent nutritionist, Sir John Boyd Orr, as Director-General, and the International Emergency Food Council through which we get, meagre as they are, our food imports. There is the I. T. O., the International Trade Organisation,

of wisdom is calling things by their right names", I propose to tell the truth about the U. N. as I personally see it.

Two Decades Back

About twenty years back, when I was a student in England I functioned for a year as Treasurer of the B.U.L.N.S. (British University League of Nations Society) and twice did a pilgrimage to Geneva to attend international students' conferences in furtherance of the League of Nations' ideals. I remember now all our endless discussions boiled down to the need for giving effect to two basic ideas if war was to be averted and peace established on earth. The first was the idea of Collective Security—the need for machinery for maintaining law and order on an international scale, of preventing aggression, of protecting small, weak and defenceless countries from bigger, more powerful and rapacious neighbours. It was increasingly recognised, however, that mere maintenance of the international *status quo* was only one half of the maintenance of peace. For peace to be established, it was also necessary that international justice and fair dealing should prevail and that changes in international relationships should be capable of being worked out peacefully and without clash of arms. If Collective Security was the first pillar, Peaceful Change was the second; and it was felt that the League of Nations' efforts on that side left very much to be desired.

Perhaps the best way in which one can attempt in a few minutes to evaluate the work done and the progress made by the United Nations within two years of their establishment is to consider briefly to

action rests with the Security Council alone. The General Assembly has met three times now—in January/February, 1946, in London, in October/December 1946, in New York, and recently again in a special session on Palestine. The discussion on Palestine and the investigation that is now proceeding there with a view to finding a solution of this vexed problem is a very good example of how the UN seeks to give effect to far-reaching changes in that area by peaceful means and without recourse to arms. A similar issue which India raised was that in regard to the treatment of its nationals of Indian origin by South Africa. Although the Charter of the United Nations lays down that the United Nations shall not intervene “in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any member state”, the General Assembly courageously widened the bounds of international authority by insisting on adjudicating in the dispute between India and South Africa, and the matter may be expected to come up again at the next session of the General Assembly later this year. The decision of the Assembly in this matter was a great victory, not so much for India as for the far-reaching principle that the world authority has a right to intervene even when a Government ill-treats a section of its own subjects.

Apart from the discussions on South Africa and Palestine, two other issues that have come up for discussion in the General Assembly have been those of Disarmament and Atomic Control and of the Great Power Veto. That brings us to our second head, namely, that of Collective Security.

which is at present taking shape in Geneva. Alongside it in the same City is also in session the I.L.O., the International Labour Organisation. Then there is the International Health Organisation. We have an Economic Commission for Europe and another Economic Commission for the Far East now in session in Shanghai. There is the Trusteeship Council to help certain backward areas to catch up under international guidance ; there are the International Bank and the Monetary Fund, which have come into existence through the Bretton Woods Agreement ; the I.R.O., the International Refugee Organisation which replaces UNRRA ; a Civil Aviation Organisation ; and a Statistical Commission. UNESCO, with whose initials all of you are familiar, is the Educational, Scientific and Cultural front of the United Nations, with Dr. Julian Huxley as its Director and eminent Indians like Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Dr. Homi Bhabha taking an active part. There is early next year to be an International Conference on Freedom of Information. Last but not least, there is a Human Rights Commission. To the extent that these numerous organisations get into their stride and are able to do constructive work in the way of strengthening international bonds and bringing the idea of One World nearer, to that extent the United Nations has forged well ahead of what the League of Nations was able to do in the direction of Peaceful Change.

The General Assembly forms the legislature of the United Nations, while the Security Council is a kind of Executive or Cabinet. While discussion of matters of common interest can take place in the Assembly, the power to take binding decisions and

after having got the secret of atomic bomb, to block inspection and control by the international authority.

Russia is also holding up the setting up of an International Police Force by stipulating that each of the Big Five should contribute exactly the same number of troops, aircraft and warships, with the result that, for instance, since China could contribute nothing more substantial than a few gunboats, the naval forces of the U.N. would be limited to the gunboat level !

The Veto

It is evident that the whole controversy centres round the use of the Great Power Veto, provided for in article 27 of the Charter, which prescribes that decisions of the Security Council on all other than procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of seven members out of eleven, including the concurring votes of the permanent members, namely, China, France, Russia, Britain and U.S.A. The effect of this Veto, which was inserted in the San Francisco Charter on the insistence of Russia but with China actively dissenting, was described at a previous meeting of this Branch by Louis Fischer with such clarity that I cannot do better than quote him :

" Let us take a hypothetical case and see what would happen. Let us say, for purposes of illustration, that France invades Iraq. The Security Council meets, debates, and votes. The six small and medium powers vote that France is an aggressor. The U.N.O. does nothing because, according to the charter, seven constituents form a majority. If

Collective Security

The second session of the Assembly last year passed a resolution asking the Security Council to table proposals before a special session of the Assembly providing for the elimination of atomic weapons, the setting up of an international authority with power of inspection and action not subject to veto, and the setting up of an International Police Force. In the Security Council and the Atomic Energy Commission, however, matters have reached a state of deadlock. While the U.S.A. and all other members take the view that there can be no question of unilateral disarmament until a system of Collective Security based on an international armed force and powers of inspection under the control of the United Nations has been set up, Russia takes the contrary view and insists on the USA giving up its monopoly of the atomic bomb as the first step to a discussion of the problem of collective security. Just at present the matter has reached a stage in the Atomic Control Commission where the Baruch Plan is backed by all the other nations but vetoed by Russia. That Plan, which was presented a year back on June 14, 1946, provides for the internationalisation of atomic power under the control of an International Atomic Development Authority, which would have power to inspect establishments in the territories of all member States and in which there would be no veto to block international supervision of the development of atomic energy. Russia, on the other hand, wants the Security Council, where the Great Power Veto operates, to be the controlling authority, with the result that if this was agreed to, either Russia or any other power would be in a position,

ess, the Security Council adjourned the matter for some months and before it could meet again, Iran was lucky enough, by undertaking to give Russia a lease for exploiting oil in the northern provinces, to get the Russian troops withdrawn from Azerbaijan, leaving behind a puppet "Government" which was later expelled.

The second example arose in the case of Albania, which was found by all the members of the Security Council to have had knowledge of the laying of mines which destroyed several British ships, with only Russia and her satellite Poland voting the other way. Thereupon, Russia imposed the Veto, and the Security Council had to throw up its hands in helplessness.

The third case was that of aggression against Greece. Just a month back on May 25, the Balkans Enquiry Commission of the United Nations, which investigated the situation on the spot, arrived at this finding, with only Russia and Poland dissenting: "The Commission, on the basis of facts ascertained, concludes that Yugoslavia and, to a lesser extent, Albania and Bulgaria have supported the guerilla warfare in Greece". When this report comes before the Security Council, one may legitimately apprehend that Russia will again exercise her veto and prevent any action being taken against her satellites for their aggression against Greece.

Another likely case to come up before the United Nations is that of Hungary, which has been recently in the news. In that country, free elections that took place in November 1945 gave the peasant party called the

these six smaller nations and the United States vote against France, the U.N.O. nevertheless does nothing, because the majority must include all the five Big Powers. By this time France has invaded Iraq. The Security Council meets, debates and votes. The United States, Britain, Russia and China as well as the six smaller Powers decide that France is indeed the aggressor. The U.N.O. does not budge. It requires the affirmative vote of France herself before the U.N.O. could proceed against herself as an aggressor. The U.N.O. would thus be paralysed in the case of French aggression against Iraq. This helplessness would not apply only in the case of Great Powers who wished to engage in war. Take smaller Powers. Suppose Yugoslavia invaded Greece; she would not do that without encouragement from Russia. Then Russia could use her power of veto in favour of Yugoslavia. In all conceivable cases of aggression in modern times, by great Powers or by small Powers, the U.N.O is powerless."

That these examples of Louis Fischer's are not fanciful has been proved by events which have taken place since he addressed this Council on 22nd July, 1946. The first relevant development was that of Iran, from one part of which, namely, Azerbaijan, the Russian Government refused to withdraw troops in breach of its international undertakings. When Iran brought the matter in the Spring of 1946 before the Security Council, Russia refused to participate in the discussion of the issue and her representative abstained from attending various meetings, thus bringing the Veto into play. To cover up its helplessness

The veto has been called by Premier Peter Fraser of New Zealand "a blot on the Charter". An analysis of its working shows that it was used eight times by the end of 1946—not once by the U.S.A., not once by Britain, not once by China, once by France jointly with Russia, and on seven other occasions by Russia alone.

Now, the basis of any world order worth the name is that nations, *big and small*, must be willing to abide by the decision of the majority and submerge their sovereignty to that extent. But it seems impossible to teach the rulers of a country where one man's voice counts for more than that of 190 million people that in international gatherings the voice of that one country cannot count for more than a mere 50 other nations.

You will by now be thinking that it is time the Veto was abolished. Well, at the last session of the General Assembly, Cuba brought forward a resolution for its elimination. Australia, more moderate, moved an amendment censuring the abuse and misuse that had taken place of the Veto Power and recommending its revision and more stringent limitation. Russia opposed all attempts to touch the Veto, and in the end an innocuous resolution was passed by the Assembly, 36 nations voting for it and only Russia and her five satellites voting against it. Asking the Big Five to see that the operation of the Veto does not impede the taking of decisions by the Security Council.

Two Worlds

Perhaps because there is no such Veto Power in operation there, Russia has refused to participate in

Smallholder's Party about 60% of the votes, with the Communist Party obtaining only 17% of the votes. When in course of time it was found that the Smallholders Party refused to take orders from General Sviridov, the Russian Commander, and objected to the economic exploitation of the Hungarian people in the interest of Russia, the Secretary-General of the Party, Bela Kovacs, was illegally kidnapped under the orders of General Sviridov over the head of the Hungarian Government, tortured by the NKVD and the usual "confessions" of conspiracy were extorted from him. He was made, among other things, to implicate the Prime Minister of the Hungarian Government and other Cabinet Colleagues in an alleged conspiracy against themselves! More recent events are known to everyone of you and the result is that the young democracy of Hungary has been strangled and Hungary may now be added to the list of puppet police States in company with Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and others. As the Hungarian Minister in New York, who has refused to recognise the puppet government in Budapest, has pointed out: "If there is to be a United Nations, it must find a solution for our problem." Though President Truman has described what has happened as an "outrage", I doubt whether the United Nations can now save Hungary. If America or any other country takes the matter before the U.N. the Russian veto is sure to operate and, however much one may regret it, Hungary may have to be struck off the list of free nations for years to come. Indeed, one apprehends that similar developments are likely to occur next in Finland and in Czechoslovakia, where Socialist and Agrarian Parties are still vocal.

There is an old saying that man cannot live with woman, nor can he live without her. The United Nations is like that—it cannot live with Russia and it cannot live without her.

You may think that in view of Russia's obstructive behaviour the first part of the proposition is obvious, but not the second. Why can't the United Nations live without Russia? In fact, only recently Senator James Eastland of the U.S.A. urged that Russia should be ejected from the United Nations. Even assuming that was the correct thing to do, it is not so easy to accomplish. For one thing there is the snag that, in framing the Charter, Russia took the precaution of seeing that she could never be expelled. In 1939 Russia was expelled by a unanimous vote of the League of Nations Assembly for her unprovoked aggression against tiny, pacific, Social Democratic Finland. The Russia Dictatorship has not forgotten that humiliation and has, therefore, insisted on inserting in the Charter articles 5 and 6 by which suspension or expulsion of a member is made contingent on the decision of the Security Council where, you will remember, the veto operates. At this, someone may say: Why not amend the Charter so as to eliminate the veto? Well, someone thought of that also, and the result is that article 109 of the Charter lays down that no alteration or amendment can be made except by a two-thirds majority in the Assembly, including every single one of the permanent members. The Veto once again!

Two Reactions

This situation has provoked two contrary reactions. One is that of the Appeasers who wish to shut

such harmless, non-political constructive activities as those I mentioned earlier—the UNESCO, the FAO, the ILO and the ITO. She has thwarted every attempt to strengthen the bonds of international co-operation and move in the direction of “One World.” The Russian dictatorship has even forbidden its citizens to marry non-Russians! Russia has erected an Iron Curtain round her empire and forced the world to divide in two water-tight compartments, one of which would ultimately conquer and swallow up the other.

Only a week back, Mr. Ernest Bevin, Britain’s Socialist Foreign Minister, made a touching appeal to the Kremlin and a plea for the removal of the Iron Curtain :

“ When you strip all these things which produce differences from political ideologies and you get down to the masses, what do they want ? They want to live ; to be free ; to have social justice ; individual security ; to be able to go home and turn the key in the lock and not to be troubled by a secret police.

“ I find no difference in the hopes of fathers and the loves of mother for their children. Whatever country you may be born in, they croon over the babies in the same old way.

“ They have the same dreams and aspirations. Why not let them live ? Why set them at each other’s throats?”

One wishes there would be some response to this, but one must face the harsh fact that perhaps it only amounts to banging one’s head against an iron screen.

Now, we in this country have in the past adhered to the principle of Collective Security and shown our distaste at the way in which China was denied assistance when Manchuria was filched from it by Japan ; we called for " Sanctions " to stop Italy from aggression against Abyssinia ; we cursed at " Non-intervention " in the case of Spain ; and " Munich " became a byword of contempt. I do not see how, consistently with that stand, we can now withhold our support when assistance is being given to small countries like Turkey and Greece whose independence is being threatened by totalitarian aggression. The argument that these countries do not enjoy democratic governments is not a sound one, because in both countries there have been free elections and opposition parties are freely functioning. Let it be recalled that over 70% of the Greek people voted freely for Monarchy and for the present parties in office in an election held under international supervision. And when it is suggested that the character of these Governments should be scrutinized, let us remember that Manchuria was ruled by the warlord Chang Tso-Lin and Abyssinia was an autocratic, slave-holding State when India expressed solidarity with China and Abyssinia.

Equally hollow is the protest that the United Nations are being by-passed by the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The Bill which has gone through American Congress for giving Aid to Turkey and Greece has, I believe, a clause laying down that when a *majority* vote of the Security Council decides that such aid is not called for any more, it shall cease. So what it is sought to by-pass is not the United Nations, but the Veto of the aggressor State itself.

their eyes to aggression in Hungary, Greece, Turkey, Sinkiang and Manchuria in the hope of averting a clash. With those who do not yet realise that appeasement is the best way to ensure War, there can be no argument. It is encouraging to see, however, that in the last few days even Mr. Henry Wallace and Mr. Richard Crossman, the leader of the British "Rebel" M.P.s, have found it necessary publicly to warn the Russian Government against a continuance of its present policies.

The other reaction is expressed in the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, which are based on the impossibility of doing anything through the U.N. machinery. Elaborating the Doctrine in a message to Congress on March 12, President Truman thus explained its basic purpose :—

"At the present moment in world history every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice too often is not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. A second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, controlled press and radio, fixed elections and suppression of personal freedoms. I believe it must be the policy of the U.S.A. to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own ways".

you may be sure that India and the nations of South East Asia will follow". This menacing picture is a challenge to the peoples of Asia.

I was happy when, earlier this month, Mr. Asaf Ali, our Ambassador in Washington, who played such a distinguished part in the discussions on Palestine, pledged India's "wholehearted support to every effort that the U.S. will make towards the establishment of peace, freedom and prosperity in the world" and added that "the tasks the U.S. has before it in the West happen to be the very same India has before it in the East".

The Next Step

Let me not be misunderstood. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan are rough expedients to deal with a desperate situation which the U.N. is precluded from tackling by reason of the Russian Veto. What is wrong with them is not their purpose or motive but that they are groping, hesitant steps taken unilaterally when what is called for is decisive action taken collectively by all free nations. They can only be accepted as interim steps while something more positive and constructive can be done collectively.

That the statesmen of America realise this is evident from the fact that it is Mr. John Foster Dulles, one of America's foreign policy makers, who has said : "Negation is never a permanent substitute for creation, and no nation is so poor as a nation which can give only dollars".

The positive and constructive action that is now called for is for the non-Russian World to put its

The Marshall Plan for the economic rehabilitation of Europe, if only the nations of Europe will co-operate in helping one another, has been welcomed by Mr. Torgye Lie, the Secretary-General of the U.N. itself. It has been said that "it deserves to rank with the most unsordid acts in history". It is a logical corollary to the Truman Doctrine—one safeguards the political independence of small nations threatened by aggression, the other seeks to remove the root causes of totalitarianism—hunger and poverty. The one assures Collective Security; the other Peaceful Change.

What Of Asia ?

Let us not think of the Marshall Plan as something for the benefit of Europe alone. On June 18, the Chinese Government through its Ambassador in Washington, Dr. Wellington Koo, asked for the extension of the Plan to Asia, saying: "There is plenty of room for expanding Mr. Marshall's Plan to Asia". Three days later, on June 21, Dr. Sun Fo, Vice-President of the Chinese Republic, son of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and till recently a friend of Russia, echoed that appeal more urgently from Nanking. "A new world war", declared Dr. Sun Fo, "is in the making in Manchuria, where Soviet Russia will try to launch a new puppet State similar to those created in Europe unless prevented by aroused world opinion led by the U.S. and Britain". Charging the present Communist offensive in Manchuria as being "Russian inspired and directed", Dr. Sun Fo pointed out that "Manchuria is the key to Korea, China and Japan. If Manchuria becomes a Russian puppet State now, then those countries will be the next. If China goes Communist,

own house in order. It has been seen that for two years now, except for Russia and its five satellite States, all the members of the U.N. have co-operated in all its efforts and been prepared to abide by the verdict of the majority of their peers. Let these forty odd States then join together in an endeavour to build up a Federal World Government. Let them agree to surrender part of their sovereignty, including their powers of defence and certain other functions like those of foreign trade and exchange and international communications, to a League of Democratic States where there shall be no veto and big and small, strong and weak, white and coloured, shall have an equal voice. The British Socialist Government has gone on record as willing to participate in a world Government. Mr. Ernest Bevin made this historic declaration before the U.N. Assembly when it met in London in January 1946. If the U.S. will also take this bold step forward, such a Democratic Federal Union covering 5/6ths of the surface of the globe could be set up.

Now, it is not being suggested that the U.N. should be dissolved or scrapped. It has been in existence less than two years, and growing pains are only to be expected. Even if the Veto stops it from becoming an effective agency for World Government or World Peace, the U.N. can still be a useful forum for international discussion, and its non-political agencies are already engaged in doing a considerable amount of useful work. The organisation that is proposed would play a supplementary role, filling up the vacuum that the Veto creates in the U.N.

Nor need it be thought that 5/6ths of the world organising itself democratically means war. The other

sixth has already sealed itself off unilaterally ; and there is no reason why there should not be diplomatic relations between the two. The only thing that will not be possible is for one to infiltrate into the other and disrupt its peace and welfare.

The setting up of such a Federation calls for a willingness on the part of the Western Democracies to be parties to Peaceful Change of a far-reaching nature. To-day, there are millions of people in Asia and Africa who are not masters in their own homes. Today, the Colour Bar is still the Achilles' Heel of Western Democracy. Today, the U.S. citizen has a diet of 3500 calories a day while the Indian and the Chinese have to subsist on less than 1000 calories. These things do not go well with a Democratic International Order. The remedy is thus prescribed by a Socialist writer :

"You can only stop Communism by making its alternative, Democracy, more real to a German who is hungry, a Frenchman who sees no future for his country, a Greek who fears reaction and unemployment, a Turk who wants a better living and more freedom, an Indian who wants food and independence, a Chinese who wants land, rice, and peace, more real to all the oppressed and suffering of the world".

Welcome Signs

There are welcome signs that there is growing appreciation of all this in the West. The British withdrawal from India, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt and Palestine ; the American liberation of the Philippines ;