

## Chapter XI

### THE UNITED NATIONS: INSTRUMENT OF CO-OPERATION

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FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT WAS THE INITIATOR OF THE project of the United Nations organization. Its actual organization was the product of Roosevelt's close co-operation with Stalin, in the Teheran and Yalta conferences. It was almost stillborn in the San Francisco Conference, because the United States began to move away from Roosevelt's policies immediately after his death, but was saved by Truman's last-minute intervention to restore the Yalta agreements.

The United Nations has not had a very auspicious first period of life. It has been largely paralyzed by a diplomatic "war of nerves" among the victorious great powers. This has led to considerable pessimism in America about its prospects and possibilities.

Of course the United Nations does not work smoothly when the U.S.A. departs from the policies of Roosevelt. But that is no reason to doubt that the United Nations will begin to measure up to its tasks when Roosevelt's policies are re-established in this country.

The United Nations organization was conceived as an instrument of co-operation among the great powers and, through their united leadership, among all nations of the world. That is the only way it will work. When

it is not given that united leadership, when instead an Anglo-American bloc tries to use it as an instrument for imposing decisions upon the Soviet Union which that power decides it cannot accept, then the United Nations becomes impotent. It simply was not designed for that sort of job. It was designed as an instrument for co-operation and is not good for anything else. When we are ready for co-operation the United Nations is an instrumentality ready and fit, through which such co-operation can be worked out.

In previous chapters I have already dealt with the main issues which have given rise to serious rifts in the unity of the great powers which stall the machinery of the United Nations. It remains to examine how these differences affect the United Nations and its prospects.

It must be remembered, first of all, that Roosevelt and Stalin carefully divorced the United Nations from all the problems of the peace settlements. The United Nations was set up, not as the medium for establishing peace, which is the task of the principal victors, but as the instrumentality for preserving peace when it had been made. The deep wisdom of that decision should now be clear to everyone. First peace must be made, then will be the time for decisive use of the United Nations to maintain that peace.

Most of the troubles of the United Nations have arisen from ignoring this basic fact.

It must be said that the Soviet Union has made great efforts to maintain this original Roosevelt-Stalin conception of how to make the peace and how to build the United Nations. But when faced with the diplomatic

offensive conducted against her under the leadership first of Bevin and then of Byrnes, she had no recourse but to answer in the same language in which she was being addressed.

It would be stupidity, however, to think that the Soviet Union is pleased by this course of events or chose to go in this direction. This is indicated by the obvious fact that the Soviet Union always knew that if and when the unity of the great powers is broken in the United Nations councils, and a line-up is forced there, she is automatically in a minority position. She could not dream of raising a majority vote against the United States within the United Nations. She joined the United Nations with the foreknowledge that in the event of division between the great powers the Security Council and Assembly were weighted against her. In the nature of things the Soviet Union knows that the most she can gain within the United Nations is to force a recognition of the necessity of agreement and co-operation upon a policy acceptable to all the great powers.

Unfortunately the United States was faced with a great temptation to rely upon the majority she can always rally on any issue before the Security Council and Assembly, and to forget the necessity for reaching agreement among the great powers. Among the most forceful personalities in the U.S. representation have been those whose predilection has always been to welcome that temptation and to embrace it—Senator Vandenberg, in the first place.

Reactionary circles in America, always opposed to or suspicious of any association with the Soviet Union,

have made great efforts to convince the American public that it is the Soviet Union which has taken the lead in moving away from the original conception of the United Nations and that the Soviet leaders long ago abandoned any hope of working with the United Nations. That, however, is an extremely shortsighted conclusion, and does not correspond to the facts.

It has not helped to clear up this confusion that the American Communists in 1946 distributed large numbers of pamphlets on "The Menace of a New World War" in which literally the only mention of the United Nations organization is a description of it as a place where "the capitalist nations constantly gang up against the U.S.S.R." Too many people in this country still believe that the American Communists always reflect the thought of the Communist leaders of the Soviet Union. That is far from being true. And in this particular case it was the opposite of the truth. Stalin expressed the consistent Soviet position when, early in 1946 in answering questions put by Eddie Gilmore of the Associated Press, he said: "I am convinced that neither nations nor their armies are seeking another war . . . It is necessary for public opinion and the ruling circles of all states . . . to expose warmongers without loss of time . . . I attach great importance to the United Nations organization as it is a serious instrument for preservation of peace and international security."

Of course Stalin knew, when he made that statement, that the majority of the United Nations representatives *had* "ganged up" against the Soviet—under American instigation. But he was not so shortsighted as to jump

to the conclusion that that was the only word to say about the United Nations. Obviously he believed that this condition might be temporary, that it could and would be changed, for he stressed the positive, valuable, future potentiality of the United Nations and not its immediate frustration.

On September 23, 1946, Stalin gave another interview pointing in the same general direction and dealing more specifically with some detailed problems, in the course of answering questions put to him by the British correspondent, Alexander Werth. The main body of this book was already written and in the hands of publishers when this Stalin interview was issued. The interview confirms that the Soviet position on all major questions is substantially as I have described it in this book.

Such confidence on the part of Stalin, at a moment when most of America was suffering from the war jitters, is difficult for many in this country to understand. Because they do not understand it, they waver between two superficial judgments, equally erroneous, either that Stalin is preparing to surrender to Mr. Byrnes, or that he is indulging in diplomatic double-talk. It does not deter such speculators to remind them that there has never in the past been any example of Stalin either surrendering or speaking ambiguously. No, Stalin's confidence in the future of the United Nations is neither weakness nor traditional diplomacy; it is an expression of strength and frankness, based upon the knowledge that the common interests of America and the Soviet Union are so broad and decisive that any serious colli-



sion between the two countries would be an act of insanity—and obviously he does not believe that America is insane.

The problems of co-operation, and therewith of the whole future of the United Nations, would be much easier of solution if our country still had Roosevelt at the helm. F.D.R. had much of that same ability to hold a steady course amidst storms which is characteristic of Stalin. But if sufficient foresight and wisdom are not present to keep us out of the danger zone, the dangers themselves are so enormous and so obvious that our new helmsmen will have to take a new tack and, though the course may be zigzag, go back to Roosevelt's charted line of travel for America and the world.

America's correct role in the United Nations, as Roosevelt planned it, is most immediately distorted and threatened by the proponents of the Anglo-American bloc, the "get tough" and "stop Russia" school of international politics.

But there is arising another deviation from the Roosevelt line which, in the future, might become equally dangerous. This is the conception that the Roosevelt plan is already "out of date," and that what is needed is the quick transition to a World Government to which all existing national governments should be subordinated. In substance this trend of thought, underneath its heavy mask of idealistic verbiage, is closely related to the "get tough" Anglo-American bloc, because it actually always carries with it the unspoken assumption that a World Government would as a matter of course be

led and staffed mainly by Americans—doubtless on account of sheer ability!

The world has not yet established the preconditions necessary for a World Government, therefore any effort to establish any such thing would not be a step in human progress, but would actually be a retrogression to a more primitive stage. The sovereign nation-state still remains the framework within which the human race must work out its destiny, with no more limitations than those which are embodied in the present charter of the United Nations.

To establish this point irrefutably, nothing more is required than a reference to the fact that a majority of the human race has still not reached the stage of national self-government and has not escaped the bonds of feudalism and of semifeudal colonialism. How is this majority to be represented in any projected World Government? Clearly they can never be represented in any sort of world community except through the process of winning their independent nationhood and working out within the nation some form of democratic self-government. Any other form of representation would only be symbolical—as slaves may be "represented" by their master—a practical denial of human freedom, the establishment of a universal despotism. It is not only undesirable, it is impossible. The current manifestations of the concept of World Government constitute a revival of reactionary Utopianism.

As a matter of cold fact, which needs to be faced however unpleasant it may be, America is committed to the United Nations as now constituted only in the most

tenuous way. We still have a long way to go, and much hard work and hard thinking to do before we can say with any deep certainty that the U.S.A. has committed itself seriously and for a long term to making a success of the United Nations as the organization of the world for a durable peace. It is the fight for this commitment which will be the main content of American political life for the next generation. And a fight it will be, a hard and bitter political struggle, with the course of battle now tending in one direction and then in another.

The enemies of the United Nations program in America have not surrendered. They have only joined under the banner of the United Nations the better to combat it from within, to disrupt it, to turn it into its opposite. America is still only playing with the idea of the United Nations when it can permit a Vandenberg to direct and dominate its representation therein.

The Senator from Michigan has a very definite idea of what he wants to make of the United Nations. In his eyes it is to be made an arm of the Du Pont-General Motors Empire, in which the nations of the world will be allotted each her place, provided she understands what that place is. Vandenberg is the plenipotentiary of the top circle of American "economic royalists" (that was Roosevelt's name for them!) to deal with Washington and the other governments of the world. He has always been the deadly enemy of all the Roosevelt policies, and he is not the least deadly enemy of the United Nations. And since Roosevelt's death he has worked his way into dominance over American foreign policy, until he now determines its general trend.

It is the uncertainty of America's role, introduced since the death of Roosevelt, that has placed the United Nations in a precarious condition.

Some left and liberal circles have responded to this dangerous situation by giving up the United Nations as a bad job, not worthy of more attention and effort. This tendency undoubtedly brings joy to Senator Vandenberg, for it makes his job easier, but it should arouse the wrath of every seriously progressive American. The United Nations remains a key point in the whole Roosevelt program. To weaken in its defense merely because an enemy has entrenched himself within means in fact to give up the whole fight for the Roosevelt program. It is a manifestation of sickly defeatism, which begins to rejoice in reactionary victories in the mystical hope that this will, someday, bring retribution by a "rising of the people."

The United Nations has a vitality that raises it above the frustrations of the day, above the machinations of its enemies within, above the weaknesses and mistakes of its supporters. That is because the United Nations organization, as Roosevelt and Stalin conceived it, *corresponds to the needs of all nations in the present stage of world development.* They must continually come back to it, and find out how to make it work. There is no possible substitute for it.

The mass of the American people have attained this basic understanding. That is why even the reactionary enemies of the United Nations now carry on their hostile work under the hypocritical mask of "supporters." That is why no party in American politics will dare to



campaign on any other platform than support to the United Nations.

That is not enough to guarantee victory for the United Nations, however, for this broad general support, to be effective, must be organized into political power around a detailed program to meet all the international issues of the day, a program which will serve to smoke out the hidden enemies, which will separate the sheep from the goats, which will make the true issues clear and inescapable.

All of which leads to the question of whether it is possible to make the struggle for the United Nations, for guaranteeing a durable peace, into a practical political program which will win the votes of the majority of the American people in the 1948 elections.