

WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.N.?

ELEVEN men in plain business suits sat at a long curved desk that looked like a polished segment from a gigantic wagon wheel. Fluorescent lamps concealed in the ceiling poured a blue-white light down on them. Before each lay a green blotting pad, papers and pencils and a well-thumbed copy of the Charter of the United Nations. Before them all lay a problem—how to stop the war in Greece before it became a bigger war.

It was an old problem. The gentlemen had wrestled with it for months. They had the power to solve it in those 111 complicated articles of the Charter, a legal mechanism intended chiefly to keep peace. As members of the Security Council of the United Nations they were, if they could agree on what to do, the most powerful group of men in the world. They could stop wars and punish those who started them.

But they could seldom agree. When they did, they made French troops get out of Syria and Lebanon and obliged Russian soldiers to evacuate Iran. But this Greek affair was different. The gentlemen of the Security Council couldn't make up their minds.

They were tired and bored, approaching the end of another inconclusive session. They had held 60 meetings on the subject. Only one, when they agreed to send a commission to Greece to investigate the causes and effects of the Greek civil war, had produced results. The investigators reported that what had started as a rebellion of left-wingers against a duly elected but right-wing Greek government now threatened peace in the Balkans and, perhaps, the world. Greece's neighbors—Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria—the investigators found, were helping the antigovernment forces in Greece. Military meddling in the internal affairs of a neighbor was a violation of the law of the United Nations.

The gentlemen of the Security Council, really lawyers acting as diplomats, had before them two suggestions for settling the Greek dispute. One was by the Australian member calling on all parties concerned to quit fighting and arbitrate their differences among themselves. The other was in tougher American language. It blamed Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria for disturbing the peace and ordered them to stop helping the Greek guerrillas. It was time for the Council to vote, but the eleven knew beforehand what the result would be.

The press knew too. Of the 200 seats in the press gallery less than 20 were occupied. A Chinese correspondent played ticktacktoe with an American colleague. A few reporters made desultory notes. Others wandered in and out of the gallery like casual spectators at a six-day bike race.

But the men and women who occupied nearly all of the 600 spectators'

seats in the public gallery, between the press balcony and the semicircular diplomats' table, listened to every word. They were attentive even when they didn't understand the French and Russian delegates. They strained for the translations. They watched every move, every expression of the eleven weary men on the stage of the amphitheater below them. Some of them, too, knew what would happen but obviously hoped it wouldn't.

The Australian resolution came first. Nine of the eleven approved. One, the Polish delegate, abstained from voting. The other, Andrei Gromyko of Russia, voted against it. There was an audible sigh of disappointment from the spectators. The press gallery rustled as reporters moved about, checking the results of the vote with one another. The Chinese correspondent wrote a cable: "Gromyko vetoed Australian resolution . . ."

Faris El-Khoury, the white-haired Syrian, who would yield the chairmanship of the Council to Gromyko in a few days under the rotating system which gives every member a chance to preside, was plainly exasperated. He looked at Herschel Johnson, the American delegate.

"We have another resolution," he said. "I don't believe its fate will be different. Do you want it discussed?"

"I do not think it necessary," Johnson replied with a tight jaw, "to take the time of the Council with any further arguments which would be in the nature of phonograph records. Let us proceed with the vote, please."

The Council voted. Gromyko vetoed. The Security Council had failed to halt the Greek civil war. Out of it might grow a Balkan war and out of it, as has happened before, another world war.

A Record of Failures

The Council's dismal performance in the Greek crisis was one of a batch of failures comparable to the futile record of the old League of Nations. The Council had also failed: (1) to pacify the Indonesian war, (2) to agree on disarmament, (3) to set up an international military organization to enforce a United Nations peace and, worst of all, (4) to internationalize atomic energy to ensure its use for the advancement rather than the annihilation of mankind.

This last was the Council's—and the United Nations'—most depressing failure although it did not, by any means, exhaust the record of deadlock and futility compiled in the brief two years of its life. What was wrong? Was the United Nations headed, like the old League, to collapse? Was One World a mirage?

Men have tried for 300 years to find workable ways of living together without periodically slaughtering one another with new and more destructive weapons. When muskets and cannon

replaced swords and crossbows back in the seventeenth century Europe's thinkers came forward with plans for abolishing war. There were the schemes of Eméric Crucé, Hugo Grotius, William Penn and the Abbe Saint-Pierre, the spiritual ancestors of Wendell Willkie. English King Henry IV's "Grand Design" for a federated Europe even included an international police force.

The advent of the airplane, which shortened distances and gave the words "world" and "war" new meanings of smallness and of horror, impelled men to make a first effort at organizing the human race into a peaceful society of the League of Nations. This died as a noble but unworkable experiment. Peace remained a coveted luxury. World War II, long before it was over, realized all the horrors of that new weapon, the airplane, and men determined to try again to organize a workable world society with the United Nations.

Then, one day, atom bombs killed Nagasaki and hushed Hiroshima in the time it takes you to blow out a match. Peace became an indispensable necessity. Two billion survivors of World War II hailed the United Nations with the enthusiasm they might have accorded the arrival of the millennium.

The new and all-inclusive League of Nations promised not only to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" but to protect fundamental human rights, promote a better life for everybody and establish justice and respect for international law. But has the United Nations realized its lofty ideals or achieved its irreproachable aims?

If so the facts are not apparent to the plain man, who knows only what he reads in the newspapers or hears on the radio. These tell him of violations of human rights in Poland and elsewhere, of famine in Europe and bankruptcy in Britain, of disregard for international law in Yugoslavia and of bloodshed in Greece and Indonesia. And the stories from Lake Success, on Long Island, where the United Nations is temporarily housed in a glitteringly functional building which was once ominously a factory for making warplane parts, do nothing to dispel his fears.

When he adds up what the headlines and the commentators say the average American is compelled to conclude that the U.N., like its predecessor at Geneva, Switzerland, is perhaps only a Utopian dream. Nevertheless, the average citizen isn't prepared to give up his dream. His enthusiasm for the idea of having a world organization to settle disputes between nations is as strong as ever. This is borne out by George Gallup's frequent public-opinion polls in which Americans, including the historically reluctant internationalists of the Middle West, voted for continuation of

the U.N. and our participation therein.

But there is growing dissatisfaction with the way in which the U.N. is handling the world's business. Gallup's most recent poll showed that out of every 100 Americans questioned on the subject 50 were decidedly unhappy about the U.N.'s progress, only 26 were satisfied, 24 had no opinion.

What Americans say about the U.N., according to Gallup's investigators, reflects dissatisfaction even more pointedly than the statistics. They look upon the diplomats at Lake Success as "a bunch of politicians playing out their own little game." They complain of "too much dissension among the delegates."

Public Opinion Speaks Out

Who's to blame? Our citizens are as sure about this as they are about their dissatisfaction. "The Russians," they told Gallup's doorbell ringers, "are trying to push everybody else around" and "are trying to get away with too much."

On the other side of the fence, the Russians blame the failures of the U.N. on America. A recent dispatch from the Russian news agency, Tass, which was published in Moscow newspapers charged:

"Everything bears witness to the fact that American policy with regard to the United Nations more and more is pointing to two alternatives—either unconditional subjugation of the United Nations to the line of the White House or direct liquidation of the organization. . . . A great campaign is waged with the intention of distracting world opinion from reality which is not pretty, and to direct the work of the Assembly to a false path. The 'veto question' is being dragged out of dusty archives, a tattered scarecrow."

Regardless of such blanket indictments by either side, not all of the blame for the dissension inside the U.N., however, can fairly be laid on the Russians. Although the struggle for power between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. dominates the scene, other battles caused by the conflicting interests of the nations of the world are fought out on the same stage.

It was not Gromyko, for instance, but the Frenchman Alexandre Parodi who snarled at least one major effort to settle the Indonesian dispute. America and nine other nations supported a Russian resolution empowering the Council to send an eleven-man commission to get the facts on the spot, as was done in the Palestine dispute. Parodi, as counsel for a colonial power, supported the interests of another, the Netherlands. France may need Dutch help in preventing liquidation of France's interests in Indo-China, where the natives also demand freedom. By this action Parodi wooed that help.

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When the United Nations was formed two years ago people everywhere hailed it as the millennium. But it hasn't been working so well since then, and here's why

BY FRANK GERVASI

PHOTOGRAPH FOR COLLIER'S BY GEORGE KARGER



Although the United Nations General Assembly, shown here, can talk but not act, some observers believe that through the force of world opinion it can accomplish things which the veto-bound Security Council is powerless to do

LIZ—that's my wife—is a very pretty woman. "Okay, Liz," I said, "so I'm late for supper again."

"That's all right, hon," Liz said.

I moped around the kitchen door, not looking at her.

"Johnny's in bed. You go sit in front of the fire and relax. I'll bring you a nice drink."

I sighed and went into the front room.

Liz came in with two highballs, some cheese and crackers. "Cheddar," she said, "Your favorite cheese."

"Yeah," I said.

"Take some."

"I don't want any," I said.

When Liz spoke, her voice had that thin, hopeful tone I was beginning to get used to hearing. "I got a good steak today, hon. Sirloin. I'll broil it rare. Just like you like it."

"Steak," I said. "I'm sick of steak."

It wasn't true but I was fidgety.

Liz stared at the gas log.

"I wish Bernie was here," I said.

Liz sighed.

I had some of the drink. I thought for a while about old Bernie and I started feeling a little more cheerful. "Old Bernie," I said. "Did I ever tell you about the time we were in training? Out at Fort Riley? And Bernie kicked out the glass door of this Chinese restaurant in Junction City? And this cocky little MP came along to arrest us, and Bernie and I kidnaped him and tied him in an empty stall out at the stables?"

"Yes, hon," Liz said. "you sure did."

"Some Bernie," I said. "That's some boy."

"How were things at the shop today?" Liz said.

"Old Bernie just didn't care. This first sergeant in the training troop, he was an old-timer, see? He was Regular Army from way back. Anything he hated, it was a second lieutenant. Bernie would ignore the second lieutenants whenever possible, but one man he'd always 'sir,' and salute, and that was the first sergeant. The sergeant loved it. He thought Bernie was the finest recruit he'd ever seen. The first sergeant, of course, practically ran the troop—guard roster, duty roster, all the details and even company punishment—and old Bernie, he took it pretty easy."

"Cute," Liz said.

"Cute! Why, that boy—"

Liz interrupted: "Things go any better today?"

"Ah, Liz," I said. "Forget it. Forget the shop, will you? The old grind. The salt mines. Six days, a day off—six days and a day off. It's awful. And the old man's still dishing out that tired malarkey: I was in today to tell him about some parts we needed for that custom-built job I been working on, and he says, 'Jack,' he says, 'you're the fastest man I got on the floor, and the best mechanic.' He says, 'Now don't forget what I been telling you about that assistant manager's job. You're the next man in line. Now

keep up the good work, son,' he says."

"Why, that's swell, hon!" Liz said.

"Swell," I said. I slumped in my chair until my chin rested on my chest. "That's just dandy. Nine to five. Back and forth. Two weeks off in the summer. Plug, plug, plug. Year after year. Where in hell does it get you?"

"Ah, Jack, darling—what're you saying? It would be a wonderful, responsible job—"

"A good job? A good job, so what? Old Bernie, for instance; old Bernie and me, we used to talk. That's one of the beautiful things about the Army, Liz: plenty of time for batting the breeze. You have a couple of beers and you sit around and you bat the breeze."

"Bernie used to say, 'Jack,' he'd say, 'this old grind on the outside, that's strictly for the birds. One thing the Army's taught me, and that is this: A man's a damn' fool to knock himself out for the other guy. Now, I been a grease monkey for this character back in Pittsburgh since I got out of high school,' he'd say. 'When I get back I'll see this guy and he'll start handing me that stuff about how proud he is of me. He'll feed me that gook about how nothing is too good for Our Boys. He'll tell me the old job is waiting for me, and they've even saved my locker for me. He'll tell me he expects to see me on the job at eight o'clock the next morning. Now,' Bernie says, 'you know what I'm going to say to this character, Jack?' I'd shake my head, uh-uh, and Bernie would say, 'I'll say

this: I'll say, *Blow it out your barracks bag, Jerk!*'"

"That's the kind of a guy Bernie is," I told Liz.

"He sounds charming."

"I'll never forget the time—"

"I'd better start the steaks," Liz said.

Well, I'd got to thinking about Bernie—I'd been thinking about him all day—and I didn't want to stop. It's like this: You meet a lot of guys in the Army and sometimes—and this is the way it was with me—there's one guy you can't forget. There's one guy who just happens to be with you when you're hitting the high spots of your Army service. And from then on this guy is all mixed up with—and becomes sort of a symbol for—all the wonderful, important, half-baked, shining things that happened to you during your hitch; and when you think of him you forget all the long in-between stretches of misery, boredom, griping and fear. It's like a song—it's like maybe Stardust: You hear Stardust a few times when you're a kid, when you just happen to feel tall enough to grab stars out of the sky—and from then on, or until you get slapped in the face with the truth, every time you hear Stardust, you'll think of how happy you always were as a kid.

"Let them go," I said to Liz. "Let the steaks go for a while and make us another drink."

When Liz came back with the fresh drinks I let her have it. I'd been work-

Sometimes it seems like there's one guy who was with you in the Army you just can't forget, like he's a symbol for all the wonderful things that happen to you. You forget the bad and remember the good. That's the way it was with

BERNIE AND ME

BY WILLIAM FULLER

ILLUSTRATED BY MARIO COOPER

