

The Quest for Peace yesterday and today [Continuation]

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THE QUEST FOR PEACE YESTERDAY AND TODAY.

Memorial Lecture given by Professor William E. Rappard, of the University of Geneva, Director, Graduate Institute of International Studies, at the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, April, 1954.

(Continuation)

...because the veto power has remained one of the most controversial issues of the United Nations structure, it may be of interest to present here the major portion of my shorthand record of the views expressed on the veto issue at Yalta...

The Marshal: 'I would like to have this document to study because it is difficult on hearing it read to come to any conclusion...

'I think that the task is to secure our unity in the future, and for this purpose, we must agree upon such a covenant as would best serve that purpose. The danger in the future is the possibility of conflicts among ourselves. If there be unity, then the danger from Germany will not be great. Now we have to think how we can create a situation where the three powers here represented, and China—'

Prime Minister: '— and France.'

The Marshal: 'Yes, and we will keep a united front. I must apologise to the conference. I have been very busy with other matters and had no chance to study this question in detail. As far as I understand what was said in the American proposal, all conflicts are being divided into two categories — conflicts which demand sanctions of a military nature; the other category includes conflicts which could be regulated by peaceful means without military sanctions. Then I understand that, in the consideration of conflicts of both kinds, it is contemplated there should be first a free discussion of the conflict. I understand, also, that in considering the disputes of the first category, which demand military sanctions, that a permanent member being a party to the dispute has a right to vote. But in conflicts of the second category, which could be regulated by peaceful means, and do not require sanctions, the party in dispute is not allowed to vote.

'We are accused of attaching too great importance to the procedure "how to vote". We are guilty. We attach great importance to the question of voting. All questions are decided by votes and we are interested in the decisions and not in the discussions...'

I was deeply disturbed by the clear evidence that Stalin had not considered or even read our proposal on voting in the Security Council even though it had been sent to him by diplomatic air pouch on December 5. This was February 6, and it occurred to me that if in those sixty-three days he had not familiarized himself with the subject, he could not be greatly interested in the United Nations organization. It was all the more impressive since this certainly was the only proposal on the agenda with which he was not entirely familiar. My concern remained even though at the next day's meeting Mr. Molotov announced the Soviet Union's acceptance of our proposal, which was

later adopted in substantially the same form at San Francisco."

This account entirely bears out what Mr. Hull writes about it in his *Memoirs*.

The decision reached at Yalta was violently challenged at the San Francisco Conference, but after repeated discussions between its authors, it was practically imposed upon the Conference.

These are the very unambiguous terms in which, on June 7, 1945, they informed it that it was to be inserted in the Charter, if there was to be a Charter and a United Nations organization:

"...the four Sponsoring Governments agreed on the Yalta formula and have presented it to this Conference as essential if an international organization is to be created through which all peace-loving nations can effectively discharge their common responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security."

Besides taking this vital decision on the veto power, the Yalta meeting had also agreed on the conference which was to draft the Charter. These are the relevant terms of the report issued at its close, on February 11, 1945:

"UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

We are resolved upon the earliest possible establishment with our allies of a general international organization to maintain peace and security. We believe that this is essential, both to prevent aggression and to remove the political, economic and social causes of war through the close and continuing collaboration of all peace-loving peoples.

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The foundations were laid at Dumbarton Oaks. On the important question of voting procedure, however, agreement was not there reached. The present Conference has been able to resolve this difficulty.

We have agreed that a conference of United Nations should be called to meet at San Francisco in the United States on April 25, 1945, to prepare the charter of such an organization, along the lines proposed in the informal conversations at Dumbarton Oaks.

The Government of China and the Provisional Government of France will be immediately consulted and invited to sponsor invitation to the conference jointly with the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. As soon as the consultation with China and France has been completed, the text of the proposals on voting procedure will be made public.

MEETINGS OF FOREIGN SECRETARIES

Throughout the Conference, besides the daily meetings of the heads of governments and the Foreign Secretaries, separate meetings of the three Foreign Secretaries, and their advisors have also been held daily.

These meetings have proved of the utmost value and the Conference agreed that permanent machinery should be set up for regular consultation between the three Foreign Secretaries. They will, therefore, meet as often as may be necessary, probably about every three or four months. These meetings will be held in rotation in the three capitals, the first meeting

being held in London, after the United Nations Conference on World Organization.

UNITY FOR PEACE AS FOR WAR

Our meeting here in the Crimea has reaffirmed our common determination to maintain and strengthen in the peace to come that unity of purpose and of action which has made victory possible and certain for the United Nations in this war. We believe that this is a sacred obligation which our Governments owe to our peoples and to all the peoples of the world.

Only with the continuing and growing cooperation and understanding among our three countries and among all the peace-loving nations can the highest aspiration of humanity be realized — a secure and lasting peace which will, in the words of the Atlantic Charter, 'afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want'.

Victory in this war and establishment of the proposed international organization will provide the greatest opportunity in all history to create in the years to come the essential conditions of such a peace."

The San Francisco Conference was attended by fifty states. Of these, twenty-six were original signatories of the United Nations Declaration of January 1, 1942; twenty-one had adhered to that Declaration between 1942 and March 1, 1945; Argentine, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic were admitted at San Francisco.

Although these fifty states could certainly not all claim an equal share in the belligerent activities against the already defeated Italy nor against Germany and Japan who were to surrender later, they felt no inhibitions against the official title which the organization inherited from the alliance of the nations united against a common enemy.

The San Francisco Conference sat from April 25 to June 26, 1945. With the ratification of the Charter by the five powers permanently represented on the Security Council and by a majority of other signatory states, it came into force on October 24, 1945. It is on that latter date that the United Nations could celebrate their legal birth as an international organization "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

(To be continued.)

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