

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION

WEEKLY SUMMARY NO. 41

For week ending 11 October 1949

Volume II

The International Week

In a week highlighted by Soviet creation of a puppet regime in Eastern Germany, the UN awaited a new USSR disarmament proposal. Meanwhile, as the GA debated the Italian colonies issue, it was apparent that partition of Eritrea, urged by the US, was unlikely to be approved. In Washington, following the Atlantic Pact Defense Committee's initial session last week, the Military Committee met to set up the pact's defense organization.

US position on Eritrea faces GA defeat. It is now virtually certain that outright cession of the bulk of Eritrea to Ethiopia, as favored by the US and UK, will not be approved by the GA. The Latin American, Arab, and Asiatic blocs are solidly opposed, and current UN testimony by representatives of local independence groups will further strengthen their stand. Under these circumstances the USUN delegation suggests working for a compromise solution which will secure as much as possible for Ethiopia while protecting US interests in Eritrea. UK sources propose cession to Ethiopia of only those Coptic areas desiring union (the boundaries to be drawn by a UN commission), hoping that the difficulty of separating these areas from the rest of Eritrea would force the commission to cede all but the Western province to Ethiopia. USUN believes that a formula more likely to command GA support would be confederation of Ethiopia and Eritrea, with safeguards for Eritrean autonomy. Both Italy and Ethiopia have given some indication that they might accede to such a course. While it thus has a better chance of success than the initial US-UK position, opposition to any tying of Eritrea to Ethiopia will remain strong, however, and postponement while a UN commission visits the territory will have much appeal.

Meanwhile if the Latin American bloc sticks to its decision to tie Libyan independence to Italian trusteeship for Somaliland, Italy's prospects will improve. However, the increasingly vocal hostility of the local population to Italian return is a powerful counter factor, and the outcome is still in doubt.

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"International Peace Day" falls flat in most countries.
The Communist-sponsored "International Day of Struggle for Peace" on 2 October obtained only scattered popular support in those Western countries where demonstrations were staged. Despite an unprecedentedly heavy barrage of Soviet broadcasts, the drive to mobilize "the people" against their "aggressor" governments produced only: (1) a peace demonstration of about 160,000 in Paris; (2) scattered meetings in Rome celebrating "Italian-Russian friendship month"; (3) an assembly of 1,200 partisans in Mexico City; (4) a few street riots in Brazil; and (5) a "National Labor Conference" in Chicago. The relatively disappointing turnout in Paris, hub of the World Peace Movement, reflects the apparent failure of the Peace Partisans to link the "struggle for peace" with the immediate wage demands of the French working classes. A more pointed effort to connect the peace movement with local Communist objectives was made at the Mexico City meeting where the Communist Party leader proposed establishment of a "national committee in defense of our petroleum." In the US, the Chicago "National Labor Conference in Defense of Peace" demonstrated the willingness of 42 leftwing CIO and AFL unions to support the principal "peace objectives" enunciated by Soviet Foreign Minister Vishinsky in the UN. The decision of these unions to form a permanent organization in Chicago may also foreshadow the early emergence of a third, Communist-oriented US labor movement.

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Yugoslav anti-Soviet tactics in GA. While studiously avoiding presentation of any specific complaint against the USSR, Belgrade has displayed both versatility and ingenuity in its methods of embarrassing Moscow. After its bid for a seat in the Security Council, Yugoslavia recently contrived to exploit the ordinarily minor league Legal Committee of the GA by filing a proposal which, while omitting direct mention of the USSR, unmistakably condemns Soviet methods of aggression through fomenting civil war, disturbances and terrorism within the territory of other states. This proposal was submitted as an amendment to the International Law Commission's draft "Declaration of the Rights and Duties of States," which comes before the Legal Committee. While the Yugoslav proposal embodies no novel principle of international law, its pointed phraseology constitutes a neat propaganda thrust against the Kremlin. Yugoslavia also used the Economic Committee, which is considering Point IV Aid, as a platform from which to denounce use of joint Soviet-Satellite corporations as a means of economic exploitation. Through these tactics, Tito is achieving a strong condemnation of the USSR without making a formal case.

- 2 -

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Egypt's motives in pressing for Jerusalem demilitarization. Egypt's evident determination to place the issue of Jerusalem's demilitarization on the SC agenda is certain to generate fresh political wrangles without any constructive result. The GA resolution of 11 December 1948 requested the SC to demilitarize the Holy City "at the earliest possible date." Although Jordan and Israel have since concluded an armistice and the Palestine Conciliation Commission has been studying the matter, this request to the SC has never been acted on. Raising the question at this time will agitate political controversy at a time when the ESM is seeking to focus attention on the economic issues in the troubled Near East. But the Egyptians seem bent on keeping Palestine political issues in the foreground to embarrass Israel even though the consequences of doing so may be largely negative.

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Plans to counter the Soviet "peace" proposal. The main problem in answering the Soviet GA propaganda attack on the US and UK is to deflect the thrust without giving the USSR an opportunity to claim credit for whatever resolution is ultimately adopted. There are three possible ways to meet the Soviet "peace" proposal: (1) merely voting it down (there is no chance of the GA failing to take some action on the subject); (2) amending the proposal to make it innocuous; and (3) making a counterproposal. The UK and US have tentatively agreed to propose a counter-resolution which, after noting that the UN Charter contains all the principles needed to maintain peace, calls on all nations to refrain from direct or indirect aggression, participate fully in the UN specialized agencies, grant access to UN bodies, remove barriers to the free exchange of information between countries and urging restraint in the use of the veto. The British lean toward a resolution more sharply pointed at the USSR than does the US, and friendly GA delegations are being sounded out to find out how far they would go along. There is great danger that any Anglo-US resolution will eventually be watered down by the GA. It is important, however, that whatever resolution is finally adopted should represent a new proposal rather than a mere amendment of the Soviet text for which the USSR would claim credit in its propaganda. In any case, it is going to be difficult to prevent the Russians from doing just this. McNeil (UK) therefore favors a proposal so strongly worded that the USSR will have to disclaim it.

The announcement of an atomic explosion inside the USSR has contributed to a feeling of urgency in the GA that immediate

- 3 -

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action of some sort must be taken to deal with the global arms race now under way. Reflecting this anxiety is the Argentine plan to set up a conciliation commission composed of past and present non-permanent members of the SC to study the causes of the breach between the permanent SC members and the failure to agree on establishing a UN police force and controlling atomic energy. Unless the US and UK can present the GA with some constructive alternative, they may be faced with exactly some such woolly small nation effort to "relieve" East-West tension as that suggested by the Argentine.

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East-West struggle for key industrial unions spreads to Latin America. Recent developments on the Latin American labor front indicate that the struggle between the Sovietized WFTU and Western labor leaders for the control of labor within particular industries may soon spread to this area. The anti-Communist Mexican Labor Federation (CTM) has demonstrated concern over discussions between representatives of the Mexican Miners Union and the Communist-influenced CIO Mine, Mill and Smelters Union regarding plans for an inter-American mine and metal workers federation. With this development apparently in mind, the CTM leader, Fernando Amilpa, recently intimated that the CTM would favor a grouping of Latin American labor unions into continental federations for each trade in preference to the AFL-sponsored Inter-American Federation of Labor (CIT). The Mexican Federation's attitude, rejecting the CIT as "only one more central," may also reflect its desire to combat current efforts of the WFTU and Lombardo Toledano's CTAL to organize key industries internationally in WFTU "trade departments." It apparently considers that organization of Latin American workers within each industry would be a more realistic response to the Communist challenge. Although its own ideas regarding such a regrouping are still only in the blueprint stage, the CTM may find support for this position from other Latin American labor federations dissatisfied with AFL mentorship.

- 4 -

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