

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS GROUP

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Volume II

The International Week

USSR overtures to lift the Berlin blockade raise the possibility of another meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The General Assembly condemned the USSR's refusal to allow Soviet wives to join their husbands abroad. Earlier the Ad Hoc Political Committee voted 34-6 to postpone consideration of the trials of Cardinal Mindszenty and the Bulgarian clergymen until the next GA session, meanwhile approving resort to the machinery of the Hungarian and Bulgarian peace treaties.

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GA DEVELOPMENTS

Multiple trusteeship for Libya. If the key Latin American and Arab blocs can reach a meeting of minds on the administrative features of a multiple trusteeship for Libya, this solution is likely to be approved by the GA. Both the Latin Americans and the Arabs favor some form of US-UK-French-Egyptian-Italian trusteeship as a compromise solution, but they differ over internal administration. The Arab states insist upon unity of Libya in fact as well as in appearance, with a single governor general over the whole territory. The Latin Americans favor having Italy administer Tripolitania, France the Fezzan and Britain Cyrenaica. Should these critical differences prove irreconcilable, no other solution offers much prospect of securing a two-thirds majority and the disposition of all Libya or at least Tripolitania will probably be postponed. It is questionable, however, whether the British proposal to retain control while postponing the disposition of Tripolitania until 1952 would gain GA approval.

Meanwhile the efforts of the pro-Italian bloc to give Italy at least some role in Eritrea have lessened the likelihood that the US-UK proposal to cede the bulk of the colony to Ethiopia will be approved separately. There is a strong sentiment for a one-package solution for all three colonies, with the competing blocs using each as a bargaining counter for the others. Consequently, unless a compromise is reached on all the colonies together, the whole issue may be postponed.

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GA action on Spain unlikely. In view of the growing sentiment against the Brazilian proposal to raise the ban on chiefs of missions in Madrid, it appears doubtful whether pro-Spanish UN members can rally sufficient votes to pass such a measure. The US decision to abstain on this issue has strengthened Western

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European opposition. Although assured of some fifteen Latin American, six Arab and possibly another half dozen Middle and Far Eastern votes, Brazil and its co-sponsors would not be able to muster the two-thirds required for approval in face of opposition from Western Europe, the US, UK, Canada, Australia, China, the Philippines, the Soviet bloc and the remaining Latin American states. Brazil is still determined to present its resolution, but when the strength of the opposition becomes fully apparent, the Brazilians may withdraw the proposal rather than see it defeated.

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Human rights in Venezuela. Uruguay's plan to bring before the GA the question of the treatment of political prisoners by Venezuela would create an embarrassing situation. It would reflect upon the ability of the Organization of American States to handle inter-American affairs; would harm the UN, because failure to approve the Uruguayan resolution might raise some question of GA authority to consider these matters; and would open the door to the submission to the GA of too many similar cases. The only result would be an acrimonious debate, presenting the Slav bloc with a wonderful propaganda opportunity.

Latin American opinion on the matter is sharply divided. Venezuela argues that the question is purely domestic. Several Latin American states consider the matter a family affair, properly to be handled by the OAS. The mere fact that the issue has been raised has apparently produced results in Venezuela. Twenty-two prisoners have already been released and the few remaining ones will be brought to trial promptly.

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Obstacles to FOI Convention. The attitude of numerous countries favoring wider limits of censorship indicates that the US will have difficulty in securing the type of Freedom of Information Convention that it wants. Since the opening of the GA, the Social Committee has been considering three draft conventions concerning freedom of the press adopted at a Geneva FOI Conference in early 1948: a US text for the Gathering and International Transmission of News recently combined with the French text on the International Right of Official Correction; and a UK text, Freedom of Information, which seeks to eliminate governmental interference. The US faces a stiff fight in the UN, because many countries with ideologies far different from those of the USSR -- particularly some Latin American states -- have regrettably similar notions about the expediency of censorship. There is danger that these conventions will be used as a means of imposing new controls on the press. The original US draft permitted censorship of outgoing despatches solely for reasons of "national military security." Mexico proposed striking out the work "military" and adding vaguer reasons of "national dignity and prestige." A compromise Australian phrase, "national defense," was carried after a vigorous fight by the US delegation. The Soviet bloc contended that to limit censorship to matters directly related to "national defense" would constitute an invasion of the sovereign rights of states. There is no chance whatever of the Slav bloc ratifying the Convention.

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British labor will call world meeting of free trade unions. Significant progress towards the formation of a new world labor organization has emerged from recent meetings of British and US labor leaders. The British Trades Union Congress plans to convoke in Geneva a June meeting of the world's "free trade unions" which will afford the TUC, the AFL and the CIO an opportunity to resume the joint consultations on a new world labor international begun in January. The decision to hold the June meeting (by assembling the Western labor delegates during the Geneva ILO Conference) may represent the immediate reaction of the three big power trade unions to the recent demand of the Brussels small power labor conference for prompt organization of the new international.

Despite separate TUC meetings held recently with the AFL and CIO, however, no common agreement on the scope and functions of the new international has yet been reached. Resolution of basic differences still dividing them is necessary before any general convention of the non-Communist trade unions can establish a comprehensive Western labor federation. The relationship of the AFL and the CIO in the new federation remains a critical point. One source of friction, however, appears to have been removed by recent TUC agreement not to press the candidacy of former WFTU Assistant Secretary Schevenels for the leadership of the new international. This move, together with the natural desire of the British and US organizations to regain the initiative from the small nation unions, may hasten the formation of a Western world labor federation capable of competing on equal terms with the Communist-led WFTU for the control of world labor.

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WFTU seeks to retain non-Communist representation. The World Federation of Trade Unions is seeking to hold to a minimum anticipated defections of its remaining non-Communist elements at the June WFTU Congress in Milan. In an effort to counteract the recent decision of the smaller Western European powers to withdraw, the WFTU is attempting to retain the Australian Trade Union Council or at least its left wing and to dissuade Swedish labor from withdrawing by adroit handling of the Swedish trade unionists attending the Moscow Congress of Soviet Trade Unions. Despite these moves, however, the WFTU will probably not succeed in retaining any small power labor elements not already Communist-controlled (such as the Australian Metal Workers and Waterside Workers).

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Paris Congress plans permanent "peace organizations." The determination of the Communist leaders of the World Congress of Partisans of Peace to convert the already widely organized "peace and democracy" movement into a permanent front for promotion of Soviet objectives is indicated by plans to establish an international organization and permanent national committees. The international "peace organization" would be responsible for applying Congress decisions generally, while specific means of action in each country would be left to the national committees. The type of activity which might be assigned to the national peace committees has been suggested by a leftist British Labor Party delegate who proposes popular ratification of a document expressing Soviet views on atomic

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energy and on increasing the effectiveness of the UN in maintaining peace. Existing Soviet front organizations like the World Federation of Trade Unions and the World Federation of Democratic Youth will work closely with the new movement during coming months in a coordinated drive to give the widest possible currency to the "peaceful" aims of Soviet policy.

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IOG NOTES

Council of Europe. At a preliminary conference, the Brussels Pact powers, Italy, Portugal and the Scandinavian states have reached a large measure of agreement on the framework of the proposed Council of Europe. The questions of voting procedure and of admitting Greece and Turkey are apparently the only major unsolved problems but it is almost certain that the two eastern Mediterranean nations will be invited to join. The Foreign Ministers of the prospective member nations plan to meet in London 3-6 May to sign the agreement establishing the Council.

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✓ "Integration" of South West Africa. Passage of the South West Africa Affairs bill confronts the UN with a nearly insoluble problem. South African Prime Minister Malan stated that the bill would demonstrate by law that the Union no longer recognized the existence of the League of Nations mandate over South West Africa. This means that for all practical purposes the mandated area has been incorporated in the Union in violation of UN resolutions recommending the establishment of a UN trusteeship. Faced with South African intransigence, the GA can now do little more than renew its recommendations and express displeasure at this latest flouting of its resolutions.