

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION

WEEKLY SUMMARY NO. 18

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Volume III

The International Week

Extensive spade work prepared the ground for the London meeting where the British, French and US foreign ministers will assess the western position in the cold war and discuss future courses of action. As world opinion registered general opposition to Hoover's suggestion that the UN would be better off without the USSR, SYG Lie planned to visit Moscow in an effort to restore UN effectiveness. Meanwhile, following Arab rejection, Israel unconditionally accepted the Palestine Conciliation Commission proposal to combine mediation with direct negotiation between the parties. On the international labor front, increased activity by Communist seamen and portworkers in the Far East foreshadowed early implementation of the Communist-WFTU plan to dislocate Pacific shipping.

ICFTU to organize Latin American regional organization. The fall or winter 1950 conference which the Free Trade Union Confederation (ICFTU) is planning for non-Communist trade unions in the American Hemisphere will probably witness the formation of a regional ICFTU organization for Latin America. The anticipated inclusion of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), reflects the desire of the ICFTU leaders to attract the participation of Latin American labor elements, such as the Mexican Workers Federation (CTM), which have been reluctant to join a regional organization too exclusively identified with the AFL. The prospects for a broadly representative regional organization are further improved by the expected adherence of Brazilian labor, which has hitherto not participated actively in regional labor activities.

This development assumes particular significance in the light of recent indications of increased Soviet interest in Latin American labor. Despite the relative loss of influence of Lombardo Tolendano's CTAL during the past year, the USSR has demonstrated its continuing determination to exploit discontents in this area by: (a) subsidizing renewed WFTU activity in Latin America; (b) promoting a Mexico City conference of oil workers unions to form a WFTU Petroleum Workers International; and (c) attempting to send top Soviet WFTU officials to last month's conference of the CTAL in Montevideo.

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Efforts to combat such Soviet activities would be substantially strengthened by the formation of a strong and comprehensive Latin American free labor confederation under ICFTU leadership.

Trusteeship for Eritrea considered. Sentiment is growing among some members of the UN Commission of Inquiry (UNCOMINQ) for a direct UN trusteeship over Eritrea without partition. Guatemala, previously an unequivocal supporter of immediate independence, is backed in this new proposal by Pakistan and possibly by Burma. South Africa and Norway, the remaining UNCOMINQ members, are likely to support partition of the territory, along lines favored by the US and UK.

The Guatemalan proposal calls for direct UN supervision for a ten-year period prior to independence, with a UN-appointed administrator and an eight-member advisory council, similar to that functioning in Libya. Under this plan, there would be no cession of territory to Ethiopia, but the latter's claims would be partially met by the establishment of free port zones in Assab and Massawa. UNCOMINQ's divided report may furnish an opportunity for Italy and Ethiopia, as the two parties most directly concerned, to renew discussions looking toward a mutually agreeable solution which the US and UK could support, and which might win General Assembly approval.

Hoover plan opposed. Ex-President Hoover's proposal that the UN be reorganized without the USSR or its satellites has brought extremely unfavorable world-wide reaction. Most press and official comment deplored this plan or any tendency to divide the world irreparably by destroying the principal remaining meeting ground for East-West discussions. Much editorial sentiment felt that forcing the USSR from the UN would constitute a long step toward war. Yugoslavia indicated it would be in a difficult position as the solitary Communist state in a revamped UN and could remain a member in such circumstances only if the Soviet bloc had withdrawn on its own initiative. The Yugoslavs, however, commented that if Communist China were a member and did not withdraw with the USSR, Yugoslavia's position as a member would be strengthened. The unfavorable reaction to the proposal to split the UN may increase public support for Secretary-General Lie's efforts in Moscow to seek common ground on which to revitalize the UN in hopes of attenuating the cold war.

UNSCOB dissolution in prospect. The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB), established in October 1947, may be discontinued at the next session of the General Assembly.

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The Department of State considers that if the Greek situation remains quiescent until the end of July the Committee should report to the General Assembly that the threats to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece which the GA resolution was designed to meet no longer exist and that it therefore recommends the discontinuance of the Committee. It is probable that US support of such a recommendation would command sufficient votes to abolish UNSCOB.

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COMMUNIST PLANS FOR A PACIFIC SHIPPING TIE-UP

The formulation of a "plan of action" for dislocating shipping in Pacific, Australian and Southern Asian ports has recently been reported as one of the major results of the November, 1949, Peiping Conference of the World Federation of Trade Unions. During the conference the Soviet WFTU Assistant-Secretary secretly gave orders for Communist port and transport workers to prevent the flow of military equipment from western Countries by tying up "war" convoys reaching ports in these areas. Local Communist workers are to concentrate first on shipments arriving at Calcutta, Saigon and Brisbane while the Chinese Communist unions take similar action against ships docking in Hong Kong and Singapore. To organize worker support sufficient to make these directives effective, independent strike committees are to be appointed, with instructions to devise anti-war slogans and to build a revolutionary trade union movement.

Although it is too early to assess with any degree of accuracy the capabilities of the WFTU's Peiping Bureau for implementing such a plan of action, the importance which the USSR attaches to it is reflected in evidence of on-the-spot Soviet direction and financial aid. A Soviet Foreign Office official attached to the Legation in Bangkok is reportedly in charge of special funds which will be disbursed from Bangkok and possibly through Indian banks and "trustworthy" representatives in Hong Kong. These operations will probably be supported by Communist-infiltrated port and transport workers organizations like the powerful Hong Kong Seamens Union and the Australian Seamens Union. Clandestine aid may also be offered by Communist-led maritime unions in some US ports.

US and other Western labor organizations have recently initiated plans for combatting this blow at Allied shipping in the Pacific. During its last meeting, the 53-nation Free Trade Union Confederation (ICFTU) decided to send a delegation to Southeast Asia and India to strengthen its contacts with non-Communist labor in these areas. The departure in the near future of a group of US labor leaders on a similar mission will enable US labor to take independent action to combat growing Communist influence in the Far East. The success of such counter-efforts, however, will be limited by their belated timing and by the substantial headway which the WFTU and the Chinese Communists have already made in many of the Southeast Asian countries.