

SETTING THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

AT the Moscow Conference of November 1, 1943, the Foreign Secretaries of Britain, United States, and the Soviet Union declared on behalf of their governments that they recognised "the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership by all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security."

In furtherance of this common purpose, officials of these three governments met at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, in August and September, 1944, and this meeting was immediately followed by one between the officials of Britain, the United States, and China. These meetings have become known as the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. The Conference was described as consisting of "informal conversations." It was purely a planning conference, and made no decisions binding on the governments concerned. The governments merely agreed to examine further the tentative proposals made by the Conference, and to take steps to prepare complete proposals to serve as a basis of discussion at a full United Nations' conference.

To Replace the League

The proposals have nothing to do with the immediate problems of the peace. They do not concern the treatment of defeated Germany or Japan, nor the question of post-war Europe. They are directed solely to setting up an international organisation designed to ensure peace for many years. They are the machinery of an incipient world government to replace the League of Nations.

In place of the League of Nations Dumbarton Oaks proposed an international organisation to be called "The United Nations." Its purposes would be to maintain international peace and security, and to develop friendly relations among nations. It would be based on the principle of sovereign equality, and would be open to the membership of all peace-loving States. The members would undertake to settle their disputes by peaceful means, to refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations. It would have four principal organs: (a) A General Assembly, (b) A Security Council, (c) An International Court of Justice, and (d) A Secretariat.

Scope of the General Assembly

The General Assembly would consist of all members. It would have power to consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of peace, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, to discuss any questions on these matters brought before it by any member or by the Security Council, and to make recommendations on such questions. But it cannot make any recommendations on any matter before the Security Council, and it must refer to the Security Council any question on which action is necessary. Each member would have one vote, and on all

What Has Already Been Done

ELSEWHERE in this issue we outline the course of the war and some proposed steps for securing the peace. Necessarily they are speculative. So we have asked G. R. POWLES, Vice-President of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, to review the plans so far announced that can be accepted' as official



The Big Three at Yalta, February, 1945: Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin

important questions voting is to be by a two-thirds majority.

The General Assembly is thus almost purely an advisory body. It is the Security Council which is to have the power. This body is to consist of one representative of each of eleven members—six of these non-permanent and elected by the General Assembly, and five consisting of the representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Soviet Russia, China, and France.

Plan to Keep Peace

The plan for the preservation of the peace is this—the Security Council is to investigate any dispute or situation in order to determine whether its continuance is likely to endanger peace, and is to call upon the parties to effect a peaceable solution. This may be done by reference to the International Court of Justice, or by any appropriate procedure the Council may recommend. If in the opinion of the Council the failure to settle a dispute peaceably constitutes a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace, or an act of aggression, the Council may not only make recommendations but also decisions as to what is to be done, and all members of the Organisation are to act as decided by the Council.

The types of action proposed are three:—

(1) Complete or partial severance of communications and economic or diplomatic relations, similar to the "sanctions" under the League.

(2) Armed action by special Air Forces, and

(3) Armed action by all or any forces of all or any of the member States as decided by the Council. These special Air Forces are national contingents to be held immediately available for urgent military measures. The strength and degree of readiness of these contingents and the plans for their combined action are to be determined in advance by the Council on the advice of a Military Staff Committee, and within the scope of agreements to which it is suggested all members should conclude relating to the use of their armed forces, and military facilities for the purposes of maintaining peace.

The important fact about these proposals for the use of armed force is that the major arrangements are to be made beforehand, and as part of the constitution, so that all members of the Organisation will be bound to act to a pre-determined extent immediately the Security Council gives the word.

Agreement at Crimea

At Dumbarton Oaks the delegates were unable to agree on the question of the voting procedure on the all-important Security Council. At the Crimea Conference in February of this year, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin are reported to have solved this knotty problem, but their solution was not published at the time.

The published declaration of the Crimea Conference dealt mainly with more immediate and practical problems. The "Big Three" set down their agreement in principle on the occupation of Germany, on reparation by Germany, on a policy towards liberated Europe, towards Poland and Yugoslavia; but they also expressed their resolve to establish, with their allies and as early as possible, a general international organisation to maintain peace and security.

This, briefly, is the setting of the international stage, but upon it there have been some curious and interesting episodes in the prologue.

Votes for Interested Parties

The voting procedure for the Security Council agreed upon at the Crimea Conference was that decisions are to be taken by a majority of seven of the eleven members, but the five permanent members must be included in the majority of seven. Further, a member which is an interested party in a dispute, may vote on the question as to whether or not the "sanctions" measures—whether diplomatic, economic, or military—are to be applied. This makes a radical contrast to the voting procedure in the Council of the League of Nations, where decisions had to be unanimous but the interested parties could not vote. It means that one small State cannot prevent action, as it could under the League Covenant, but it also means that the sanctions measures will not be applied against any of the "Big Five."

But more voting surprises were in store. Six weeks after the Crimea Conference Mr. Stettinius, U.S. Secretary of State, announced in answer to press rumours, that at Yalta the Soviet representatives said they wished at the San Francisco Conference to raise the question of the admission of the Ukrainians and White Russian Republics as members. This would, in effect, give Russia three votes in the Assembly. The United States reply had apparently been to agree to this, but to determine to ask for three votes for herself also. Later Mr. Stettinius stated that the United States claim for three votes would not be made.

Of Supreme Importance

Yet, by one stroke Stalin, who is still largely the enigma in international relations, swept away the cloud of cynicism which had begun to hover over San Francisco as a result of the voting wrangle. After having given notice of his intention to abrogate the Soviet treaty with Japan, presumably because he desired less friendly relations, and having abrogated the Soviet treaty with Turkey, presumably for an opposite reason, he agreed to President Truman's request to send M. Molotov to San Francisco.

At once this Conference became of supreme importance. It was no longer on the purely official and discussional level, not far removed from the tentative nature of Dumbarton Oaks. It was capable of settling troublesome issues and making binding decisions, or at least decisions which governments would do their best to put into effect. From it, therefore, we are entitled to expect much.