

Middle East - Suez story No 33-35a: Middle East - Suez story No 33-35a - 6

HS L 179:115a



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Middle East / Suez story - 33

15 June 56

Smith, George Ivan (Dir, U.N. Information
Centre, London)

- 1 letter to D.H.
- 1 encl.

L 179: 1159

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

PERSONAL

London Information Centre,
14/15 Stratford Place,
London, W. 1.

June 15th, 1956.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,

I am, of course, informing DPI in the normal way about last night's dinner at the Mansion House but I felt I should send a personal note to tell you that Lord Grantchester and Lord John Hope, who as you know is Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, in their speeches paid the warmest possible tributes to you and your work. The audience of some 400 welcomed these remarks enthusiastically. You will see from the clipping attached that the Diplomatic Corps was fully represented.

In sending you the text of my own remarks I know you will understand that I am not doing so as a proud father exhibiting a favoured child. Honestly I believe it's a dull and didactic infant (three-quarters of the audience was uninitiated and needed images). But you might wish to glance through it because it was greeted in a way that surprised me. Privately I was thanked for making this kind of speech by Malik, Lord John Hope and the United States Ambassador. Then, wonder of wonders, the Israeli Ambassador and several Arab Representatives came up and thanked me and hinted that they read into it a compliment to their own aims and intentions.

Normally one does get the usual courtesy thanks but it seemed to me that most of these people felt that I had said something really substantial - and this I find bewildering. If a plea for law and order is regarded as substantial it only goes to show how dry the drought has been.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George".

George Ivan Smith
Director.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary-General,
United Nations,
New York.

It is not easy to define the phrase "the United Nations". Miss Beatrice Lillie had a similar difficulty about terms when she was travelling on the Queen Mary and asked the Captain "At what time does this place get to Southampton?"

To many the UN does suggest a place - something static. To others its corporate action has a dynamic quality that in some curious way seems to them to be independent and supra national.

For example, last week some 20 different governments reduced their tariffs against many commodities. It was all done within the framework of a UN Agency. Free traders praised the UN for a step in the right direction and supporters of imperial preference blamed the UN for a step in the wrong direction.

It was the governments that had reduced their tariffs, but it's easy to see how the framework - the UN - becomes a symbol for that action.

The Organisation does have a static and dynamic form. In its static form it serves in much the same way as a piece of electric wiring. The energy that goes in at one end and the power or light that comes out at the other end is the energy of nations, the power and the light of nations. The UN acts as a conductor - sometimes a lightning conductor taking the jolts of national conflicts to dissipate them in debate or the cold analysis of law. Sometimes it is a channel for collecting and distributing national energies in the form of ideas and skills to help other peoples. One finds examples of this in the United Nations Technical Assistance programme, and the UN conference held last year at which information about Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes was freely exchanged by and between governments from all quarters of the globe.

A channel or a conductor of any kind does act as a discipline in the sense that it sets limits on what can be done within the channel, and it does act as a guide in certain directions.

Let us examine what this form of discipline means in practice because under its influence the dynamic character of the organisation is beginning to emerge.

When a delegate from one country rises to speak to delegates from more than 70 other countries it is obvious that he must try to convince them of the international significance of his case. It would be little avail if he persistently argued a case without being able to bring out its implications for other countries - its significance to them. In the first few years some had to learn by hard experience how to select issues and arguments to which an international response could be expected and urged.

The rules of profit and loss apply as drastically to political debate in the UN as to business activities here in the City. One cannot go on pushing a line that is generally unacceptable.

And the code of ethics, the rules of integrity that govern the long term growth of any business, also govern the growth of political policy in the UN, or anywhere else. Once or twice one can make a quick return with an inferior product but experience shows that when one is forced by economic or political circumstances to do some genuine bargaining at a later stage, then the earlier short term advantages may become a terrible burden.

During ten years of debates and ten years of extensive field work that has succeeded and failed in varying degrees - a backbone of such experience has been formed in the UN and certain disciplines have become self-evident.

In the first place the international character of the organisation acts as a discipline by influencing the policies that member states feel they can or cannot express in the UN. Secondly the principles of the UN Charter, as

guiding lines, obviously exert a discipline in those fields covered by the Charter. Thirdly the previous decisions taken by various councils and committees of the UN have built up a body of opinion in much the same way as precedents built up the body of common law with/a state. And as you will know precedents do exert their influence and ⁱⁿrepresent a form of discipline.

When the principles and the experience of an organisation can cause member states to shape and to change their policies so that they are more in harmony with the principles and character of the organisation, this is another way of saying that a static organisation can cause member states to exercise some self-discipline in the practice and expression of world affairs. At that point the static organisation begins to be dynamic.

When the Secretary-General went on mission to the Middle East he was armed with the principles and the experience of the world organisation he represents. In a sense the power and resources that he took with him were compounded in a body of law - and you will agree that it is difficult to become emotional about law.

A unanimous resolution sent the Secretary-General as the agent for the Security Council - and through it for the world community, recalling this it becomes significant that the agent for the Security Council and world community had access to, and was heard by all parties to the General Armistice Agreement. It becomes significant that at a later stage, the Secretary-General was able to pay tributes to the governments of the 5 member nations concerned for their unfailing cooperation with him in his task.

A negotiator would soon have been lost had his aim been to find a path through the maze of contradictions and contraventions that had grown like weeds in and around the General Armistice Agreements.

But above that undergrowth of recriminations there was a small vista of common purpose. Law and order within the world community, and respect for duty and obligation in that context.

In saying this I am not evaluating the work of the mission. Only time and events can do this. Of this we can be sure; events cannot escape the law of integrity that I referred to earlier. In the long run events are bound to be shaped by the discipline of principles in the UN Charter. A short term advantage will inevitably be lost if it has been gained at the expense of principle - because history consistently records that principle and its discipline relentlessly has the last word.

You may well ask why nations should bother to put themselves within the yoke of any international discipline. It is now generally accepted that a negative and complete form of isolation, (if it could be achieved at all), would be a form of national annihilation. Inter-dependence has become a critical reality. The demand for markets and for diminishing raw materials spells out the reality. So does the tremendous drive by millions of peoples for self determination, and the enormous effort being made to improve economic and social conditions of life by the vast majority of mankind that so far has not shared in the advantages of modern technology.

Such revolutionary developments could shake the foundations of our world to pieces unless we move forward in a spirit of co-partnership, unless the sense of law and order that has been developed slowly and often painfully within our own countries, can now by interchange and experience be made to develop in the world at large through the instrument of the UN.

Therefore, Sir, it is on behalf of all here present that I respond to this toast. No matter which country you come from, it's your energy that contributes to the dynamic of this world Organisation. No matter which

country you come from, it's your hopes that are at stake in this work of co-partnership. It's a long job that we are engaged upon together. Action by common consent is bound to be slow. It involves education by experience, an understanding and an application of the code of ethics and of the law of integrity. In that sense it is and will be an evolutionary process.

I have spoken about science and technology and human need forcing peoples and nations into some form of co-partnership. If I have over-emphasised the political and material dynamic it is because my capacity to observe is largely on that plane. But humbly I am aware that this gradual coming together of peoples is in line with a more powerful discipline - the concept of the unity of man. That concept is shared by peoples of all countries and of all persuasions. Is this not the more potent dynamic, the actual yeast within the dough.

As William Blake once wrote "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite".