

16 March 1959

HG:lr.

"Neues Deutschland" ("Organ of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Unity in Germany". Official organ of the East Berlin Government.) - 11 March 1959

WHO IS THE BOSS IN THE UN? - A CRITICAL REVIEW

By Erich Böhm

Day by day there is much coming and going in the UN building in New York. While in the Committees, representatives of 82 nations are struggling for compromises, Negro and Indian women, dressed in elegant dresses, are taking visitors around - some days 5-6,000 of them - to the Conference Rooms. One can see nuns with their classes, members of American women's organisations, who behave as if they would like to occupy the whole UN building. They are all taken around - of course for a fee - by beautiful girls in blue uniforms, who explain to the visitors the history of the Korean War, of divided Berlin and of the putsch in Hungary, in a version which could have come directly from the U.S. State Department. No breath of the spirit of tolerance or coexistence is noticeable here. The spirit ruling the UN apparatus is the American spirit if you consider the State Department as the embodiment of America.

Mr. Cordier organises the voting

On the last day of the last session, the American, Mr. Cordier, one of the most powerful in the apparatus, gave an example as to how everything can be "twisted". Mr. Cordier sits next to the President of the General Assembly, the former Lebanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Malik. Mr. Cordier "organises the business" and counts the votes after the President has asked "Are you ready to vote?". On the last day, the Algerian problem was on the Agenda. In the Political Committee, a resolution was approved by a simple majority, calling on both parties - the French and the Algerian Government in exile - to begin negotiations. The Colonial Powers and the U.S. Delegation tried in vain to win over the anti-imperialist states in Africa and Asia for one of the usual compromise resolutions, which would not hurt the French Colonial Power and basically would have left everything unchanged. This time, neither the Arabs nor the Indians gave in. They remained together with the socialist states, true to their principles, in order to show the world that the majority of the UN condemns the French reign of terror in Algeria.

In the General Assembly the situation was very critical. There was a possibility of a two-thirds majority. In this situation Mr. Cordier applied a simple method: he made "a mistake in counting". He announced thirty-four votes for, nineteen against and twenty-eight abstentions as the result of the voting. Accordingly, two votes were missing for a necessary two-thirds majority. The representative of Tunisia protested, saying that he counted thirty-five votes for. President Malik referred to Mr. Cordier, who had reported thirty-four votes to him. Then the representative of the UAR stood up and stated that he counted thirty-five votes also. Then Mr. Cordier had to name the states and their respective votes. And lo and behold! Mr. Cordier once again gave a "wrong count", by naming the individual countries voting "yes"; he has "forgotten" to name Pakistan, a country which normally votes on the US line. However, he had bad luck, because the Pakistani representative took the floor and stated that he voted "yes". Mr. Cordier evidently weathered a storm and tried to correct his mistake

The US Dominates the Apparatus

The method of work in the UN is based on compromises. Today the Indians are the leaders in this method and in the eyes of an observer they seem to therefore play an important role in the UN. But this does not change the fact that the Americans dominate the apparatus. The higher the rank, the greater is the American participation in the organisation. To be sure, three-quarters of the elevator operators and half of the guides are Negroes, but the lower one goes on the social level, the greater is the percentage of the non-Americans on the staff. But, the US hegemony will have to be broken on the higher levels. The last General Assembly instructed Mr. Hammarskjold to reorganise the UN apparatus according to the membership of the organisation.

New Forces are Appearing

In places where the delegations, and not the apparatus, have a say, one can already see the first signs of a change. While in the previous session, the US could beat the Soviet proposal to elect a Disarmament Commission where all members would be represented, the US have now had to approve it. Also, they did not dare to expel the Hungarian Delegation, though they had such an intention. Though the General Assembly decided not to take a decision regarding the credentials of the Hungarian Delegation, the Hungarians participated in all discussions with full rights

There is a possibility of liberating the UN from the dictation of the US, should the nations be willing to preserve their rights. Then the UN could really become what it stands for, according to the Charter: an organisation of nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and "to promote social progress and a better standard of life."