

The Dis-United Nations

The John Birch Society has featured this slogan for many years: "Get the United States out of the United Nations and the United Nations out of the United States."

Within the Jewish community there was general distaste for that slogan, as well as for the extremist John Birch Society. The U.N. symbolized the defeat of Hitler, as well as the birth of Israel — but more than that, it held our hopes for future world peace. The organized Jewish community gave avid support to the U.N.

Today, of course, the hostility towards the U.N. within the Jewish community is probably as strong as it is in the Birch Society. Is this evidence that the Jewish community is turning towards the political right? Scarcely. The John Birch Society does not want an international body at all; the former friends of the U.N. still want an international body — but they want one that works for peace, not war. It is the U.N. that has changed, not its former supporters.



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Of course, these former supporters are not altogether blameless. Look at what happened to the structure of the U.N. General Assembly. It was participatory democracy gone wild. Thirteen nations in the General Assembly each has a population less than that of San Francisco. But each of them has a vote equal to that of the United States. To put it another way: each citizen in one of those countries has a weight in U.N. decisions equal to the weight of 500 American citizens. That's not exactly "one man, one vote." Over half of the countries in the U.N. put together don't have the population of the U.S.

Many of the same people who supported the concept of "one man, one vote" in this country, were also supporting the opposite concept of "one country, one vote" in the U.N. It was a romantic notion, ultimately based on the thought that the smaller countries were probably more virtuous than the larger countries. Not so.

Moreover, the U.N. was not a magic formula for peace, anymore than was the League of Nations. The U.N. was only a useful tool for peace, *if* the nations of the world wanted peace and justice. Meanwhile, among the nations, the strong had better be good. And the good had better be strong.

That is a painful theme. It suggests that Americans must be frankly concerned with maintaining U.S. military strength. It suggests also that Americans must be concerned with building a positive national purpose — one that includes world peace. But in that formula, and in an anarchic world being made more anarchic by the antics of the U.N. General Assembly, the element of military strength cannot be missing. The detente rests squarely on such strength. World peace does. Any meaningful regeneration of the U.N. depends on such military strength. And so may the freedom of many millions.

It is a sad fact to face. But the time for ploughshares is not yet.