

Peace and the U.N.

by PHILLIP GRANT

WHAT is to happen to the United Nations buildings that now decorate the Manhattan shore of New York's East River? Sooner or later the present occupants will have to stuff their attache cases leaving behind bundles of unpaid personal bills, and fly off to their respective countries. That is inevitable. For nature's law insists that whatever loses its function must of necessity cease to exist. And the United Nations has demonstrated repeatedly over the past twenty years that it has failed to function as the war preventative it promised to be. If, as implied in its charter, its purpose was to preserve international peace, the United Nations has proved to be cruelly unproductive.

Whatever its fate, the United Nations will not be operating as a peace preserving body, for it never has. Even though Article 1 of its charter pretends to promise an end to international conflict, later sections strongly indicate that it was not intended to prevent *all* aggression. Its intention was to promise international peace, and that is not the same thing.

Despite its promise, the U.N. has time after time proved itself unable to "maintain international peace and security" because it has refused "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace," though it is authorized to do so under Articles 41 and 43 of its charter.

Although it had the power and the legal right to crush even half-hearted threats of aggression at their first appearance, and although the world has seen hardly a year of non-aggression since the San Francisco charter was signed, the United Nations has repeatedly failed to fulfill its obligation.

The site on which the buildings now rest was until 1947 an eighteen-acre tract of stinking slaughter houses that formerly provided the city with much of its meat. There were also weather-beaten shacks that housed small marginal manufacturing units, a number of popular gin mills and old-fashioned low-rent slum dwelling. Of flora it had none. Of fauna it boasted armies of rats, fat cats and stray dogs. Today thanks to the genius of world renowned architects and New York's street cleaners, the riverbank rivals in splendor the great processional plaza of ancient Babylon, replete with expensively dressed and garrulous politicians.

Tomorrow? Only one of three things can happen to the present United Nations complex. It can become another of New York's museums with an appropriate bronze plaque over its entrance, or a group of remodeled office buildings, or a rubble of concrete crumbings, rusted twists of steel and lumps of fused glass lying unnoticed on one edge of a leveled and silenced Manhattan island.

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Max Toubeau, long the distinguished editor of *Terre et Liberté*, died at his home in Meudon, France, in March. He was ever hopeful that free trade would triumph over protectionism, and ten years ago he made this vigorous but unheeded plea: "Take from the title holders of land a just tax based on its value and free the user of all taxes which now penalize his productivity, then you will accomplish a peaceful but great revolution. At the same time you will be relieved of the torments of anticipating the prospect of the common market and free trade."