

Uniting for Peace

by A K Roy

It is sometimes forgotten nowadays that the United Nations charter in embryo is to be found in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. These proposals were published on 9 October 1944 under the auspices of four sponsoring governments: those of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union (defunct) and China. Their purpose was to provide a scheme for a general international organisation under the title of the United Nations which could later be discussed at a full conference of those allied and associated powers who were already known as the United Nations. The intention of the sponsoring governments in formulating these proposals was to remedy what, in the light of the circumstances leading up to the second world war, appeared to be grave defects in the covenant of the League of Nations, and in particular what appeared to be its fundamental weaknesses: the absence of effective collective arrangements for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the ultimate freedom of a member state to use force to effect a settlement.

The purpose of this writeup is to examine what steps the United Nations has taken to deal with situations in which the Security Council is unable to act to maintain international peace and security owing to lack of unanimity among the permanent members of the Council, and what steps it has taken to keep the peace in situations unforeseen, and thus unprovoked for, by the drafters of the charter.

As regards the first defect, although both the League Council (under article 4 of the covenant) and the League Assembly (under article 3) could deal with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world, the League lacked any central machinery for enforcing the decision of either organ. Although, as has been stated, the 'authors of the covenant started from the idea that all members of the League were equally bound to participate in sanctions, and although each member undertook immediately to subject any member of the League resorting to war in breach of articles 12, 13 and 15 of the covenant to the economic sanctions prescribed in the first paragraph of article 16, there was no explicit provision in the covenant that the Council of the League should determine whether a situation calling for the application of sanctions existed, and such determination was therefore left to the individual judgement of member states. Nor, in the event of a member of the League resorting to war, had the Council power to do more than to recommend to the several governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the members of the League should severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League'. There was therefore under the covenant no central organ 'with powers to determine with effect binding upon all members the occasions for the obligatory collective use of force' and endowed with executive powers of enforcement action.

This intention is fully carried out in article 2, paragraph 4, of the charter, which provides that:

All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

The Charter therefore goes a good deal further than the covenant in outlawing the use of force as an instrument of national policy, and its other provisions in particular, chapter VII, which is based on chapter VIII B of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and is headed 'Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression' must be considered in the light of this significant advance.

Bearing in mind the deficiencies in the covenant, and the fact that the first purpose of the new organisation was to be the maintenance of international peace and security, it is not surprising to find in chapter VI of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals the concept of a Security Council on which members of the new organisation would confer primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and which would not consist (as in the case of the Council of the League) of all members of the organisation, but of eleven members only, of whom five should have permanent seats. Nor is it surprising to find in chapter VIII B of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals the provisions which, with very few changes, are now embodied in chapter VII of

the charter. In contrast to the covenant of the League of Nations, the charter, in chapter VII, provides that it is the Council which is to determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, and if necessary to decide upon (not merely to recommend to member states) what measures are to be taken to maintain or restore international peace and security. Whilst the intention of the covenant had been to create a system of co-operation between States who agreed to do or not to do certain things in the exercise of their sovereignty, there was hardly anything which the League, as an organisation, could do; on the other hand, the charter clearly

envisages the purposes of the United Nations as being those of the Organisation as a corporate body, and not simply those of its members severally. What is contemplated in chapter VII of the charter, if diplomatic, economic or other measures involving the use of armed forces prove to be inadequate, is combined international enforcement action based on national contingents provided by member States. For this purpose, under article 43 of the charter, special agreements are to be negotiated on the initiative of the Security Council, and concluded between the Council and individual members or groups of members. Thus the charter, as a whole, but chapter VII in particular, was intended to remedy one of the grave deficiencies in the covenant: the inability of the League itself to take military measures to prevent or suppress aggression. Hence the emphasis on enforcement measures and centralised control of action by armed forces.

In presenting the report of committee III/3 on chapter VIII B of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals ultimately chapter VII of the United Nations' charter the rapporteur summarised the results in the following terms: This part of the proposals of Dumbarton Oaks constitutes... from the point of view of security, definite and considerable progress over measures adopted previously and especially over the covenant of the League of Nations... Military assistance, in case of aggression, ceases to be a recommendation made to member States; it becomes for us an obligation which none can shirk. If these proposals are adopted, the international organisation will cease to be unarmed in the face of violence; a collective force the size, the degree of preparedness, the composition, and the general location of which will be determined beforehand will have been placed at the disposal of the Council to carry out its decisions. Realisation of this optimistic forecast depended in the main on two factors: unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council in the event of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, and the readiness of member states 'to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance and facilities... necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security' (article 43 of the charter). Moreover, implicit in the rapporteur's statement is the belief that the situations the new organisation would have to face would be broadly the same as those which had confronted the League of Nations, that is, situations calling for coercive action against a particular State or governmental authority. The long discussions at San Francisco of chapters VIII, sections A and B, of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals ultimately chapters VI and VII of the charter do not disclose any realisation that the new organisation might need to take collective action involving the use of armed forces which would be neither coercive nor directed against a particular State but which would have as its aim the maintenance of international peace and security.

The purpose of this writeup is to examine what steps the Organisation has taken to deal with situations in which the Security Council is unable to act to maintain international peace and security owing to lack of unanimity among the permanent members of the Council, and what steps it has taken to keep the peace in situations unforeseen, and thus unprovoked for, by the drafters of the charter. These two aspects of peacekeeping cannot be dealt with entirely separately, since both are affected by the view, consistently maintained by the Soviet Union (defunct) that the only circumstances in which the organisation may legally use armed forces are those foreseen and expressly provided for in chapter VII of the charter.

Two factors in particular have contributed to situations in which it has been difficult, if not entirely impossible, for the Organisation to take the coercive action provided for in chapter VII. These are (1) the absence of 'special agreements' under article 43, and (2) the lack of unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council.

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'MILLION-FAMILY-MARCH' A New American Society Emerging?

by AMM Shahabuddin

THAT 'robust fiery orator', considered by many in the USA as a 'dangerous man', but the popular-most leader of the Black Muslims (to use modern nomenclature 'African-American' instead of Blacks), Luis Farrakhan, the most capable inheritor of the mantle of his forerunner, Elijah Muhammad, shook again the streets of Washington for the second time in five years, by holding there 'Million-Family March' on 16 October last. The first such earth-shaking march, named 'Million-Man March' took the streets of Washington on 16 October in 1995. The difference between the two being the first one was more political, while the second one put more emphasis on social programme for strengthening the family life of the black Muslims, taking family as the basic unit of a civilised society.

Martin Luther's 'Dream' and Farrakhan

Luis Farrakhan's 'thunderous sermon' at the 1995 'Million-Man March', demanding equal human rights and end of white supremacy over the blacks for good, sent a loud and clear message to white America. It created a great sensation among political and religious leaders of America. In fact, a new powerful force has born to be reckoned with by powers that be. Although Farrakhan made a powerful speech, it didn't convey any sense of rancour or malice towards any socio-political or religious organisation, as apprehended by President Clinton who later 'guardedly' praised the aims of the 'March'. The black leader didn't call the 'March' a 'Black Man's March' or 'Black Muslims' March, but just a 'Million-Man March'. It was another new phase of the long march for achieving basic human rights for the black people of America, that began with President Lincoln and later carried forward by that legendary black leader Martin Luther King Jr in the sixties. Both Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther had to lay down their lives at the hands of assassins who were opposed to their missions. Martin Luther's historic announcement 'I have a dream...' was to bring freedom for the black Americans who were mere slaves to the whites. And Luis Farrakhan has taken up the 'cudgel' to carry the mission further ahead. The only difference between the two leaders is that under the banner of 'Nation of Islam' which Farrakhan is now the chief, new dimension has been added to the civil movement for rights of the black people, by calling them to Islam which recognises human dignity, fraternity and equality, irrespective of caste or creed. In a way, the 'new religion' introduced to the black Americans have further inspired them for greater and stronger

movement to finish the 'unfinished' task of Lincoln and Luther. The recently held 'Million-Family March' was on a socio-economic 'theme', rather than a political one, for the participants in the 'March'. Addressing the gathering, Farrakhan explained to the participants the need for a 'March' to celebrate 'family values' after five years since the 'Million-Man March' held in 1995. This time he sounded more as a 'theologian' than a 'politician'. He declared: 'Whenever you have a great society or a civilization as the USA and 50 per cent of those who marry get divorce within first three years, there are signs of decline of a civilisation.' He

nists over Farrakhan's sermon at the 1995 gathering holds little water. One of the US columnists apprehended that the new black leader was 'throwing the American nation on the brink of a social divide', while another said that his statement shows that the signs of 'a sharp social division' are multiplying. Such hasty conclusions subsequently proved to be too far-fetched.

This sort of rather 'un-American' or an 'ugly American' attitude towards the new movement for establishment of human rights for the black Americans (or African Americans) is the legacy of the long-cherished supremacy over slavery which once devoured

The white Americans should now realise in their heart of hearts what wrong and injustice they had done to their black neighbours, millions of whom were shipped from Africa by their former colonial rulers to employ them as slaves in their tea, coffee and cotton plantations... Now the Americans should be bold enough to call a spade and put an end for good to the disguised practice of much-hated racial discriminations.

emphasised that the family is the basic unit of a civilisation and strongly pleaded against abortion. And the 'masses promised' not to abort, when Farrakhan was conducting a sort of 'blessing ceremony' for several thousand newly-wed couples.

A Symbolic Day

And to give the 'Million-Family March' a non-controversial colour or 'look', or rather a 'universal character', the day began with Muslim and Buddhist prayers and Bible readings, followed by native American dances and discussions. A representative of 'Black Feet' US Indian tribe lauding the gathering said: 'It is a symbolic day, the spiritual foundation for people to come together and for unity of the world.' So Farrakhan's 'March' has taken a giant step towards achievement of that goal of which Martin Luther had 'a dream' and for which he was assassinated. Thus the motive behind Farrakhan's call for both the 'Million-Man March' (1995) and the 'Million-Family March' (2000), became more transparent and above any controversy, perhaps except for the 'vested interests' in the 'white' quarters, as they were open to all, irrespective of religious beliefs, particularly when the recent 'March' was attended by representatives of 'Unification Church', Roman Catholic bishops and Baptist Lutheran clerics. Therefore the allegations made by some US intellectuals and colum-

the blacks like an octopus. Although that curse is gone, some Americans perhaps are still being haunted by that 'psyche'. So when a black leader gives a call for a unified American nation of black and white based on equal socio-economic and political rights, professing their own religious beliefs and customs, certainly he is not out to create a 'divide' or 'division' in the American nations. They are the real threats to the US society or nation.

Myth Exposed

The 'myth' of such biased and critical approach by some American intellectuals and columnists is often exposed. A Canadian columnist in The Toronto Star said some time back that 'the racial inequality is a central and not a peripheral feature of American life'. He further said: 'The deep structural inequalities that affect every aspect of American life begin with the institution of slavery which made the African-Americans a permanent 'other' in the American life.' What a naked truth has been exposed by the Canadian journalist about the prevailing present-day 'state of affairs' of the American social life, even after centuries of the abolition of slavery as an institution, following the Civil War during the regime of President Lincoln (1861-1865) who, at the end of the war, returned to Washington in April 1965 as a triumphant soldier but had to lay down his life

in the hands of a revengeful assassin on 14 April the same year. The same tragic end was repeated again in the case of Martin Luther King Jr who was shot down by another 'fanatic' about a century after Lincoln's death.

Today's America should not forget that it was the dispute between the 'northerners', supporting Lincoln's call for abolition of slavery and the 'southerners', the die-hard supporters for the continuation of slavery, that led to the bloody civil war. America was literally hanging from the cliff for a division of the country, into two parts: one dominated by the 'northerners' and the other by the 'southerners'. Thanks to the historic emergence of Abraham Lincoln as the President in 1861 that saved America from ruin. And the modern America, which is the richest democracy in the world itself and champion of the system and human rights all over the world should take a hard look at the new shape of things that are emerging. Any wrong foot may cause disaster. The Americans who are still being haunted by ghosts of slavery should have to be exonerated for a clean America that can stand up and declare itself as a real champion of democracy and human rights. White Americans sharing their wealth and prosperity with their black poor neighbours on equal terms, for which Lincoln and Martin Luther made tremendous sacrifices and today Luis Farrakhan is carrying the banner for a graceful conclusion.

Disguised Discrimination

The Americans should now realise in their heart of hearts what wrong and injustice they had done to their black neighbours, millions of whom were shipped from Africa by their former colonial rulers to employ them as slaves in their tea, coffee and cotton plantations. Is it not a pity that not a single black American has not yet entered the presidency as US President during the last two centuries or so? When that black leader Jesse Jackson became a presidential candidate Farrakhan's organization 'Nation of Islam' extended full support to him by organising public meetings addressed by Jackson. But the overwhelming White votes just quashed him out. Even former Army C-in-C Powell who had 'big contribution in the Gulf War victory, failed in his efforts to get a party nomination, simply because he was 'smelling' black. Now the Americans should be bold enough to call a spade and put an end for good to the disguised practice of much-hated racial discriminations. It is always better to put one's own house in order, then go around to tell others what they should do, and not do.

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Strong People's Organizations Needed for People-centred Development

by Md. Abdul Kader and Sohail Ibn Ali

THE problem of poverty is, indeed complex to comprehend. Its root causes are deeply embedded in the overall socio-cultural fabric involving multifarious factors, institutions and actions. Professor Muhammad Yunus once said, 'I do not see any consistency between a civilized world and a world of poverty. To me a civilized world is a world where poverty belongs in the museums. Only way for children to learn about poverty would be to visit these museums and when they do so, they would certainly blame their ancestors for tolerating the conditions of human beings at that level'. Prof. Yunus' observations are very explicit in pointing the causes of poverty due to the actions by a few affluent people in the society while the rest of the majority suffer from the consequences. One of the major factors or vices is corruption. It deprives people of their basic rights: right to land, right to food, right to shelter and education. It affects the poorest the most who just cannot become a part of the process. Resources ultimately get in the hands of the few who have power and influence.

Constraints in Poverty Reduction

In Bangladesh, poor face many dominant constraints in their struggle for a decent livelihood. The nature and magnitude of these constraints often also determine the prospects for dealing with the challenge of poverty. Such constraints are, of course, not immutable and they can change over time in their intensity and significance. Over

the last two decades or so, one can note a significant weakening of certain types of constraints while in others, little change has occurred. Such constraints are: (i) socio-cultural constraints; (ii) socio-political constraints; (iii) socio-economic constraints.

While socio-cultural constraints may have weakened significantly, socio-political and socio-economic constraints have changed relatively little. The political advantage for the poor whether over electoral outcomes or state decision making shows little evidence of any significant change. The main reason of these constraints is weak governance including widespread corruption, elite dominated politics and a lack of effective pressure or capacity for reform. In Bangladesh, over the recent years, the issue of corruption has been the growing concern as elsewhere in the world. Bribe, nepotism, theft to public means and general mismanagement have reached to alarming proportions in many countries. Ms. Tove Strand, Director General of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) once told 'It is the poor who are hit the hardest by corruption. They suffer when schools that are planned are not built because somebody is stealing the money. They do not get adequate health treatment because somebody takes the medicines to make profit on the private market. Corruption distorts resource allocation in society. It takes from the poor and powerless and gives to those who have power. It is a barrier to sound social and economic development.' A recent study con-



Mobilizing masses on land reform and other development issues in northern district of Pabna

cluded by the World Bank established a direct correlation between corruption and GDP per capita in Bangladesh. The report asserted that since the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, the per capita income could be made double if corruption could be eliminated from the country. The hypothesis we can easily draw from the analysis is that any stride for elimination of poverty therefore depends on how successful we have been in eliminating corruption.

The different types of constraints and their inter-linkages create a society that is economically inequitable, unproductive and inefficient, socially unjust and discriminatory of women as well as environmentally polluting and unsustainable and politically undemocratic. All are the circumstances that create and maintain mass poverty.

Characteristics of the Poor
At present in Bangladesh, 53 per cent of the population consist

of group referred to as poor. The whole group is divided into two separate groups: the poorest (36%) and the moderately poor (17%). The moderately poor are on the threshold of the poverty line. The moderately poor household owns up to 50 decimals of land and per capita annual income is about 6300 taka. Within an average daily calorie intake of less than 2100 Kcal, their nutritional requirements are satisfied only occasionally. Again, the poorest is divided into two separate groups: the ultra poor (31%) and the destitute (5%). Some characteristics are common to both groups. Both are definitely under the poverty line. With a daily calorie intake of less than 1800 kcal, they are chronically undernourished. The chronically undernourished are 15 decimals and quite a few of them own no land at all. The reason for their poverty is not the same for the whole group. Some are poor because of demographic reasons e. g. widows, widowers, old and

infirm. Others are poor for ecological reason e. g. riverbank erosion while yet others are poor because of structural reasons such as lack of assets and access to opportunities.

Role of People's Organization
This vicious cycle of poverty, corruption and deprivation can not be overcome unless those who are deprived are mobilized to fight for rights and their very existence. On the other hand, public sector reforms and economic growth will

be necessary in order to reduce poverty and inequality and promote human rights. More pressure for change on government, political and other elites is needed. The collective organizations of the poor can act collectively to acquire better access to resources and extract accountability from service providers and political leaders. These types of organizations can also challenge elites. They can undermine the present patron-client relationships, which create social and economic hierarchies. Such hierarchies persist because the poor rely on patrons for short-term security for employment, informal credit and land access (e.g. through sharecropping). Therefore, now it is very important to build up collective organizations of the deprived poor in order to reduce poverty, deprivation and corruption. It will also act as effective pressure groups for the government as well as other sectors. Because, without

collective organizations and access to resources, the poor's bargaining power is limited, and their abilities to participate in the markets and local politics remain constrained.

Experience shows that the only possibility for the popular movements to reach objectives was to mobilize more people, the masses. To take an example from our own history, the big social movements: Tevaga Movement, Tango Movement, Santal Movement were all protest movements against the established social exploitation. Different types of activities like agitation, preaching, adult education, and opinion building were the most important tasks for the movements.

Now the questions a rise how did these movements and mass organizations manage to mobilize such energy and power? There are many possible explanations:

- 1) At the heart of the issue was 'self organization' and/or self-motivation for pursuing their interests and protecting their rights.
- 2) The members were united and strengthened by their common interests based on basic human values and visions about the good society for all.
- 3) They proved in practical actions their capabilities of nurturing a democratic culture in their own organizations; they managed the administration of their own organizations.

Role of NGOs
Recent research study shows that the poor need alternative patrons, associations and alliances, outside of their own social

classes, if poor people are to claim entitlement needs to pro-poor civil society. Some NGOs can be alternative patrons of the poor. Such organizational patronage differs from the less formal but more pervasive elite patronage where can sustain a high degree of member control and thereby reflect the interests of the poor. In the northern Bangladesh, the NGO Samata is assisting landless men and women to strengthen their organizations in order to gain access to more resources, to counter forms of exploitation and social inequality.

Samata has also made aware the landless males and females of the need to form collective organizations to establish their rights. They started their works on land issue and now spreading activities related to people's voice, building a coalition for change and improving pro-poor governance in general. Besides, the NGO supports a major network of smaller organizations to achieve the above-mentioned targets through replication of its strategies by across the region. Samata's activities proved that if the poor people could be united and form collective organizations, they could establish their rights and actively participate in the local power structure and markets. Thus, existing poverty scenario in Bangladesh can be changed through strengthening the people's organization as well as social mobilization activities.

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