

The attacks are not confined to men in public life. Here is a paper called The Cross and the Flag which, claiming to speak in the name of religion, turns loose a wild diatribe: "Its flag is the same color as the Jew Palestine flag and is the same design as the Russian military banner." Although forced to acknowledge that President Eisenhower has only good things to say about the U.N., this paper calls it "the most expensive denial of Christ in an attempt to please the anti-Christ in the history of the world." It declares the U.N. "the most elite and high-toned crucifixion our Lord has ever received."²

Wild words such as these can be shrugged off as rantings from the lunatic fringe. But on the day when this paragraph was being written, the most powerful newspaper in Chicago (it calls itself "the world's greatest newspaper") charged editorially that this nation's international difficulties spring from the fact that our government "meekly assents to the proposition that America takes its orders from the U.N." (There are members of the U.N. who would assert that its difficulties are caused by the fact that it too often takes its orders from America, but that isn't the way the readers of the Tribune hear it.)

The day before it printed the editorial just quoted, this same paper charged flatly that "the U.N. has proved a failure," and added that it is "Alger Hiss' major contribution to the vexations of the United States." The day before that it declared that Americans who support the United Nations "look forward with equanimity to the destruction of American independence and the subjection of the government of the republic to the authority of a U.N. supergovernment."³ A large number of people in the middle west get that kind of editorial diet steadily. There are other newspapers whose contempt for the international organization, if not as bitterly expressed, goes just as deep.

Is it any wonder, in the face of such divided counsel, that so many Americans do not know whom to believe or what to believe? This study is an effort to help such Americans make up their minds. It will try to give a balanced picture - the good and the bad; the strengths and the weaknesses; the achievements and the failures of the U.N. Then, it is believed, the Americans who have read it will find themselves better able to reach their own conclusions on this much-debated and immensely important matter.

In a study such as this, one must ask questions as well as try to answer them. So let's start with a couple. Why is there such an organization as the United Nations? If there were no U.N., would it make any great difference? Or, to phrase the second question a little differently, what would be the alternative to the U.N.?

Why is there a United Nations? Most Americans know, but it is worth saying again, that the U.N. traces back to the great change in world history which came with the First World War. As the United States and most of the other nations were drawn into that conflict, an American President, Woodrow Wilson, saw that its sacrifices would be justified only if it led to an organization of the nations to preserve peace, increase human happiness and provide a means by which their disputes could be settled around a conference table instead of on fields of battle.