

effect of the decisions of India and Pakistan to remain in the Commonwealth. There were high hopes, moreover, that a lasting peace could be effected in the Middle East as a result of the painstaking negotiations of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. On the economic side the beneficial effects of the European Recovery Programme were beginning to be felt, and trade conditions were slowly improving. In short the upheavals wrought by the Second World War were beginning to show signs of subsiding and world public opinion began to reflect the hope that a final settlement of some of the most difficult post-war problems was at least not impossible.

No one, however, belittled the vast differences which still divided the non-communist states from the communist hegemony. Charges and counter charges continued to be levelled on both sides of the Iron Curtain and the inevitable difference of opinion between East and West was re-emphasized in agencies such as the Security Council, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments, which meet continuously. The United Nations, however, with the record of its activities in Kashmir, Indonesia and Palestine to its credit, had proved itself capable of stemming the tide toward major conflicts, and invaluable as a meeting place for the proponents of vastly differing points of view. The results of the first three regular sessions of the Assembly, intangible as they were, had clearly demonstrated that the United Nations was the most workable instrument for international co-operation that could be devised under existing world conditions.

Italian Colonies and Indonesia

In this atmosphere the General Assembly tackled the sixty-nine items on the agenda for the fourth regular session. The most constructive decision taken by the Assembly provided for the disposition of the former Italian colonies in North Africa. One important aspect of this item lay in the fact that, for the first time, the Assembly was exercising powers of direct legislation, as a result of provisions in Annex XI of the Peace Treaty with Italy. The arrangements decided upon may not prove entirely satisfactory and may even have to be adjusted. However, the method which was used to dispose of the colonial territories of a state which had been defeated in war, were a vast improvement on the previous peace settlements whereby the spoils were simply given to the victor. For this reason alone, the United Nations settlement for the former Italian colonies may prove much more enduring.

One of the more satisfying moments in the recent Assembly occurred when a resolution was adopted commending the parties to the Indonesian dispute on the agreement reached at the Round Table Conference in The Hague. Much of the credit for bringing about the sort of pre-conditions necessary for the talks can be fairly attributed to the tireless efforts of members of the various organs of the United Nations which dealt with the problem over a period of eighteen months. The real reason for the final agreement, however, lay in the fact that both parties were prepared to make important concessions in order that a lasting settlement might be reached.

The Assembly re-affirmed its belief in the value of the work performed by the various "watch dog" committees and commissions which have been established from time to time to provide on-the-spot information about situations which might lead to international friction. A substantial number of Member