

AN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR

—or How to Think Like a Turk

ISOLATED BEHIND their "great white wall," Tech students have a passion for trying to find out how the rest of the collegiate world lives and thinks. Some of the most successful of these investigations are the intercollegiate conferences, with their liberal-arts and coeducational atmosphere—which is rather lacking at Tech. It is only proper, then, that a survey of campus life should include a report from the largest and most elaborate of these conferences, the Model United Nations, which held its sixth session last month at Oregon State College in Corvallis, Oregon.

Nine Tech men were among the 600 students from 70 participating colleges at this session. Each school represented a member nation in the General Assembly, and in the committees and councils of the UN, following as closely as possible the interests and activities of its country in world affairs. The result was an exceedingly effective demonstration of international problems in an intimate, working way.

Diplomatic affairs

The convention began, for Caltech and a dozen other southern California schools, with the long trip north by chartered train. As strangers thrown together for a day, the delegates started diplomatic relations immediately. Australia (Pomona), Indonesia (Orange Coast J. C.), and the Netherlands (Immaculate Heart College) began lobbying for their rights to West Irian, part of the island north of Australia. South Africa (UCLA) was immediately challenged to defend her racist policies, and (the hypocrites!) presented the case as soundly as possible. Though such enlightened discussion was in vogue, actual lobbying, taken seriously by the neophytes, failed to ring true for very long in the atmosphere of amiable coexistence that pervaded this United Nations. After 24 hours on the train most delegates had been initiated into foreign affairs and had advanced to the more comfortable realm of social affairs.

The four-day conference was impressively directed by a Secretariat of nearly 900 Oregon State students, who had drawn up the rules of operation and an agenda paralleling current UN problems. Almost every delegation had spent two or three months studying its country and its policies, writing resolutions and pre-

paring speeches; Oregon State students, however, had worked for eight months setting up the conference, both in their classes and in their spare time.

The leadership of this small bureaucracy, complicated by the tenuous nature of part-time student assistance, came from a Mr. Papadopoulo, an Egyptian-Greek Cypriote, studying food technology at the OSC graduate school. Mr. Papadopoulo had been sent to the United Nations in New York over Christmas and consequently had in mind the spirit as well as the proper procedures for a United Nations meeting. He was to be seen everywhere, with the hurried, yet carefully amiable air of an amateur executive with a not-too-subdued love for the spotlight.

Secretary-General Papadopoulo called the first plenary session of the General Assembly to order in the OSC Coliseum, which was restyled in clean, well-lighted grandeur and draped with 76 flags for the occasion.

Though there was to have been no debate at this first session, soon after Dr. Frank Munk's opening address the U.S.S.R., without a sign of a smile, rose to object to the propaganda charges in the speech given by China as one of the Big Five Powers' opening statements. This was the first of hundreds of points of order raised by vocal students with an exacting eye on the procedure and a somewhat too eager interest in getting the floor.

Technically Turkish

The Caltech (Turkish) delegation found little difficulty in overcoming the handicap of "technical" training among liberal arts students. The members had met five evenings in the previous two months to study Turkey and the United Nations, and had even received first-hand information from Richard Robinson, the American Universities Field Staff representative recently returned to this country from Turkey. Though Tech did not claim the distinction of writing any successful resolution, one delegate did introduce to the Economic and Financial Committee an economic assistance program which in real life was a pet project of Mr. Robinson's.

The delegation received some inspiration and a little prodding from three Turkish students at OSC who were naturally interested in those who represented their homeland. In fact, one of the more enlightening auxiliary

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events of the conference was the argument over Turkish politics that resulted when these three gentlemen each tried to "explain" Turkey. In the end, they issued a kind, but probably futile, invitation to us to visit their homes in Istanbul.

With this background Tech men found it easy to identify themselves with the Turks, even to the point of acquiring a new national pride and prejudice. "I'm from Turkey," became the simple introduction.

Turkish interests

Turkey's primary interests were in economic aid programs (being in debt, she wants them); in the Arab-Israeli dispute (being nearby, she wants a fair peace settlement); and, most of all, in Cyprus—for which she supports the British administration, in opposition to a plebiscite, which would deliver the island to Greece and thereby threaten the Turkish Cypriote minority as well as Turkey's security. Thus these problems were Caltech's primary concerns during the committee meetings of the next two days. They gave ample opportunity for oration and diplomatic lobbying.

The Cyprus question ultimately resulted in the most violent scene of the conference. Though delegates from Turkey and Great Britain (Lewis and Clark College) vehemently disputed it, an unfavorable resolution, calling for a commission to study conditions for a plebiscite, was passed by the General Assembly.

Out of order—and out

On the podium, the British representative was justifiably outraged at this infringement of domestic jurisdiction, but hardly appropriately decorous in his behavior for a British diplomat. As the slightly confused lad protested, he was declared out of order by the chair, and Oregon State's dignified ROTC "security guards" carried the stunned gentleman from the platform, with much loss of aplomb. The British delegation walked out in a huff, bringing home to the Assembly the point that the United Nations must work *with* its members.

Though official business went through the committees and thence to the General Assembly, much of the "politicking" was carried on in block caucuses. Turkey had a part in three of these six groups; one Turk was vice-president of the Afro-Asian block, and others were active in the NATO and METO caucuses.

It was in an Afro-Asian caucus that one of the most heated discussions occurred. This group—consisting of the Bandung conferees—was disrupted by the vociferous Arab nations, led by Egypt (Reed College) and Lebanon (Occidental). On the third day of the conference it was announced that 130 Egyptians and Israeli had in reality been killed on the Gaza strip. True to its responsibilities, the Afro-Asian group immediately took up this problem,

assuming a complete diplomatic authority from its home offices.

Over vehement Arabian objections, by a one-vote majority, Israel (Stanford) was allowed three minutes to present its case (as printed in the *New York Times*) in the crowded, partly antagonistic caucus room. Then, until past midnight, a subcommittee of Turkey and India conscientiously undertook to negotiate a truce, calling in alternately the chairmen of the two delegations involved. The Egyptian chairman, a strikingly handsome, self-confident Reed senior with a smooth oratorical rhythm in his voice, presented Nasser's predicament at the mock conference table, ultimately agreeing to a compromise resolution. Point by point, the Israel chairman, a shrewd, mustachioed and very German student from Stanford, also agreed to or modified these proposals as the night wore on.

Show of strength

Unfortunately the plan was defeated next morning, after a vigorous Syrian delegate caused the Arab block to force Egypt to back down. It so happened that this student, a young man with blazing eyes, curly black hair, and a scar on his cheek, was actually a native Syrian, embittered by the death of relatives in the border warfare.

There were many foreign students to lend an international flavor to the affair. Occasionally true loyalties were confused. A tall Negro, with the distinctive bearing of an African prince, introduced himself with, "I'm from Ethiopia—I mean Rumania." Like many others at the conference, he had come to this country to prepare for work with the United Nations after graduation. The greatest incongruity, however, was in the performance of the Negro who defended the notorious racial policies of the Union of South Africa.

International unity

In addition to the weighty problems of state, the delegates attended a banquet, a dance, and a concert sponsored by OSC. By the end of a week most international (and intercollegiate) barriers had been broken down. In the following two weeks, in fact, the southern California delegations managed to stage two joint reunions of the sort that the Washington diplomatic colony is famed for.

Though few Model United Nations delegates would qualify as real diplomats, the temporary pretense was enough to convince most of them that the problems facing the United Nations—Cyprus and Israel included—cannot be solved in four days, nor maybe even in a week.

—Tom Bergeman '56