

## *Philadelphia's Quest to Become the Permanent Headquarters of the United Nations*

IT IS NOT usually remembered that Philadelphia was almost selected in 1946 to be the permanent headquarters of the United Nations. Had it not been for John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s last-minute offer of the East River site in New York City, Philadelphia would in all probability have been chosen. The fact that the city had been so closely associated with the ideals of political liberty and with the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States led many to feel that Philadelphia would especially symbolize the underlying principles and ideals of the United Nations.\*

Even before the United Nations Charter was finally approved and ratified, a movement was launched to have Philadelphia designated as the site of the organization's headquarters. On March 5, 1945, an editorial appeared in the *Philadelphia Record* urging that Philadelphia, "The City of Brotherly Love," be made the permanent home of the United Nations. It went on to observe:

Independence Hall, recognized throughout the world as the birthplace of political liberty and democracy, is the shrine around which the United Nations . . . buildings should be grouped. . . .

Philadelphia, more than any other city in the world, embodies those spiritual values which would inspire and strengthen the United Nations. . . .

Its very name is an inspiration as are the ideals of its founder, William Penn, a pioneer in liberalism and tolerance. Its most illustrious statesman, Benjamin Franklin, was America's first, "Citizen of the World," who was almost as familiar a figure in Paris and London as on Chestnut Street. . . .

It is most fitting that the men and women who administer the world organization should gain daily inspiration from the shrine where the

\* This is part of a larger study which the author has prepared entitled *Pennsylvanians and the United Nations*.

ideals of modern government were born. It is peculiarly appropriate that the organization dedicated to world peace should make its home in this great city whose founder dedicated it by name to the highest ethical concept—the universal brotherhood of man.

The editorial pointed out that the location of the United Nations in the neighborhood of Independence Hall would fit in most appropriately with the plans already made to improve and beautify the area and to develop a large mall extending northward from Independence Hall to the Delaware River Bridge Plaza. Copies of the editorial were sent to the Mayor of Philadelphia, the Governor of Pennsylvania, the United States Senators and Representatives from Pennsylvania and the President of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The movement took on added momentum later in March when both houses of the Pennsylvania General Assembly unanimously adopted a concurrent resolution memorializing the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the United States Delegation to the San Francisco Conference “to advocate the establishment of the World Capital of the United Nations on the soil of Pennsylvania and in the City of Brotherly Love.” The resolution expressed the view that: “Philadelphia, once the capital of the United States . . . [was] ideologically and historically eminently suited to become the World Capital of Peace, the permanent home of the United Nations and the nerve-center of the world machinery of peace. . . .” The resolution further supported the idea of constructing a landscaped mall leading from Independence Hall to the Delaware River Bridge Plaza, and the grouping of the United Nations buildings “around our Shrine of Liberty.”<sup>2</sup> Additional backing for Philadelphia as the site for United Nations headquarters came on April 18, 1945, when the Delaware State Legislature

<sup>1</sup> The editorial was reprinted in full in the *Congressional Record*, Mar. 6, 1945, Appendix, A1024-A1025.

<sup>2</sup> Senate Concurrent Resolution Serial No. 116, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Legislative Journal*, Mar. 12, 1945, pp. 1070-1071, and Mar. 26, 1945, pp. 1587-1588. A second resolution proposing Philadelphia as the site for the United Nations was introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on Mar. 12, 1945, by Representatives John P. Corrigan and Samuel W. Salus of Philadelphia. It was adopted immediately and was later inserted in the *Congressional Record*, Mar. 20, 1945, p. 2459. For action of the Pennsylvania House, see *Legislative Journal*, Mar. 12, 1945, p. 1100.

adopted a resolution similar in principle to the one passed in March by the Pennsylvania General Assembly.<sup>3</sup>

In order to clear away legal obstacles to the possible acquisition of land in Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania General Assembly in May, 1945, approved a law giving the consent of the Commonwealth to the acquisition of such land by the United States and ceding jurisdiction over the land.<sup>4</sup> The federal government, in turn, would then be in a position to conclude the necessary agreements with the United Nations if the decision were made to locate in Philadelphia.

This early movement to have Philadelphia chosen as the site also reflected considerable business interest, since it was estimated at one point that the construction and settlement of the United Nations headquarters would result in expenditures of perhaps \$20,000,000.<sup>5</sup> This was a very modest estimate in view of the fact that the actual cost of building the headquarters in New York between 1947 and 1952 proved to be some \$67,000,000. Another economic benefit of considerable size to the host city would be the expenditures for living costs of United Nations delegates, visitors, and secretariat employees, for supplies and upkeep of the United Nations and the many meetings held under its auspices, for rents and operating costs of the mission offices of member governments, and for the many other related local expenses to maintain a world organization. New York City authorities, for example, estimated in 1971 that at least \$135,000,000 annually flowed back into the city's economy as a result of spending by delegations and United Nations' staff. In addition, the assessed value of taxable property in the immediate neighborhood of the United Nations increased from about \$54,000,000 in 1955 to more than \$168,000,000 in 1971, bringing with it corresponding increases in tax revenues.<sup>6</sup> The sheer material interest in having the United Nations in any one city was therefore considerable.

The final text of the United Nations Charter was signed in San

<sup>3</sup> Text of the Delaware Resolution in *Congressional Record*, May 3, 1945, p. 4094.

<sup>4</sup> *Legislative Journal*, May 1, 1945, p. 3376, May 5, 1945, p. 4453 and pp. 4328-4329. The bill was signed by Gov. Martin on May 16, 1945, as Act No. 252.

<sup>5</sup> *New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1945, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 1971, pp. 1 and 14.

Francisco on June 26, 1945, and ratifications by various governments took place throughout the summer and fall until the requisite number had been obtained to put it into effect on October 24, 1945. This date thereafter became known as "United Nations Day." Official United Nations consideration of the location of its headquarters had begun earlier that month in London, where preparatory discussions looking toward the setting up of the organization were taking place. While considerable desire existed among European countries to have the United Nations located in Europe, majority sentiment in these discussions favored a location in the United States where it might reflect the spirit of the new world and not be handicapped by the disillusion associated with the demise of the more European-oriented League of Nations.<sup>7</sup>

With agreement reached in principle that the United Nations should have its seat in the United States, the next question was "Where in the United States?", and this unleashed a spirited competition among twenty or more American communities, each of which invited the United Nations to take up residence in its respective region. Among those interested were San Francisco, New York, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, the Black Hills region of South Dakota, Newport, Rhode Island, and Tuskahoma, Oklahoma. The supporters of Tuskahoma argued that it was virtually in the center of the United States and that the United Nations should be in a completely new city untarnished by the past.<sup>8</sup>

In the fall of 1945, San Francisco seemed to be the favorite among American cities in the eyes of various United Nations members. The city had made a positive impression on delegates to the San Francisco conference earlier that year with its ample facilities and its "pioneering, hopeful outlook on life."<sup>9</sup> In addition, it was strongly supported by Australia, New Zealand, China and the Philippines because it was nearer to them than most cities elsewhere in the United States.

Philadelphia supporters countered with the argument that Phila-

<sup>7</sup> "Headquarters of the United Nations," *Current Notes on International Affairs* (Australia, Department of External Affairs), October, 1946, p. 613.

<sup>8</sup> *Congressional Record*, Dec. 7, 1945, p. 11633. For the names of various communities seeking to be selected as United Nations headquarters, see *Congressional Record*, 1945, 79th Congress, 1st session, Index, under the entry, "United Nations Capital."

<sup>9</sup> *New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1945, p. 8.

delphia was closer to the capitals of all but five of the other fifty United Nations members and that its better accessibility for the large majority of countries would make it a more convenient location. A careful check of airline distances between Philadelphia and the capitals of all United Nations members confirmed this.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, threw his weight on the side of Philadelphia by pointing out that since the fundamental historical documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States had been drafted and made public in Philadelphia, the latter had a significance in the movement for world organization which no other American city could possibly possess.<sup>11</sup>

A committee of prominent citizens headed by Dr. Robert L. Johnson, President of Temple University, was formed to develop greater support for Philadelphia's candidacy and to present the city's invitation formally to the United Nations committee when it met in London. Other members of the Philadelphia committee included former United States Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts; L. Stauffer Oliver, a Judge of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas; Dr. Thomas S. Gates, chairman of the board of the University of Pennsylvania; Thomas B. K. Ringe, attorney; Dr. John G. Herndon of Haverford College; Arthur C. Kaufman, department store executive; and Benjamin Eshelman, advertising agency head.<sup>12</sup>

Philadelphia's hopes, however, received a near-fatal setback late in December, 1945, when the United Nations committee, which was considering the headquarters question in London, decided to eliminate Philadelphia from the list of choices because of its proximity to Washington and the apprehension that the United States government might be able to exert undue influence on the United Nations if it were that close.<sup>13</sup> The committee, which by now had considered offers from some forty areas, decided to narrow its search to the eastern seaboard as a compromise between the European and Far

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1945, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 12, 1945, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 29, 1945, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1945, p. 8; United Nations, General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, First Part, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 101.

Eastern countries, and to place New York and Boston at the top of its list.

This decision brought expressions of regret from members of the committee which had been laboring hard to have Philadelphia selected. Dr. Johnson cabled the United Nations' committee chairman expressing surprise that the Philadelphia site would not even be visited and stating that the city had the endorsement of twenty-eight of the forty-eight state governors. Judge Oliver expressed the committee feeling in these words:

We think Philadelphia is the real choice of the American people for the United Nations capital because of its historic associations. . . . Since the United Nations Organization is coming to the United States to enlist the enthusiastic support of the American people, it seems odd that they disregard the American sentiment to the extent of not even visiting Philadelphia.<sup>14</sup>

Mayor Bernard Samuel urged that the United Nations' representatives again be invited to inspect Philadelphia's "unexcelled advantages,"<sup>15</sup> and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, in an editorial entitled, "Still Best Site for U.N.O.," expressed hope that the decision would be reversed. It declared: "Philadelphia is already a center of sincere belief in and support for the plan and purpose of the United Nations Organization. It could not be otherwise . . . in view of its history. . . . Nowhere else than at Philadelphia could the United Nations Organization find such great and constant inspiration for the fateful labors it is called upon to perform."<sup>16</sup>

During January, 1946, a special United Nations inspection group visited various sites in the Boston and New York regions, and, following consideration of its report, the United Nations General Assembly on February 14, 1946, decided to locate the headquarters somewhere in Westchester County (New York) and/or Fairfield County (Connecticut), an area approximately forty to sixty miles north of New York City.<sup>17</sup> Efforts were undertaken during the

<sup>14</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 29, 1945, pp. 1 and 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1945, p. 2A.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6B.

<sup>17</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, First Part, Plenary Meetings, Feb. 14, 1946, pp. 535-537 and 671-676, Assembly Resolution 25 (I).

following months to identify the most suitable specific site within the Westchester-Fairfield Counties regions, but when strong local opposition to the proposals developed in some sections interest in locating the headquarters elsewhere in the United States picked up momentum in October and November, 1946.

San Francisco authorities renewed a strong bid for their city. New York offered the former World Fair site in Flushing Meadows which was then serving as the temporary headquarters of the United Nations. And the Philadelphia committee chaired by Dr. Johnson was again actively pushing that city. The committee had been working quietly for several months, contacting United States and foreign delegates, trying to persuade them to reverse the decision of the preceding December and to locate in Philadelphia. Up to this point, San Francisco had been the only serious rival to New York, but now Dr. Johnson expressed the view that Philadelphia had a 50-50 chance of being selected.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, it had been reported in September that sites in Chester, Delaware, Lycoming, Monroe, Northampton and Pike Counties had been offered to the United Nations by the county commissioners of those areas.<sup>19</sup> Interest seemed particularly strong in Delaware County, where a large area around Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Media was offered without cost by the Delaware Valley Association for United Nations Headquarters.<sup>20</sup>

Evidence of the deepening controversy over the location was seen when the United States, on November 7, 1946, gave up the neutral position which it had previously held regarding particular sites and announced that it would take an active part in the negotiations. It now proposed that the New York and San Francisco areas be carefully studied.<sup>21</sup> Two days later, the General Assembly decided to modify its decision of the preceding February by broadening its search for sites and including areas in San Francisco, New York, or other parts of the United States which might be available at reason-

<sup>18</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 11, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 19, 1946 p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 8, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, Second Part, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 106-107.

able or no cost.<sup>22</sup> The stage was now set for a month of intense competition and argument over where the United Nations should make its home. Philadelphia was in the thick of the controversy.

At the meeting of the United Nations Headquarters Committee on November 11, mention was made of Philadelphia, and the British and Iraqi delegates said they would approve the addition of Philadelphia and Boston to the list of sites to be considered.<sup>23</sup> On November 15, it was announced at the United Nations that two sites in the Belmont-Roxborough sections of Philadelphia had been offered free of charge jointly by the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These were areas along the Schuylkill River, adjoining Fairmount Park, just a few miles northwest of the center of the city.<sup>24</sup> During the next month, these sites were scrutinized carefully and viewed with increasing favor by many United Nations delegates.

Following the General Assembly decision to broaden the search for sites, a subcommittee visited the Belmont-Roxborough area as well as other locations in San Francisco, Boston, and New York. The subcommittee was cordially received in Philadelphia where, according to *Time* magazine, "the spirit of brotherly love was almost overpowering." The city authorities "made no bones about wanting U.N.," but presented their case "with becoming restraint." The U.N. representatives were treated to a concert by the Philadelphia Orchestra and entertained at a luncheon at the Art Museum. Edward Hopkinson, chairman of the Philadelphia Planning Commission, made such a moving plea that the Soviet representative was moved to say of his hosts: "A sincere people, with a fine understanding of the objectives of the United Nations."<sup>25</sup> *Newsweek* magazine reported that the United Nations subcommittee felt that the "City of Brotherly Love . . . demonstrated 'the spirit for which the United Nations strives.'"<sup>26</sup>

The subcommittee's report on December 2, 1946, concerning its inspection visits brought joy to the supporters of Philadelphia for

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Plenary Meetings, Nov. 9, 1946, pp. 944-952.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 110-111.

<sup>24</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Time*, Dec. 2, 1946, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Newsweek*, Dec. 2, 1946, p. 42.



it listed the Belmont-Roxborough site and the San Francisco site as first choices of equal merit, and the White Plains-Harrison site in Westchester County as second choice.<sup>27</sup> The vote in the subcommittee was reported to have been as follows: Philadelphia—9, San Francisco—9, Westchester County—8, Flushing Meadows—1, and Boston—0.<sup>28</sup>

But now another complication arose affecting Philadelphia's chances. The United States delegation appeared to be more favorable toward San Francisco and was exerting considerable pressure on other delegates to support that city. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that only the open lobbying in favor of San Francisco by the United States delegation and an unusual intervention in the name of President Truman had kept Philadelphia from being recommended alone as the chosen site.<sup>29</sup> On December 5, Dr. Johnson charged that the State Department and the United States delegates were openly lobbying for San Francisco, despite President Truman's informal pledges of United States neutrality as between American cities. The Soviet Union also accused the United States of violating previous United Nations' decisions to locate the headquarters along the eastern seaboard.<sup>30</sup>

Following Dr. Johnson's charges, Mayor Samuel and Senator Francis J. Myers made strong protests to President Truman and Warren R. Austin, Chief United States Delegate to the United Nations, over the activities of the United States delegation and called on them to abide by the President's previous pledges of neutrality.<sup>31</sup> The President reportedly had informally explained to Mayor Samuel a few days previously that his offer of the United States Army base in San Francisco, known as the Presidio, was not an endorsement of San Francisco over Philadelphia. He said that he merely wanted the United Nations to know that the Presidio site was available were it needed, subject to the approval of Congress inasmuch as it was United States property.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, Second Part, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 171-206, at 188.

<sup>28</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 3, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1946, pp. 1 and 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1946, p. 14.

Support for Philadelphia at the United Nations mounted in the next few days as delegations like the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Poland, India, Cuba and New Zealand came out in favor of Philadelphia as a compromise between New York and San Francisco.<sup>33</sup> Great Britain, which had previously favored the site in Westchester County, now took a leading role in support of Philadelphia. The Soviet Union, which had strongly favored New York, was equally strongly opposed to San Francisco and went so far as to say that it would not go to San Francisco if that city were selected. Locating the headquarters so far from Washington would make it necessary for the Soviet Union to maintain two separate staffs in the United States. It was, however, prepared to accept Philadelphia as a compromise.<sup>34</sup>

The only critical reference to Philadelphia in the public records of the United Nations discussions at this time came from Carlos Romulo, delegate from the Philippines, who favored San Francisco. His objections to Philadelphia ranged widely from the allegation of inadequate sanitary conditions in the city to the argument that the location of the United Nations in the Belmont-Roxborough site would involve the displacement of local residents and the necessity of relocating hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions.<sup>35</sup> He also suggested that difficulties might arise in securing title to the land since the area had originally been set aside as a park. In his view, even though the Pennsylvania legislature passed the necessary statutes, there might be long and costly law suits before the United Nations could gain clear title.<sup>36</sup>

Confronted with criticism of its activities and charges that it had been openly working for San Francisco over Philadelphia and other sites, the United States on December 6 formally disclaimed any lobbying on behalf of San Francisco and said that it had only been

<sup>33</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, Second Part, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 119-135.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-138. According to the report of the United Nations inspection subcommittee, about 5,450 persons then lived in the Belmont-Roxborough areas. There were three hospitals, one orphanage, several homes for the aged, two private schools, one public school, several country clubs, one industry and a number of small commercial establishments. The subcommittee felt that these could be relocated without great difficulty. *Ibid.*, 195, 202-203.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

trying to assist the United Nations in reaching a final decision. It indicated that it now favored a location somewhere along the eastern seaboard since this would be closer to Europe and more accessible for most United Nations members.<sup>37</sup> This move virtually eliminated San Francisco and left Philadelphia and New York as the leading contenders in the race.

During the next few days, the contest over the choice had many of the appearances of a free-for-all fight. Intensive meetings were held behind closed doors at the United Nations over the weekend of December 7 and 8, and at least two new offers of sites were proposed. New York suggested the use of Governor's Island, while another proposal called for the construction of a skyscraper headquarters in the city. Ironically, in view of what they were to do a few days hence, United Nations delegates did not react sympathetically to the skyscraper proposal, and some of them objected to the idea of being "cooped up" in an office building rather than being out in the open spaces.<sup>38</sup> *Newsweek* characterized the situation as an "eenie, meenie" one, but the estimates of most observers were that if any one site could be agreed to it would probably be Philadelphia.<sup>39</sup>

James W. Girard, United States Ambassador to Germany during the Wilson Administration, infuriated Philadelphia supporters when, in advocating the skyscraper proposal for New York, he told a group of United Nations representatives at a Waldorf-Astoria luncheon: "Above all, don't go to Philadelphia. When you're not dreaming your time away in that somnambulant city, you'll spend half your time going to New York."<sup>40</sup> This prompted a long editorial column in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* sharply criticizing the below-the-belt tactics of Ambassador Girard in his derogatory remarks.<sup>41</sup>

On December 9, United States Delegate Warren R. Austin attempted to calm the troubled waters by suggesting that the decision on a site be postponed for a year and that in the meantime the

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-136.

<sup>38</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 9, 1946, pp. 1 and 11.

<sup>39</sup> *New York Times*, Dec. 11, 1946, p. 1; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 11, 1946, p. 1; *Newsweek*, Dec. 16, 1946, p. 40.

<sup>40</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 9, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 10, 1946, p. 16.

Secretary-General study and recommend the best sites in the New York and Boston areas to be considered along with Philadelphia and San Francisco. This proposal aroused considerable opposition among a number of United Nations delegates, particularly the suggestion of broadening the survey to areas other than the eastern seaboard and reopening the question of San Francisco. A spirited debate followed, but no action was taken on the Austin proposal.<sup>42</sup> Sharply critical, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* called the suggestion a stalling tactic to maneuver Philadelphia out of the picture, and declared:

By his shifts of position, violent changes of mind and above all, his proposal to defer action on a permanent home for the U.N. until the next meeting of the Assembly . . . Austin is threatening, as one foreign diplomat put it, to make the U.N. a laughing stock. . . .

The U.N. in Philadelphia would get adequate, conveniently located sites and, what is equally important, find itself placed in a community second to none in this country in its earnest faith in the aims of the United Nations. . . . In this historic city, warmed by friendliness and lighted by exalted traditions, the United Nations would really be "at home."<sup>43</sup>

What eliminated Philadelphia's chances of becoming the site of the United Nations headquarters was the dramatic and unexpected announcement on December 11 that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was willing to buy the six-block area along the East River between 42nd and 48th Streets in New York and give it to the United Nations. This quickly turned the whole situation around. The offer to purchase the property at a price of \$8,500,000 was presented and strongly supported by Representative Austin. It was warmly and gratefully received by most delegates who were by now becoming weary over the prolonged controversy.<sup>44</sup> The British and Soviet representatives, who had been favoring Philadelphia, now switched to immediate acceptance of the Rockefeller offer, and this killed whatever hopes Philadelphia still might have had. With the excep-

<sup>42</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, Second Part, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 141-142, 145-148, 206.

<sup>43</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 11, 1946, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, Second Part, Permanent Headquarters Committee, 149, 153-163.

tion of Australia, India, and a group of Arab states, the members of the Headquarters Committee now became receptive to the Rockefeller proposal, even though it involved the construction of a skyscraper office-conference complex which had seemed unpopular only three days earlier.

The Arab states were loath to have the United Nations located in New York, where they feared it would be more susceptible to pressure from the influential Jewish community. They probably would have accepted Philadelphia, although they were even apprehensive about this because Philadelphia was only ninety miles from New York. In an attempt to prevent an early decision, Egypt tried, as had the United States a few days previously, to have the headquarters decision postponed until the next Assembly session, but got nowhere with the proposal. The United States had reversed its position on postponement and was now pushing vigorously for the New York site offered by Mr. Rockefeller.<sup>45</sup>

The Australian representative, who had been a strong advocate of San Francisco from the outset, also protested vigorously against hasty action on the basis of an offer that had been under consideration for such a short time. "More facts should be made available," he argued, "hurried and careless methods in the selection of the site were deplorable." He added, interestingly, that the selection of New York "would have an unfortunate effect on the peoples of other cities that had offered hospitality to the Organization."<sup>46</sup> The Headquarters Committee, however, was not deterred by these appeals and on December 12, barely thirty-six hours after the Rockefeller offer had been formally presented, approved its acceptance by an overwhelming vote of 33 to 7 with six abstentions.<sup>47</sup>

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, which was understandably displeased with the decision, reported that the Headquarters Committee had been "dominated" by the United States and that Representative Austin had "railroaded" his proposal through to victory.<sup>48</sup> Judge L. Stauffer Oliver, a member of the committee which had worked on behalf of Philadelphia, expressed deep regret that the decision

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 157, 162.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-163.

<sup>48</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 13, 1946, p. 1.

in favor of New York had been made despite the offer by Philadelphia of a gift of tax-free land valued at above \$20,000,000, plus a guarantee by the city to finance, construct, and manage all required dwellings, apartment houses, and hotels which might be needed by United Nations personnel. He concluded:

How can the United Nations adequately solve the difficult problems which face the world if it works in the superficial, hard and cynical atmosphere of New York? By contrast, Philadelphia offers space, a commanding site which dominates the city, tranquility of the soul and a sense of human dignity and a warm, sustaining, friendly feeling towards the United Nations.<sup>49</sup>

The *Inquirer* summed up its views in an editorial entitled, "The City Is Still the Best U.N. Site," and accompanied it with a cartoon of a young dejected girl (the United Nations) sitting on a dismal wharf of the East River. The cartoon was pointedly entitled "Dead End Kid."<sup>50</sup>

Other papers in Pennsylvania gave much briefer attention to the news about the United Nations site. *The Patriot* of Harrisburg and the *York Dispatch*, for example, limited themselves to short factual summaries of the action with no interpretation or editorial comment.<sup>51</sup> The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, in addition to similar reports, published an editorial on the subject urging quick action on the selection of a site and expressing preference for the Belmont-Roxborough location over New York. It noted that Philadelphia had seemed to be in the lead until Warren Austin intervened with the Rockefeller offer.<sup>52</sup>

On December 14, 1946, the General Assembly, by a vote of 46 to 7, gave final approval and set the machinery in motion for the construction of the now-familiar United Nations buildings along the East River.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Philadelphia's bid to become the permanent site disappeared into thin air at the very moment when it seemed on the

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>51</sup> Issues of the two papers were surveyed from Dec. 10 to 17, 1946.

<sup>52</sup> *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Dec. 12, 1946, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> General Assembly, *Official Records*, First Session, Second Part, Plenary Meetings, Dec. 14, 1946, p. 1375, Assembly Resolution 100 (I).

verge of being accepted. Instead of locating in an area steeped in the history of the American quest for political freedom and democracy, the United Nations delegates decided in favor of the more cosmopolitan, more communication and trade-centered, more culturally diverse, and perhaps the more socially appealing atmosphere of mid-Manhattan.

Whether the subsequent history of the United Nations would have been any different if Philadelphia had become its headquarters is doubtful, although more Pennsylvanians might have developed a direct interest in it through employment, business relations, or other forms of association. But Philadelphia, nonetheless, had made a favorable impression on many United Nations delegates, particularly on those who had visited it. This was evident in the remarks of Mr. Entezam of Iran, the rapporteur of the Headquarters Committee, at the meeting when the Assembly gave final approval to the Rockefeller proposal. He referred approvingly to Philadelphia as "the cradle of peace and brotherhood" and expressed special gratitude for the courtesies and warm welcome which the United Nations' visiting committee had received there.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 1371-1372.