

majority of other states, have an abiding faith in an organization which in some respects seems to have fallen so far short of the high hopes entertained for it in 1945. Those hopes centred on what are admittedly the key purposes of the Charter - the maintenance of international peace and the pacific settlement of disputes. They were hopes born out of the anguish of the Second World War and which had inspired those who met in San Francisco to express, in the words of the preamble of the Charter, their determination to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". For most people, that high purpose conjures up a picture of a United Nations capable of safeguarding the peace and of enforcing its decisions in international disputes by the application of collective force.

Limits of United Nations effectiveness

Critics of the United Nations point to its failure to fulfil that supreme function and draw the hasty conclusion that as an instrument for the safeguarding of international peace the U.N. is ineffective. In fact, the means whereby the United Nations would have at its disposal enforcement powers have never been established in the way the Charter envisaged, mainly because the relevant passages in the Charter were all predicated on the existence of harmony between the permanent members of the Security Council. I need not labour here the disappointing and dangerous political divisions which have characterized great power relationships in the post war period and which have effectively frustrated many of the security provisions of the Charter. Those same political divisions between the Soviet Bloc and the rest of the world have tended also to hamper the ability of the United Nations to exercise its conciliation functions.

To the critics of the United Nations I would say that if the world organization has failed in some respects to live up to the high promise of its earliest days, the reason is to be found not in the defects of the organization itself, but in the unhappy facts of the contemporary political scene. I would also say, however, that these shortcomings, which centre almost entirely on the peace-keeping provisions of the Charter, should be kept in careful perspective. No one would wish to deny the paramount importance of those Charter provisions relating to the maintenance of international peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes, but we would do well to remind ourselves that a further object of the Charter is to protect the dignity and worth of the human person and to promote social progress and better standards of life.

Achievements

In the pursuit of this objective, the functions of the United Nations today go far beyond issues of war and peace. In the kind of world which modern technology