

special conferences of the kind already discussed have focused attention on the need to adapt further the traditional UN structures so as to permit greater participation by the new members. They, in turn, quite naturally look for ways of adjusting the rules of procedure of the Assembly and of the Councils, and of reforming the Charter, to their own advantage. The older, mostly Western members, understandably, tend to resist such changes. Somehow the UN must find a new point of equilibrium which will satisfy the double criteria of participatory democracy and proportional responsibility.

A. Membership and participation

The Charter specifies that membership in the United Nations "is open to all peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations". Over the years this concept has gradually evolved to mean that all states have a right to membership, although applications for membership are still subject to the veto and some states, eg. the two Koreas, have failed to overcome political obstacles to membership.

There is one outstanding exception to this trend -- South Africa. An attempt to expel South Africa failed in 1974, although its delegation was prevented from attending the Assembly through a procedural manoeuvre. If it were not that expulsion, like admission, is a joint prerogative of the Security Council and the General Assembly, South Africa would no longer be a member, and Israel's membership might also be in danger.

Canada, along with other Western members, opposes the expulsion of South Africa. It takes the view that, despite the provisions of Article 6 of the Charter*, the expulsion of a member state would create a grave precedent, which would certainly be turned to the disadvantage of others no matter how heinous the original offence might seem. Many states, at one time or another, have violated the principles of the Charter. Where is the line to be drawn? Moreover, it is not certain that the isolation of an offending member will lead it to repentance. The risk of isolation is defiance. Continued membership, on the other hand, brings with it the responsibilities of participation and the obligations of the Charter.

The majority of member states reject these arguments. They maintain that South Africa has persistently violated the principles of the Charter in regard to human rights, despite the clearly-expressed will of the UN, and, having flouted its responsibility to administer the trust territory of Namibia in accordance with these principles, has since obstructed the decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council to place Namibia under UN control. It has refused to acknowledge innumerable UN resolutions with respect to apartheid or to accept decisions of the Security Council imposing

* A member of the United Nations that has persistently violated the Charter may be expelled from the organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.