

system. They often brought with them a different set of priorities and loyalties, and have come to be thought of as a "third force", as opposed to the split into East and West under the general orbits aligned to Moscow and Washington. Originally made up largely of African and Asian states, this "third force" now includes Latin American states which share many economic problems with the others.

At the end of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 1) in 1964 a statement was released, signed by 77 states (including 2 which were not members of the United Nations) that reflected a deep perception that they shared common economic and social needs, and that a New World Economic Order was needed for their development.

The Group of 77 now numbers some 125 members. It exists as a kind of "trade union of poor that is kept together by a unity of opposition to the power of the rich".⁴ That unity is based on shared historical experience and a shared set of needs and aspirations rather than by any common ideology.

PEACEKEEPING FORCES

The United Nations is in charge with both peace-making and peacekeeping. In some instances the work is done simply by providing a forum for debate and a channel for quiet diplomacy. On occasion the Secretary-General has made his offices available to parties in dispute, either directly or through a special representative. There have also been a number of peacekeeping forces and observer and fact-finding missions struck to attempt to either prevent or terminate hostilities.

Conflict-control measures or peacekeeping operations have been authorized by the Security Council (or, exceptionally, by the General Assembly), normally with the consent of the parties involved, in order to assist in bringing about the cessation of hostilities, to prevent their recurrence and to normalize conditions. These have been either military observer missions or United Nations peacekeeping forces.

1. Military observer missions: these are composed of unarmed officers made available to the Secretary-General by Member States considered impartial by the concerned parties. They report to the Secretary-General and the Security Council on the maintenance of a cease-fire. There is currently an observer mission on the India-Pakistan border (UNMOGIP — United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan).
2. Peacekeeping forces: these are composed of contingents of armed forces from various member states. They assist in preventing a recurrence of fighting, restoring and maintaining law and order and promoting a return to normal conditions. Generally they interpose themselves physically between opposing parties. They must be accepted by all parties in question, use force only in self-defence as a last resort, and must at all times maintain complete neutrality. Their most significant roles have been in the Congo (Zaire), Cyprus and the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

It is all too easy to focus on the instances and areas in which the United Nations has failed to live up to its aims and aspirations. It has clearly all too often failed to be the respected arbiter of international peace and security as described in the Charter. There are those who seriously question the value of its very existence. They forget that the United Nations system is only a means to an end.

To dwell on the negative is to ignore or misunderstand the positive. The world of 1984 is dramatically different from that of 1945, and the United Nations has experienced a remarkable expansion in its responsibilities, especially in the areas of economic and social activity. It is inconceivable, in an increasingly interdependent world, to consider doing without the work of the various agencies involved in development programmes. These agencies play a pivotal role in what is sometimes referred to as "the functional approach to peace".

The very increase in the number of Member States is proof of the successful resolution of one of the Charter's aims — the right of peoples to self-determination and self-government. For a great many of the new, small states the United Nations is the sole forum in which they participate in international diplomacy. It is all they can afford.

It is easy to remember the times when the United Nations failed to prevent or stop hostilities. The times when diplomacy tipped the scales away from war usually do not make headlines. The successful intervention by peacekeeping forces takes a hot spot out of the news. The key, as in all aspects of the work of the international body, is the degree to which Member States are prepared to accept and use the offices of the United Nations.

"The United Nations is not a world government, and it can only act when its Member States decide that it should. They do or do not provide it with the political will to act. They do or do not give it money, people, material and direction. They do or do not use its procedures, carry out its decisions or observe the principles of the Charter."⁵ If the objectives and guidelines are to be translated into reality then the sovereign nations which together make up the United Nations must be willing to act and co-operate in the achievement of these lofty goals.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 From the Report from the Conference at Malta, 11 Feb. 1945 as quoted in *Everyone's United Nations*, 9th Edition, 1979, page 5.
- 2 *UN Handbook 1983*, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, page 48.
- 3 Statute of the International Court of Justice, Article 36, No. 1.
- 4 *A Matter of Right*, Ross Stevens, Global Negotiations, Information Project, New York, 1982, page 42.
- 5 *Image and Reality*, UN/DPI, 1983, page 10.

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