

No one is deceived by the semblance of constitutionalism provided by this parliamentary majority. The simple fact is that the communists, aware that they were losing ground and afraid of the scheduled election, have taken over by a coup d'etat and are now firmly in power with control of all the important ministries.

All the grim mechanism of the totalitarian state is now being brought into play in Czechoslovakia - arrests of political opponents, prostitution of justice, control of the press, and intimidation of all non-communists. Wholesale purges of civil servants, editors, teachers, managers, and all persons of influence or responsibility are being carried out by "action committees" set up in every plant, office, government department, and other organization. An "election" will no doubt take place as scheduled, and it may safely be assumed that the communist party will roll up an eminently satisfactory majority, but nobody in the Western world will be in the least impressed.

Of course, there are other clouds as well on the international horizon. In Italy the communists are staging a ruthless, determined and skilful fight for power. I mentioned also, a few moments ago, Indonesia, the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, the Palestine situation, the setting up of a national government in Korea. Not all of these problems are the result of the same ideological warfare: but they are all affected by it and to a certain degree overshadowed by it.

On the other hand, there are, however, signs of promising and effective democratic counter-action.

The threat to us all of this insidious spread of communism has been recognized. We are all seeing the light. Not a light like the candle which attracts the moth, but the light that serves to warn of impending danger. Our own Prime Minister had this to say about it some two months ago :

"... Communism is no less a tyranny than nazi-ism. It aims at world conquest. It hopes to effect its purpose by force... So long as communism remains as a menace to the free world, it is vital to the defence of freedom to maintain a preponderance of military strength on the side of freedom, and to secure that degree of unity among the nations which will ensure that they cannot be defeated and destroyed one by one."

Six months ago, at the United Nations General Assembly, I ventured to assert that new international political institutions might be required. I stated that it was not necessary to contemplate the break-up of the United Nations or the secession from it of the Soviet group in order to form a stronger security system within the United Nations. I pointed out that without sacrificing the universality of the United Nations, it was possible for the free nations of the world to form their own Union of the Free World for collective self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations; that such a union could be created within the United Nations by those free states which are willing to accept more specific and more onerous obligations than those contained in the Charter in return for greater national security than the United Nations can now give its members.