

were such as to demand increased study. At the Ministerial Meeting of the Council in May a Committee of Three Foreign Ministers--those of Italy, Norway, and Canada--was appointed to "advise the Council on ways and means to improve and extend NATO co-operation in non-military fields and to develop greater unity within the Atlantic Community." The Report of the Committee, which was published in December, examines political co-operation, economic co-operation, cultural co-operation, co-operation in the information field, and the organization of NATO as applied to its non-military aspects. This Report was approved by the Council at its December meeting.

#### TEST FOR ASSEMBLY

The United Nations, increasingly representative through the addition of new members, became in 1956 more than ever the forum for discussion and negotiation of problems; in particular it was seized of the critical situations that arose in Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the late months of the year. This latter problem is proving to be one of critical importance as a test of the value of the Assembly in the field of peace preservation.

One of the main factors influencing international affairs in the postwar years has been the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. During the early months of 1956 there were indications that that policy was departing in some respects from the rigidities of the Stalinist era. Western governments were under no delusion as to the continuation of the threat to the security of the non-communist world; nor, in particular, did they interpret the modifications in Soviet policy as detracting from the necessity of NATO as a protection against any possible Soviet military aggression. There were, however, some signs of a desire amongst the Soviet leaders to raise the iron curtain. Through the gap visitors passed more freely than in the past between the Soviet Union and Western countries. Cautious hopes arose that the Soviet Union, influenced not least by the appalling prospect of nuclear war, would develop a new interest in meaningful negotiations with non-communist states.

Such budding hopes as may have been briefly cherished were, ironically, frozen by the brutal termination of what had seemed to be a more liberal attitude toward the states in Eastern Europe that were under Russian domination. Partly as a necessary corollary of some degree of reconciliation with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Government had given promise of loosening the straitjacket of Moscow control. The response in Eastern European states demonstrated the desire, which had been known to exist, for return toward personal and national freedom. Poland did achieve some success in moving toward these ends, but the later Hungarian attempts to go further by withdrawing

from the Warsaw Treaty and planning for free elections went beyond the boundaries permitted to a satellite state, so on November 4 the Soviet Army intervened to crush what had developed into a revolution of national liberation. An attempt to have the Security Council deal with the Hungarian question was blocked by a Soviet veto. However, this was in turn overcome by transferring the question to the General Assembly, following the pattern followed a few days earlier in the similar situation that had developed in connection with the Middle Eastern item.

#### "UNITING FOR PEACE" RESOLUTION

An emergency session of the General Assembly had already been called because of the inability of the Security Council to deal with the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East in the face of vetoes by permanent members. For the first time the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution of 1950 was invoked, allowing the Assembly to be convened and to consider the critical situation that had arisen. Thus, throughout November and December the Assembly, first in special and then in regular session, devoted a great deal of time to these matters. On the Middle East rapid action was taken. Arrangements were made for a cease-fire, withdrawal of foreign forces from Egyptian territory, the establishment of a United Nations Emergency Force, and the clearance of the Suez Canal. No comparable progress was made in respect of the situation in Hungary. The efforts of the General Assembly to send observers to Hungary to examine the position at first hand were frustrated by the refusal of the Soviet Government and the Hungarian Government to allow either the Secretary-General or his representatives to make such an investigation. Similarly the Soviet Government brusquely ignored requests that its troops should be withdrawn from Hungarian territory. The Assembly had, perforce, to restrict its activities to debate in which the situation, in so far as it was known, was described before the world in all its grim tragedy. For Canada, as for other individual countries, it remained during 1956 only to assist the political refugees who daily streamed into Austria, both by public and private financial aid and by accepting a share of them as immigrants.

Thus, as the year drew toward its end, the two situations most threatening to peace had--with a host of other complicated problems--been brought before the organization set up, above all, to preserve peace. That the United Nations was only partly successful does not remove the significance of what it did accomplish. In terms of the hopes and ideals of 1945, neither the limited degree of success nor the means by which it was achieved would have been expected; but in terms of the disappointments in subsequent years the record of the United Nations in 1956 gives some cause for encouragement.