

on the agenda of the United Nations Economic Conference in 1964 of an item ensuring a thorough examination of the pressing problem created by a chronic and growing shortage of international exchange.

### **Atmosphere of Conciliation**

The Belgrade conference met under very different circumstances from last year's conference in Brazilia, which took place at the very height of the Cuban crisis. The delegates to this year's meeting were very conscious of the improvement in the international atmosphere, an improvement which had already made possible the conclusion of the Moscow agreement on nuclear testing. With few exceptions, the delegates tried to avoid polemics and to concentrate on areas where agreement was possible. This does not mean that they tried to gloss over differences, but that they tried to convince rather than condemn. For instance, one theme that was apparent throughout the course of the conference was the emphasis placed by Communist delegates on the functional nature of their national assemblies; they tried to convince the conference of the advantages of their system in ensuring that specially-qualified persons would be the representatives of the people. On the other hand, Western representatives illustrated in everything they said and did that, although responsible and representative government might take a different form in every traditional democracy of the Western type, all such democracies had one thing in common — the national assembly or parliament was the focal point of the state, where the representatives of any substantial body of opinion met to hammer out and chart the course that state should follow. Western representatives emphasized in this way the enduring value of freedom and the necessity of democratic responsibility if the rights of individual persons and groups were to be adequately protected.

The fact that the conference met in Belgrade undoubtedly helped to promote this atmosphere of conciliation. From an ideological, political and economic point of view, Yugoslavia occupies a unique position in world affairs, affording some point of contact with every delegation. The Communist delegations were conscious of the much closer relations existing between Yugoslavia and the Warsaw Pact countries, even though Yugoslavia maintained its independence of the Warsaw Pact. Though Yugoslavia had also made clear its right to find its own road to Communism, the delegations from other Communist countries could appreciate the similarities even if they privately deplored — or envied — the differences. On the other hand, Western delegations found a special interest in this opportunity to meet in a Communist country and to understand better how such a system works. This was particularly true since they met in a Communist country which maintained friendly ties with the West and had extensive economic relations with it. During the years of its alienation from the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia had developed particularly cordial political and economic relations with the neutral states of Africa, Asia and South America. These states were, therefore, very well represented at Belgrade — Algeria, Cameroun, Senegal, Sierra Leone and