

Africa. At the last session of the Assembly the situation in the Middle East also became a major concern of the majority partly because of the new wealth and prestige of the Arab members. The question I wish to raise is whether the majority has made the best use of its influence at the United Nations to bring these problems closer to solution.

At its Sixth Special Session in April 1974 the General Assembly approved resolutions prescribing a new international economic order and a programme of action in its support, despite reservations by a majority of industrialized countries, including Canada. The point I wish to emphasize is that these resolutions were not the result of negotiation between the various states involved. They represent essentially the views of the majority. The same tactic was used at the last regular session of the Assembly to limit Israel's right of reply in the debate on Palestine and to reject South Africa's credentials, thus achieving its de facto suspension from the Assembly although not from the United Nations itself. Suspension is subject to the veto in the Security Council and this was exercised by the three Western permanent members. In addition, UNESCO has taken decisions excluding Israel from its European regional group and terminating UNESCO assistance to Israel.

The upshot of these various decisions, quite apart from the consequences for the parties involved, is in our view to undermine the credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the minority group of states, mostly from the West, who opposed them. One might conclude that in addition to a new economic order the majority of members are hoping to establish a new political order based on their ability to interpret the rules of procedure and even the Charter itself as they wish. The minority group includes those member countries which provide by far the greatest share of the United Nations' budget, as well as most of the money for the United Nations' development assistance programmes. If they were to become convinced that the organization was no longer serving legitimate purposes the consequences could be serious.