

to be placed on the United Nations Assembly? Or is it, on the contrary, to be placed squarely on Russia, where it belongs?

To attack the United Nations as an institution for failing to save Hungary from Russia is misleading and perhaps unfair. The attack is based to some extent on the erroneous impression that the African-Asian group refused to condemn Soviet action in Hungary after having denounced the British and French Governments over Egypt. It is true that some members of this group were slow to recognize the brutal nature of Soviet aggression and inclined to suspect a deliberate effort to divert their attention from Egypt. When it was clear to them, however, what was happening, the great majority of them strongly denounced Soviet action, and only the "hard-core Arabs" abstained from the condemnation which was voted.

The reason the United Nations did not save Hungary was that it could not; not that it would not. The fault lies not in the Organization as such, but in the hard facts of Soviet policy and the cold war, with peace balanced precariously on the edge of the atomic deterrent.

It would be rash, and might be fatal, if we tried on all occasions to take UN enforcement action in order to see that justice is always done without any regard to the consequences; or without, to be perfectly frank, any regard to the big blunt fact of the Red Army. We certainly must not become the prisoners of our fears, for if we do our diplomacy is doomed, and the future would be grim indeed. But neither must we indulge in threats and gestures which may provide an easy escape for our emotions, but cannot be followed up by effective action. In the case of Hungary, for instance, if we had intervened through the United Nations by force, the first victims would have been the Hungarians themselves, and the rest of the world might have followed into the abyss.

The world as it exists in reality does not cease to be the same world when it is reflected in the mirror of the United Nations. If the picture it reflects is a sombre one, attacking the mirror does not help much. The United Nations did not create the picture we see today. It did not create the cold war, or anti-colonialism or Colonel Nasser. It is idle to blame it for these things.

If we want to solve our difficulties, we have to go to the roots of the problems themselves, and we do nothing to advance this process; indeed we hinder it by seeking to weaken or pull down the United Nations.

I admit - and I deplore the necessity for the admission - that the United Nations as an institution could not drive the Russians out of Hungary by force, and it could not have persuaded any of its members to do so on their own. However, it did what it could. It gave the U.S.S.R. an opportunity to reach a negotiated settlement and offered its good offices for that purpose.