

sociate themselves from specific activities and on that ground refuse to bear their share of expenses. This was also the opinion of the International Court to which the General Assembly referred the matter in 1961, and which ruled that the expenses of operations in the Congo and on the Egypt-Israel border were "expenses of the organisation" under Article 17 (2) of the Charter and so all members were obliged to bear them as apportioned by the General Assembly. The Soviet stand that only the Security Council can lay down the procedure for financing peace-keeping operations is legalistic and does not evoke much sympathy even among the non-aligned members who have every reason to welcome the shift of the centre of authority in the UN from the Security Council to the General Assembly.

It has been suggested as a compromise solution that a special fund should be set up into which all peace-keeping dues outstanding at present should be paid. This suggestion, put forward as a face-saver for the Soviet Union, can be carried further. The UN should have a general fund to finance its peace-keeping activities to which all members would contribute. The Secretary-General would draw on this fund to finance actions sanctioned by the General Assembly or the Security Council. This would put an end to the vexations of assessing and apportioning the costs of every operation separately and prevent the type of ludicrous situation which developed during the recent crisis in Cyprus when before the UN could take any action it had to go about with the begging bowl for *ad hoc* voluntary contributions. A permanent consolidated fund to which all members would make annual contributions to finance all of UN's peace-keeping activities would carry the principle of collective responsibility to its logical—and idealistic—conclusion.

The sad fact, however, is that in the UN as it is at present constituted and as it works, it is impossible to give practical shape to collective responsibility through some proposal such as the one mentioned above. Collective responsibility presupposes roughly equal weight and voice to all members in formulating the organisation's decisions and directing their execution. There can be no room for privilege, either formal or informal. Unfortunately, it is privilege which still constitutes the basis of the UN, the vast expansion

of membership notwithstanding. Ten years ago the United States could conduct a war to preserve American interests in Korea under the UN flag; more recently, she could still exercise enough control over UN operations in the Congo to use them to set up a pro-American Government in the country. As long as it continues to be possible to subvert the UN for national purposes, crises such as the present one will recur and it will be meaningless to harp on collective responsibility to condemn this country or that.

But can this be otherwise, given the vast disparities in economic and political power among members and their unequal share in UN finances? Ultimately, he who pays the piper will call the tune. Equality, though the ideal, may never be achieved. But there still remains much scope for action to reduce overbearing influence and privilege, formal and informal, which is both practical and consistent with differences in economic and political power of members. The changes which have already taken place in recent years is proof of this. (Quite clearly, U Thant does not view the role and functions of the Secretary-General in the same light as Trygve Lie did). These changes, however, have been just enough to underscore the implications of collective responsibility but not enough to make it a fact yet.

An Agricultural Commission?

THE suggestion was made on last Monday by B R Sen, the Food and Agriculture Organisation's Director-General that a high level agricultural commission should be set up in India to supplement the work of the Planning Commission, the Ministries of Food and Agriculture and Community Development and Co-operation. The recommended duties of the proposed commission are divided into three parts which can be roughly summarised thus: first, an analysis of our food requirements up to the year 2000; second, an assessment of the effectiveness of the present measures for agricultural development; and third, the role of agriculture in India's economic development.

Do we need such a commission? That there is need for a major breakthrough in our agriculture is evident to everybody. But do we require for that purpose greater fact-gathering or, rather, better utilisation of the facts already known as well as more vigorous implementation of the programmes

already formulated? Of course, it would be rash to assume that we already knew all the relevant facts about agriculture or that there is no need for research to discover newer measures for changing the character of agriculture. But the point is that the measures which have already been tried have *not* been proved ineffective; only their implementation has been half-hearted, sluggish and unimaginative and so no positive results have been produced.

We all know that the following measures are full of promise: increased use of fertilisers and pesticides by farmers; full utilisation of the newly-expanded irrigation facilities; price support for the major crops; and provision of cheap rural credit. Indeed Sen himself recommends some of these measures for improving agricultural performance. He has commented on the failure of the fertiliser industry, both in the public and private sectors, to keep to the time schedules laid down in the Third Plan.

What has been lacking is vigorous implementation of programmes which have been discussed, commented upon (by native as well as foreign experts) and approved. A number of observers have said that in spite of the wide awareness shown in spoken words of the basic importance of agriculture, the Ministries of Agriculture, both at Centre and in the States, enjoy little influence, and the members of the agricultural administration at the district and village levels display insufficient enthusiasm for the programmes which they have to implement. Something is needed to perk up our agricultural administration.

But Sen is apparently suggesting just another more-or-less advisory commission for agriculture. It may be argued that we need such a commission as well as more vigorous implementation. But for one thing such a commission may make the implementation of policies more sluggish because, by adding one more authority concerned with agriculture, it is likely to strengthen the disagreements and the lack of decisiveness at the top which are partly responsible for poor implementation. For another, at a time when the real need is for better implementation of known remedies, the appointment of such a commission will be as distractionist a measure as the appointment of a horde of other committees and panels to regurgitate policies and remedies which have already

been known for years. At his press conference, Sen himself mentioned that the "new" policy of the government to build up buffer stocks of foodgrains of about 5 to 6 million tons had been recommended by FAO way back in 1957.

More to the point than an advisory agricultural commission is a high-powered watchdog committee to review continually the implementation of agricultural programmes, and with the power to issue directives to agricultural ministries. Such a committee is bound to find its own ways of obtaining whatever new data and proposals it needs.

Civil Rights : Next Move

A correspondent writes:

FOR more than three months, the most important social movement in the United States has been dormant, concentrating its energies on defeating Goldwater's bid for the Presidency. Now that the Republicans have suffered a major setback, due in part to the Negro vote, the civil rights movement in America is preparing to launch a major campaign aimed at breaking the back of racial segregation. The Negro leaders and their white allies, led by Nobel prize winner, Rev Martin Luther King, Jr, are planning an assault on Southern intransigence and the remaining vestiges of racial segregation in the northern cities.

But despite impressive gains in recent years in the field of race relations, and the dramatic success of last year's Washington Civil Rights March which brought out 285,000 people in a massive demonstration, the civil rights movement faces major problems. According to a recent study by the University of Chicago's population research committee, racial segregation has actually increased during the past ten years, although certain key areas have seen improvement. The "white backlash", although unsuccessful at the polls, still has the ability to generate discontent among the white middle classes, who often feel themselves threatened by the Negro movement. But perhaps the most important problem is within the civil rights movement itself. A crisis in leadership has been shaping up for some months, and although Rev King's Nobel Prize will help him to remain at the helm of the movement, he is faced with substantial local opposition from younger, more militant elements.

In the movement, the doctrine of non-violence as a primary tactical

weapon has come under strong attack. The summer riots in New York, Rochester, and other places, were used by those elements in the Negro community demanding more militant direct action. They are prepared to carry on the fight for equal rights by force, if necessary. The established leadership is also threatened by such groups as the Student non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), a southern-based militant Negro youth movement which seeks to greatly intensify the struggle, although through non-violent means.

Furthermore, the Negro masses in the North have become disillusioned with the slow progress of equality, and have either turned to the more militant sects, such as the anti-white Black Muslim organisation (which claims 100,000 members) or have left the movement altogether. It will be a major task to win these elements back to the mainstream of the civil rights movement. Indeed, upon the success of this task of involving the Negro masses depends the peace of America's major urban areas. For if resentment among urban Negroes goes unchecked and unguided, riots and aimless looting is the inevitable result.

In the past, the civil rights movement has aimed at "token" goals. It has succeeded in breaking down segregation in restaurants, for instance, but this is not a key factor in the lives of the Negroes. If the movement is to hold on to its present gains and move forward, it must now concentrate on the basic elements of racial segregation which remain essentially unaltered—housing and employment. The few efforts to improve the Negro's employment position have been unsuccessful thus far, and the rate of unemployment among Negroes is still twice that of the general population. Housing, even in the Northern urban areas, still has an essentially segregated pattern.

The Negro leadership, led by Dr King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, CORE, and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, is now planning an assault on these bastions of segregation in America. Upon the success of this drive will depend the civil rights movement as well as the progress of democratic institutions in the country. In the coming months, cities and towns in north and south can expect major civil rights activity, culminating in massive direct action campaigns and economic boycotts.

Russian Ships Are Coming?

INTERNATIONAL merchant shipping, like the petroleum trade, has been living in uneasy anticipation of a Soviet 'invasion'. To be sure, the Soviet fleet is not yet of such a size as to threaten entrenched ship-owners and, besides, its almost sole concern has been with the fast-growing trade of the Soviet Union. But of late Soviet ships have certainly not been averse to picking up other cargo. Addressing a press conference in Bombay on Tuesday, an official of the Soviet ship-chartering organisation threw the suggestion that Indian exporters and importers should use Soviet ships outside the Indo-Soviet trade. Soviet ships, he said, could offer better services and more favourable terms than the existing lines.

There was, of course, no suggestion of a regular Soviet cargo service from India and so it is perhaps premature to speculate on the prospective relation between Soviet ships and the Conferences controlling the liner trade from India. But this issue has already been raised in other parts of the world. There have been reports, for instance, that the Russians intend to put one of their new passenger liners on the trans-Atlantic run, plying between Leningrad and Montreal. Will the Russians, who do not recognise any rate-fixing arrangements, seek to undercut conference rates on this run? Ordinarily they have everything to gain from such a policy and so much would depend on the pressures that are brought to bear on them by the Governments of the countries whose ship-owners stand in danger of being undercut. The extent of such pressure would depend, in turn, on the tonnage that the Russians put into operation. Should it rise to appreciable proportions then the pressure to agree to some rate-fixing arrangement may become difficult to resist. Clearly, the Russians do not ignore this possibility and have, therefore, taken care not to give the impression of being entirely opposed to the idea of shipping conferences.

Soviet shipping has had some impact on freight rates in another respect. Under the system of rate fixing in the Indo-Soviet trade, the shipowner does not pay for cargo handling at either end of the ship's run. This basis for rate fixing has found favour with other ship-owners in the Indian trade, but has failed to be adopted outside the Indo-Soviet trade—in spite of a number of initiatives, including one recently by India—because of opposition from port authorities and forwarding agents.