

tionals leave the country with their husbands; the other, prompted by the trials of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary and the 15 Protestant pastors in Bulgaria, "most urgently" drawing the attention of these two countries to their obligations under the peace treaties.

Except for the fiasco over the Italian colonies, the disappointments of the past session came chiefly from the Assembly's bad habit of saying something innocuous rather than saying nothing at all. One such example was the convention on press freedom, which, as we have already noted, is largely empty of practical effect because of its attempt to compromise what could not be compromised. The besetting sin of this U. N. Assembly was not its oratory or its propaganda, although in past years much of the speech-making has been so bitter and intemperate that it has done actual harm. The real weakness, which can become fatal over the years, is a willingness to water down a resolution for the sake of harmony until it becomes mere verbiage. The next task for the Assembly is to strengthen its backbone.

Useful Assembly

The Assembly has just given a few faint signs of how well the United Nations might function if there were a true relaxation of tension between Russia and the West. At the Paris session last fall the wrangles were so unending, and the agenda so overloaded, that a second part of the session was needed to dispose of unfinished business. When the delegates resumed at Lake Success last month few of them could have expected anything better than another weary bout of oratory. The result, instead, was fair accomplishment. The chief reason was, of course, the lifting of the Berlin blockade, and the fact that the negotiations with Russia had taken place easily and naturally among the U. N. delegates and in the setting of the U. N. headquarters. Looking back on it one can see now that it was a wise choice on Mr. Acheson's part to let Dr. Jessup make the first inquiry through Mr. Malik at Lake Success rather than through the usual diplomatic channels. The outcome was a tonic to the U. N. and a boost to its prestige.

For a body that is often derided as a mere debating society, the Assembly made a respectable record, even though it failed inexcusably to settle the long-vexed problem of the Italian colonies. The Assembly admitted Israel to membership, and by this act of faith helped to wipe out the effects of past indecision and double-dealing. It called for a round-table conference on the treatment of Indians in South Africa, and it set up a special committee to plan a small United Nations guard force to accompany U. N. missions into troubled areas. If the delegates failed to rescind the foolish ban on ambassadors to Franco Spain, it was not for want of trying. The ban remains in force because too many European governments feared that its removal might connote approval of a detested regime. The delegates also expressed the collective conscience of the world by at least two resolutions: one condemning the Soviet Union for not letting the Russian wives of foreign na-