

fact that member states are deeply concerned about the effect produced by their arguments; though it may also be encouraged by the immature and mistaken assumption that words must be violent to be effective. There would, I think, be more cause to worry about the United Nations if the debates ever generated into an elaborate exchange of meaningless courtesies which avoided any realistic reference to outstanding issues and disputes. Then, indeed, futility would have been reached. Neither extreme of violence or indifference is, however, necessary. It should be possible in every circumstance of United Nations discussion to combine courtesy and conviction.

In free democratic states, this world public opinion which is manifesting itself in so many new ways, operates through political parties. The United Nations Assembly, however, does not of course work in this way. Yet we hear a good deal about "blocs," which some feel to be the international counterpart of domestic parties and groups. There are such "blocs", but they vary greatly in their degree of internal consistency, and their membership changes on particular issues. There are -- so to speak -- chips continually falling off the old blocs. One newspaper the other day described these main blocs as the Soviet, the Latin American, the NATO, the Arab-Asian, and even indicated with a quite remarkable degree of precision, if not of accuracy, just exactly how many votes each bloc "controlled." In some ways this kind of speculation is of a similar order to the informed guess-work that is now going on in an unnamed country about the prospects of two political parties, and perhaps with about the same degree of accuracy. The point is, however, that "blocs" -- or the regional groupings which take shape in our world Organization, and have their roots in geography and history -- would exist even if the United Nations did not. The United Nations has brought these groups together and given greater publicity to them -- but has not created them. In any event we can agree that the United Nations gives us at least the chance of getting to know better the folks in the next "bloc."

Public opinion on specific United Nations issues will often differ greatly from country to country, because the United Nations often has to deal with differences and disputes between states and groups of states.

That is its business -- difference and debate. In every dispute there are at least two sides -- I often wish there were only two! -- and where national interests and opinions are involved, there will be strong feelings on both sides. The United Nations has to recognize this. It is not a supra-national organization which can control these feelings by law, and by force if the law is broken. It is an association of sovereign states joined together for common purposes. Therefore, each national representative has a responsibility to his own government (which, in turn, must heed its own public opinion). In disputes between governments, therefore, whatever action the United Nations takes is likely in greater or less degree to disappoint (or even infuriate) one of the protagonists. This has been true of some of the issues with which the United Nations has dealt in the past. It will certainly be true of some of the issues now before us at this seventh session. That has already become apparent.

There is, however, another -- and more encouraging -- sense in which the United Nations can be said to rest upon public opinion. In this other sense, public opinion