

vocabulary used to describe and analyse man's political actions is taken from fields whose subject matter, far from being warm and human, is cold and inanimate. If politicians are praised or blamed, as they often are, more for being architects of social institutions than for anything else, they may come to regard the preparation of blueprints as their most important function. We should be skeptical of such blueprints. The work of the politician or diplomat or social scientist should be more like that of a gardener than a draftsman; for he is dealing with living things, and at best is only preparing the ground for their growth.

As Professor Butterfield has recently remarked:

"The makers of blueprints are sometimes like the child who, on seeing the sunset, said: 'Do it again Daddy,' or the child, who thought that it was the gardener who actually made things grow. We seek too great a sovereignty over our history. It is wiser to imagine ourselves as rather preparing the ground where many of the most important things in life will grow of themselves."

Among other things, the gardener knows the value of patience, the absence of which is so dangerous in international politics. Patience is not weakness, and should not be lost if in today's difficult and complex diplomatic problems we are unable to achieve spectacular victories, or sudden, and clear-cut solutions; the kind for which we have a passion because decisiveness has been the keystone of so much material advance on this continent. To the extent that this need for patience is inadequately understood, public opinion in democracies may tend to make self-defeating demands on its own political servants. Or even worse, force them into rash and unwise actions.

Moreover, it is worth considering whether sensational diplomatic victories are always desirable, even when they are possible. Serious, constructive diplomacy should always have its eye on long-term results. Diplomatic conversations are often likely to be more permanently successful when designed to convince the other government rather than to satisfy the immediate emotions of the spokesman's own people. In a democracy, this demands not only courage on the part of public men, but maturity and generous understanding on the part of public opinion.

Two weeks ago I noticed in an editorial, aptly entitled "Brickbat Corner" in the London Economist, the following sentence:

"Independent journalism serves no useful purpose unless editors are prepared to use their immunity from popular wrath to say things that would lose millions of votes if said by politicians or start a strike if uttered by the heads of a corporation."