

tion was seldom sought; and only exceptionally was any attempt made at compromise or mediation. Emotion often blinded reasonable deliberation. Relatively few issues in any of the committees were free of either the "cold war" conflict between the Soviet bloc and the Western powers, or the friction between the "haves" and the "have nots", or a combination of both.

3. The session was disturbing, not only because it was disagreeable but also because of the implications it might carry for the future of the United Nations. There seemed to be a trend in the direction of more rigid blocs and groupings within the Assembly. This was accompanied by an increase in the relative strength and influence of the Soviet bloc and the anti-colonialist countries of the African-Asian group at the expense of the Western Powers, who were consequently pushed into more inflexible positions than they might otherwise have taken and who appeared at times to be isolated and out of sympathy with a majority of the Assembly. At the same time the mediating group of middle and small powers that had played a useful "fire brigade" role at previous sessions was no longer effective. The result was a feeling of frustration and concern on the part of those member countries to whom we have customarily looked for the most responsible behaviour, but who no longer seem to wield the same influence over developments in the United Nations.

4. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the thirteenth session was for the most part unproductive. Its positive achievements, particularly in the political field, were meagre. It was apparent moreover that the powers principally concerned with some of the more important political issues of the day preferred direct channels rather than the United Nations to seek settlement of these issues. This may not have been bad in itself, but it enhanced the impression of ineffectiveness that the session created. Although the Assembly did not actually deal with the Far East or the Middle East situations, it seems fair to say that the views expressed by speakers in the general debate and the informal consultations in the corridors had the effect of discouraging hasty or violent action in those areas.

5. The most notable feature of the disarmament debate was the failure of both the Western Powers and the Russians to gain the support of the uncommitted. All efforts failed to achieve a unanimous resolution and thereby give some positive encouragement to the Geneva negotiations, but the general support which most speakers gave to the permanent cessation of nuclear tests may have had an influence on Western policy at Geneva. The only concrete result in the Assembly was the establishment of a disarmament commission of the whole, which on the face of it appears to put disarmament back into the framework of the United Nations but in practice may further divorce the United Nations from the active work of negotiation on this subject among the few powers principally concerned.

6. On the outer space item too, the accomplishment was more apparent than real. The debate did establish the interest of the United Nations in this new field and produced an *ad hoc* committee to investigate future United Nations activities in the peaceful uses of outer space. Unfortunately the prospects for progress were spoiled by the failure to achieve agreement between the USSR and the Western Powers on the composition of the committee and by the consequent Soviet boycott of the committee.

7. No progress at all was made in the direction of even the most modest preparations for a United Nations standby force, in spite of a very useful study of the problem that was tabled by the Secretary-General. Efforts to build on the Secretary-General's study were unsuccessful against a combination of flat opposition on the part of the USSR, confusion and suspicion of Western motives on the part of the African-Asian delegations, and reluctance to foot the bill on the part of the Latin Americans.