

It was certainly never intended that it should be used -- as it has been used -- quite irresponsibly and selfishly to prevent the operation of machinery for the settlement of disputes and the removal of causes of trouble. If we were too optimistic at San Francisco -- though I assure you this optimism was by no means universal, especially among the Middle Powers -- it was because we felt that the links of friendship and cooperation forged between the Great Powers in the heat of a common struggle for survival against Fascist forces of evil, might remain, if not unimpaired, at least unbroken, after victory was won. That hope has been bitterly disappointed. Those links have been snapped, and one by one discarded. History has once again shown the senseless and selfish folly of man, in throwing aside after a war the methods and the spirit of international compromise and cooperation which alone had made possible his victory.

In 1948 there is little left, between the two great groups into which the world is forming, of that confidence, cooperation and respect which can alone make the present United Nations a workable instrument for establishing peace and security. We might as well face that fact. One consequence of it is that the veto power in the Security Council has been -- and indeed in this situation is bound to be -- used for the protection of selfish national interests by those who are aggressive or suspicious or do not desire international cooperation except on their own terms. The veto, therefore, which has been justified as necessary to preserve the unanimity of the Great Powers by ensuring that they all act together, merely highlights their disunity. Its repeated use -- and it has been used by one state twenty-two times -- simply underlines the weakness of the Security Council as the instrument for establishing security. It reduces action in that body -- on controversial political issues -- to the lowest common denominator of inaction. Unity is, finally, achieved, but on the basis of zero; on the basis of no runs, no hits and no errors; that is, no errors of commission, only lost chances.

We should not, however, mistake the symptom for the disease. The system is the veto-scarred record of the Security Council of the United Nations. The disease is the division of one cooperating world into two opposing worlds.

The futilities and frustrations which sometimes occur in the meetings of the United Nations, and more particularly the Security Council, have been the consequence and not the cause of this division.

So we find that instead of a United Nations based on the idea and the principles of a cooperative world community, we have a United Nations in which too many of the members are concerned primarily with the protection of their own exclusive national interests. The emphasis is placed on individual sovereignty instead of collective responsibility; on national defence, instead of collective security. Instead of the United Nations acting as a forum for the expression of the conscience of mankind, it is becoming a platform for the aggressive propagation of ideological passions and reactionary and revolutionary plans. Discussion is debased to the level of vilification. It is, of course, a good thing to have disputes and grievances exposed, and talked out, but only if the exposure is for the purpose of reaching some understanding which will solve the disputes and remove the grievances. I do not suggest that we return to the superficial courtesies and hypocritical concealments of the old diplomacy, where aristocratic gentlemen gracefully bowed low while preparing to stab you in the back. There is something to be said for standing up and calling a spade a spade. There is nothing, however, to be said for shaking your fist and calling it a blankety-blank American or British or Soviet shovel.

Debate designed to inflame is merely the degradation of free discussion, and there has been too much of that at the United Nations