

is developed -- or should develop -- out of the obligations and the responsibilities which fall upon all members of the United Nations towards each other and towards the United Nations itself, and to the principles of the Charter. It is in this sense that public opinion should underlie all our work. It is this which leads the parties to a dispute to bring that dispute to the United Nations, and which impels all member states to bring their judgment -- which should be an objective and a responsible judgment -- to bear on its settlement. In doing so, the members of the United Nations are bound to use to the full the processes of discussion, conciliation, compromise and peaceful settlement. We are never bound to any particular solution for a particular problem. But we are all bound to advocate, support and follow peaceful means and the principles of the Charter in the consideration of any problem which faces us.

The unswerving acceptance of this by all peoples would provide an unshakeable foundation of public opinion on which our Organization could securely rest. In free countries -- and with the aid of societies such as yours -- that public opinion can be established. It responds to our highest hopes. It springs from many sources deep in the experience of human beings throughout the world. It listens to many propagandas, most of them contradictory, and keeps steady in the tornado of contending claims. It seeks through the clash and conflict of discussion and debate to separate what is true from what is false. It learns by experience. It needs to be empirical, for the truth is often between two extremes. Above all, it must have freedom; for its very existence, and criticism is of its essence. It is rooted in faith, in the value of free speech and free thought; in the fundamental principle of free decision, freely reached. If that faith is betrayed and destroyed in our countries or in our U.N. discussions, the United Nations will disappear. If, on the other hand, it is weakened by exploitation or abuse, by using the United Nations rashly and provocatively in the name of free discussion, the United Nations may also disappear.

I should like here to pay my tribute to the band of newspapermen and broadcasters from all parts of the world who have worked day in and day out for many years to inform themselves and to tell the story to others of the United Nations. I know they have the reputation for being a pretty hardboiled group; but I know too that underneath their sometimes weary and disillusioned exteriors, there is a deep understanding of what this great experiment is all about, and a devotion to the United Nations cause which is very genuine and should not go unmentioned.

There are other supporters of the United Nations who are more than merely fair weather friends, and for whom we should be grateful. They include the members of your Association, who have never lost faith and hope, or flagged in good endeavour.

In some quarters it has become fashionable to belittle the United Nations and even to consider it a failure. This defeatist attitude results I think from an unduly pessimistic interpretation of developments in and out of the United Nations and is unwarranted. The United Nations remains today of transcendent value as the only near-universal centre for international cooperation in fields of common international concern. In this day and age of interdependence, if the United Nations did not exist, we should have to create it anew. It is, as I have already said, a world platform where grievances, real or imagined, can be voiced and heard.