

Staff members were engaged under three different types of contracts: temporary-indefinite contracts, fixed-term contracts and permanent contracts. The intention was that the bulk of the staff should eventually be in permanent status. Because of the circumstances under which the initial staff had been recruited, however, and because due attention had to be paid, in the granting of permanencies, to the "principle of geographical distribution" cited above, only about one third of the staff had been granted permanent status by 1951. By far the greater part of the Secretariat was still in temporary-indefinite status, and many staff members had been in that status for a long period of time.

Meanwhile, on November 24, 1949, a United Nations Administrative Tribunal had been set up by the General Assembly, to hear cases of alleged non-observance of contracts of employment with the United Nations.

It had been intended that permanent staff regulations should be considered and adopted at the fifth session of the General Assembly in 1950. Because of the pressure of more urgent problems, the subject had to be deferred until the sixth session. In the intervening months a number of questions relating to the termination of staff contracts received widespread attention. In the late summer of 1951, the Administrative Tribunal had before it appeals of a number of staff members whose contracts had been terminated by the Secretary-General. The appeals were supported by the United Nations Staff Association and opposed by the Secretary-General. The judgments of the Administrative Tribunal contained rulings which — contrary to the position adopted by the Secretary-General — were to the effect that an employee in temporary-indefinite status was entitled to be given reasons for termination of his contract, as an element of "due process" in the bringing of an appeal against termination, and that the holder of a fixed-term contract might appeal the non-renewal of his contract if he could establish that he had been given grounds for expecting renewal.

The fact that large numbers of staff members had still failed to achieve permanency, and the feelings which had been aroused over the cases dealt with by the Administrative Tribunal, led many delegations to fear that debate on the draft permanent staff regulations at the sixth session of the Assembly would be bitter. However, in a statement made to the Assembly's Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee at the opening of debate in January 1952, the Secretary-General was able to give assurances which went a long way towards allaying the fears of staff members and reassuring the members of the Committee. He declared that it was his intention, within the next two years, to go as far as possible towards the goal of a Secretariat which would be 70 to 75 per cent in permanent status, paying due regard to the principle of geographic distribution. This would involve a thorough review of the whole staff, and would inevitably lead to the termination of a considerable number of staff contracts. It was his intention, however, to have staff representation on the body conducting the review, while the Secretariat's own appeals machinery, which includes staff representation, would be available to employees whose contracts were