

At the opening of the tenth session of the General Assembly two extraneous factors helped to shape the attitudes of the majority of delegations. One was the heralded "spirit of Geneva" proceeding from the meeting of Heads of Government in July 1955; the other was the impending meeting of the Foreign Ministers, who were to meet about half-way through the timetable of the tenth session. The first factor stimulated a strong hope that the tenth session would be a true turning-point in the struggle to achieve the aims and purposes of the United Nations Charter; the second provoked a tendency to hold in suspense the Assembly's discussion of the controversial subjects on its agenda. The desire of delegations seemed to be to keep alive the "Geneva spirit" as long as they could, and, in order to do this, delegations were prepared to postpone potentially acrimonious debates until after the Foreign Ministers had had a chance to discuss in detail the directives issued in July by the Heads of Government. Therefore, statements in the opening general debate were embroidered with references to the improved international situation. These speeches were, on the whole, conciliatory in tone and in many cases overly optimistic. An appeal was made to all spokesmen to moderate the advocacy of their causes, and except for some strident notes towards the end of the session, the avoidance of extreme propaganda by spokesmen for the two main camps was noticeable—a significant and welcome change from previous sessions.

Of course this trend was more evident before, rather than after, the Foreign Ministers' meeting in November 1955 at which no agreement was reached by them on the two most important subjects on the agenda of the tenth session—disarmament and the admission of new members. Nevertheless, even after the November meeting, the Assembly did not revert entirely to the old habits of the cold war.

There were grounds for satisfaction among delegations at the end of the tenth session that the General Assembly had been able to produce results of considerable importance on some matters which greatly strengthened the United Nations. In particular, the tenth session had achieved the admission of 16 new members. After a deadlock of nearly ten years, broken only occasionally by the admission of a very few mutually acceptable candidates, the United Nations finally enlarged its membership from 60 to 76 nations, and became, as it was originally intended to be, very largely representative of the entire world. The Canadian Delegation, under the leadership of the Hon. Paul Martin, contributed substantially to this result.

Another significant contribution of the tenth session was the unanimous approval of the resolutions on peaceful uses of atomic energy and on the effects of atomic radiation. The debate on disarmament, however, was disappointingly inconclusive after the hopes raised at the ninth session. After the failure of the Conference of Foreign Ministers in November, the General Assembly passed a resolution on disarmament by a large majority, but there was no great enthusiasm and little sense of achievement or satisfaction since the short-lived unanimity of the ninth session had evaporated and could not be recaptured.

It would be ostrich-like to ignore important points of dissension at the ninth and tenth sessions of the General Assembly. They still exist, even though they may be expressed in slightly muted tones. Differences of opinion on the so-called "colonial problems" facing the United Nations are acute, and controversy on this subject was at times bitter. The honest desire of many nations which have emerged from dependent status to accelerate the process of self-government was as usual exploited by member states which have in their own policies shown little or no respect for the rights of subject peoples. Although