

*Unprecedented
open hostility
in wake of
resolution
equating Zionism
with racism*

In marked contrast to the quiet successes of the session was the fateful and provocative resolution equating Zionism with racism. A short paragraph in Resolution 3379 amending an otherwise respectable and commendable text adopted earlier by consensus in the Economic and Social Council resulted in the Assembly's accepting the view that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination". Resolution 3379 is unlikely to pass quickly into obscurity. Indeed, the storm that followed the introduction of this resolution left the United Nations with an unprecedented amount of open hostility. Polls revealed that, in the United States at least, support for the UN had sunk lower than ever before.

Within the Assembly, although a victory of sorts was won by those antagonistic to Israel, a high price was paid in terms of Third World solidarity. For the voting on this resolution (72 for, 35 against, 32 abstaining and three absent) on November 10 broke the usual unity of the developing countries and revealed a division in the ranks of the so-called "new majority". Canada, with a number of like-minded states, played an active part in attempting (unsuccessfully) to deter the resolution, not only because of its inherent unsoundness but because of obvious danger to the United Nations itself.

A procedural move to defer the question, incidentally, failed by only 12 votes (55 for (Canada), 67 against, 15 abstentions), revealing that many members would have preferred to avoid putting the issue to the test. An analysis of the voting indicates, in fact, that 17 African states abstained or voted against the resolution. Most of the 19 African states voting in favour have substantial Moslem populations.

The reaction in Canada, Western Europe, Scandinavia and certain Commonwealth countries was swift and vigorous. On November 12, the Canadian Parliament unanimously condemned the resolution on a motion of Mr. John Diefenbaker, in the following terms:

"(it) . . . is in the opinion of this House unmerited, untrue and deserving of the unqualified condemnation by this House and by all peoples who believe in freedom and world peace."

While the resolution on Zionism is generally seen as a success for the Arab cause, it was somewhat weaker than the most extreme elements would like to have seen. For the time being at least, Israel's membership in a forum where its vital interests are at stake has been preserved.

*Resolution
condemned
by Canadian
Parliament*

Within the limits of the UN system, the practical impact of the Zionism resolution may be diffused in the long run. More unfortunate is the damage to the credibility of the generally positive thrust of UN activities in the broad area of human rights. Such activities as International Women's Year and the forthcoming Conference on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination are immediately identifiable victims.

Major item

One estimate has it that the thirtieth session spent 30 per cent of its time on questions about the Middle East. For the first time in three years, the Arab states began a general debate on the Middle East situation. An attempt was made to capitalize on the success achieved at the twenty-ninth session, when the Palestine Liberation Organization was recognized, by seeking greater recognition of the rights of Palestinians. Following the appearance in the General Assembly of President Sadat of Egypt and the Sinai disengagement agreement, Resolution 3375 was passed, calling for PLO participation in all efforts to solve the Middle East question. Though Canada agreed that the Palestinians should be represented in peace negotiations affecting their own future, it abstained, indicating that the resolution questioned by implication the right of Israel to exist.

The debate in the Special Political Committee on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees and the presentation of the Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories occasioned further exchanges on the prospects of reconciling Israeli and Palestinian interests (which remain as dim as ever). Although the debate in this committee was moderate compared to past sessions, the coincidence of raids on refugee camps with the establishment of Israeli settlements in lands occupied since 1967 undoubtedly made it increasingly difficult for Israel's friends to support it actively during these discussions.

The mandate of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East was renewed by the Security Council for a 12-month period in a restrained debate that also approved an enlargement of the force required to police the second Sinai disengagement agreement. This was a welcome development for UNEF, since the previous renewals for six-month periods had made long-term planning difficult. Conversely, renewal by the Council of the