

delegation was anxious to see a document so carefully drafted that it would stand up to the strains and stresses of implementation, it was suggested that the Committee should give the convention a first reading only. An opportunity could then be given to the International Law Commission and the Economic and Social Council, as well as to member States, to study the draft in detail. However, the Committee felt that, since the subject of genocide had already been considered by two Assemblies, the Third Assembly should not delay further the adoption of a convention. It therefore proceeded with an article-by-article examination of the *ad hoc* Committee draft.

The *New Zealand* delegation was to some extent influenced by doubts as to whether a formal legal convention, along the lines proposed by the *ad hoc* Committee, was the most appropriate method of handling the grave problem of genocide. It was in some sympathy with the *United Kingdom* Attorney-General when he told the Committee that it was a delusion to suppose that the adoption of a convention of the type proposed, even if generally adhered to, would give people a greater sense of security or would diminish the dangers that at present existed of persecution on racial, religious, or national grounds. Besides, the acts comprising physical genocide were already recognized as crimes punishable by law, and genocide in this sense was simply a new word to describe a particular form of murder. He recognized, however, that the convention would have the advantage of marking more emphatically the detestation with which genocide should be regarded, and suggested that it should state clearly and simply those propositions with which there would be general agreement in the Committee.

This last suggestion accurately defined the attitude taken by the *New Zealand* delegation in the ensuing debates. Support was given to amendments designed to confine the convention within definite limits, and the delegation sought to ensure the inclusion of only generally acceptable principles and the adoption of as effective a document as possible. It also favoured clear and simple drafting, for, as the *New Zealand* representative pointed out in one intervention, the Committee should remember that in most cases it would be necessary for member States to translate the convention into their domestic legislation. In the majority of legal codes, a crime required a precise definition capable of limited interpretation.

Under Article I of the convention the contracting parties confirm that "genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish." The convention then proceeds to define genocide, and, naturally enough, it was this definition which led to most discussion in