



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/36/13, 116, 258, 385 and Add.1, 421, 529, 558, 559, 584, 593, 615)

1. Mr. RYDBECK (Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) said that in 1981 the Agency had experienced serious financial problems which would become even worse in 1982, to the point where it might have to suspend all or some of its activities.

2. There was a political ingredient in both the activities and the problems of the Agency which could not be ignored if the dimensions of the problems were to be understood. In the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, the General Assembly had recognized, in its resolution 212 (III), that the relief of the refugees was "one of the minimum conditions for the success of the efforts of the United Nations to bring peace to that land". Furthermore, in paragraph 11 of its resolution 194 (III), it had resolved "that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible". The following year, in establishing UNRWA by resolution 302 (IV), the General Assembly had recognized that "without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11" of resolution 194 (III), "continued assistance for the relief of the Palestine refugees is necessary ... to further conditions of peace and stability". In all its subsequent resolutions concerning UNRWA, including resolution 35/13 A adopted in 1980, whereby the Agency's mandate had been extended until 30 June 1984, the Assembly had emphasized the need for the implementation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), a goal which it had not been possible so far to achieve. Palestine refugees attached great importance to that paragraph and to the Agency's responsibility for implementing it; that led them to view with suspicion any reductions in the Agency's services, which they saw as an attempt by the international community to relinquish its responsibilities and bring about their integration into the host countries contrary to the commitments made to them. He recalled in that connexion that early attempts by the Assembly to establish works programmes as a means of providing the refugees with a source of income had had to be abandoned because they had been seen as attempts at integration. The education programme which had replaced the proposed works programme was now threatened through a lack of funds, and even its curtailment would have very serious consequences for stability in the area.

3. Thus, decisions taken by the Agency had wide ramifications. In that connexion, there was a problem which he had mentioned in paragraphs 17 to 19 of his report (A/36/13). Since the Agency had no governing body, other than the General Assembly itself, the Commissioner-General had to take decisions within

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(Mr. Rydbeck)

whatever guidelines were provided by the Assembly and the Advisory Commission. In 1981 he had made known that, as he had predicted to the Special Political Committee in 1980, financial constraints might oblige him to close down schools to the extent required to avoid insolvency. In reply, he had been told that the Commissioner-General could not make such basic changes in UNRWA's programmes without the authority of the General Assembly. Yet it seemed clear to him that he was obliged to take the necessary action to assure the Agency's solvency, and the opinion of the Legal Counsel of the United Nations reproduced in annex III to the report supported his position. The Commissioner-General had no choice but to accept that heavy responsibility. However, as he had stated in paragraph 19 of his report, "while there is no doubt about the legal rights and duties of the Commissioner-General to take whatever steps are needed to keep the Agency solvent, there is, on the other hand, a strong political argument in favour of providing the General Assembly with the opportunity to take a stand, if it so wishes, before final decisions are implemented by the Commissioner-General". Since in 1982 he was again likely to face the same difficulties, he would ask the Committee to consider the question and, as far as possible, to give him specific guidance.

4. In 1981, to avoid having to close the schools in Jordan and Syria, and possibly also in Lebanon, at the end of the school year, he had made appeals to all Governments and to intergovernmental bodies in a position to assist. Those appeals had been supported by the Chairman of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, by the Secretary-General and by the Director-General of UNESCO, among others, and there had been a substantial response from many Governments. He would like to express his deep appreciation to all concerned. Nevertheless, by March the response had not been sufficient to keep all the schools open until the end of 1981. He had therefore been obliged to warn the Governments and to prepare notices of dismissal to the education staff affected. The reaction of the Jordanian and Syrian Governments, of the Palestine refugee community and of UNRWA's own locally recruited staff had been vehement. By April additional contributions had been made, and he had been able to decide to take the financial risk involved in keeping the schools open beyond the end of the school year in order to avoid the violence that would certainly have been unleashed by closing them.

5. In September, he had been able to confirm that decision. As indicated in paragraph 18 of the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, in order to keep the schools open it had been necessary to forgo much expenditure on maintenance and replacement, to deny Jordanian staff increases in remuneration, to forgo making provision for staff separation costs and to draw down cash reserves to a minimum. That had left the Agency with a cash balance sufficient to carry it on in 1982 for a little more than one month, as compared with two months in 1981.

6. The Agency estimated a total expenditure in 1982 of \$265 million, of which \$151 million was for education, \$42 million for health and \$61 million for relief. Estimated income was \$185 million, leaving a projected deficit of \$80 million, or

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(Mr. Rydbeck)

\$10 million more than in the preceding year. It would therefore be necessary to make reductions in expenditure at the beginning of 1982, or possibly even before the end of 1981. In 1980 he had informed the Assembly that, if the Agency were faced with the necessity of reducing its health and education programmes, priority would be given to schools in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where there was no Arab Government or administration in a position to assume responsibility for them, and in Lebanon. Fortunately, he had been able to avoid that action. However, the same problems lay ahead for 1982. The option favoured by the host Governments would be to keep all the schools open until funds had been exhausted and then close down all of them. As Commissioner-General, he could not agree to that course, which would mean the end of the Agency. Unless the General Assembly decided otherwise, he would therefore have to follow the same course in 1982 as had been envisaged for 1981.

7. There were two aspects of the situation on which he would like to elaborate. The first was the liability of the Agency to pay termination indemnities to the staff. That was explained in paragraph 238 of his report. The Agency must make provision to have the available cash required to pay termination indemnities if its activities were suspended. By way of illustration, he said that on 30 June 1981 the amount required for indemnities would have been \$53 million for all staff and \$30 million for teachers. Moreover, if savings were to be made by closing down programmes, the closure must take place at least by mid-year because by September the savings on salaries were exceeded by the size of the termination indemnities. The burden of those indemnities bore heavily on the Agency; if the General Assembly could relieve it of them, it would be able to devote its resources entirely to the provision of services to the refugees. The second aspect concerned the timing of reductions in relation to foreseeable income. Of the \$80 million deficit forecast, \$39 million related to the education programme, which was the most important one. He hoped to apply \$5 million of the 1981 cash balances to the 1982 education programme, thus reducing the cash requirement to operate all the schools until the end of the year to \$34 million. That, therefore, was the minimum amount which must be raised over and above the contributions of \$132 million forecast.

8. On the basis of a number of assumptions, the Agency had made the following statistical projections:

(i) If no funds were available, and if all schools were treated equally, they would have to close down at the end of April, with notices being issued to the teachers concerned at the end of March. If the schools in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon were to be kept open until the end of 1982, the schools in Jordan and Syria would have to be closed in December 1981. However, it was already too late to prepare the notices to teachers.

(ii) If an additional \$10 million of income was forthcoming, the Agency would be able to keep all the schools open until the end of the school year in May, with notices being issued in April. In order to ensure that the schools in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon remained open until the end of 1982,

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the schools in Jordan and Syria would have to be closed at the end of March, with notices being issued in February.

(iii) If an additional \$20 million was contributed, the Agency would be able to keep the schools in the three priority fields open until the end of 1982, provided that the schools in Jordan and Syria were closed at the end of May, with notices being issued in April. If the available funds were distributed equally, the schools could remain open until the end of June, but that would mean paying the teachers for one month of vacation.

(iv) If an additional \$30 million was contributed, the only possibility would be to keep all the schools open until the end of June, owing to the problem of the termination indemnities, because the cost of paying such indemnities to the staff in Jordan and Syria would make it impossible to keep the schools in the other three fields open until the end of the year. However, if the Agency were to receive only \$4 million in additional income, it would be able to keep all schools open until the end of the year and would not have to pay any termination indemnities.

9. The Agency therefore needed \$80 million to maintain all its programmes, of which \$34 million was needed for the education programme. The latter amount was the minimum required to avoid collapse. He would spare no effort to raise the necessary funds and counted on the support and assistance of the Chairman of the Working Group and of all those who had helped him during the current year. Although Governments generally agreed that the Agency's services were a stabilizing element and that the maintenance of its education programme was essential from both a humanitarian and a political point of view, the income obtained from voluntary contributions had proved less and less adequate. Unless the Agency's finances were placed on a sounder basis and it was assured of regular and adequate contributions, it would continue to move from one crisis to another until it collapsed. The General Assembly should address that problem before it was too late. The Agency's work was essential to the maintenance of peace, as indicated by the General Assembly in resolutions 212 (III) and 302 (IV). The Agency might have fewer financing difficulties if its peace-keeping role was better understood.

10. Mr. KOLBY (Norway), speaking as the Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, briefly described the origin and membership of the Group and the renewal of its mandate by General Assembly resolution 35/13 D, all of which were covered in chapter I of the Group's report (A/36/615).

11. Chapter II contained a resume of the Group's activities and reflected its concern about UNRWA's financial situation. At the end of February 1981, the Commissioner-General had informed the Working Group that the only way of absorbing the estimated deficit of \$50.4 million was to reduce the education programme, and had requested the Group to spare no effort to help him to obtain the additional \$34 million needed to keep that programme operating. The members of the Group had made several suggestions as to the action the Group might take.

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(Mr. Kolby, Norway)

12. At a subsequent meeting, the Working Group had decided to launch an urgent appeal for an immediate effort to avert the closing of the Agency's educational facilities. The Group had further decided to request its Chairman and its Rapporteur to discuss with the Secretary-General further measures that might be taken to assist the Agency and to meet with the Chairmen of the regional groups to draw attention to the need for additional funds. In October, the Working Group had met with the Commissioner-General, who had said that in the light of the strong reaction from Governments and the refugees themselves, and the Agency's improved cash flow situation, he had decided to take the risk of keeping the schools open until the end of 1981. However, he had expressed grave concern about the outlook for 1982, when the Agency would have to face an estimated deficit of \$80.3 million. Lastly, the Commissioner-General had pointed out that any proposal for a change in the methods of financing the Agency would have to be put forward by Governments themselves.

13. Chapter III of the Working Group's report described the current financial situation of UNRWA. In February, the Agency had faced an estimated deficit of \$50.4 million. Since then, drastic cuts had been made and additional contributions had been received, but those steps had been insufficient to enable the Agency to continue its education programme in all fields.

14. At the end of October, the deficit had still stood at \$46 million. The Commissioner-General had again decided to take the risk of keeping the schools open in all fields until the end of the year. To that end, he had been obliged to eliminate all expenditures on construction, repairs and salary increases to compensate for increases in the cost of living. It would also be necessary to eliminate budgeted provision for increases in staff separation allowances. Furthermore, the Agency's reserves would have to be reduced to a minimum, which would place it in a precarious cash-flow situation at the beginning of 1982. The financial outlook for 1982 was most disturbing. Expenditure was estimated at \$265.6 million and income at \$185.3 million, leaving an estimated deficit of \$80.3 million.

15. Chapter IV of the report contained the Working Group's concluding remarks. It stated that in spring 1981 the Agency had come close to total collapse because of insufficient funds and pointed out that the Agency might enter 1982 without sufficient funds to pay its staff wages beyond January. The health care programme had already been reduced to a minimum and the relief assistance programme consisted mainly of distribution of food-stuffs donated to the Agency. Within the context of projected resources, the Agency would be in a better position to give the required priority to the education programme if Governments making contributions in kind would consider the possibility of converting some of those contributions into cash. Any further reduction in the Agency's programme could only be achieved through a reduction of the education programme and the closing of schools. In the view of the Working Group, such a step would have serious social and political consequences with implications for the refugees, the host countries and the prospects for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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16. The Working Group believed that there was an urgent need to place the Agency's financing on a more stable basis. It was regrettable that it had not been possible to make progress towards that end in 1981. The Agency's financial position could not be improved unless more countries participated in its financing and the countries in a position to do so increased their contributions. The Working Group therefore reiterated its call to those Governments which had not yet done so to begin contributing to the Agency, and urged those which had thus far made only modest contributions to contribute more generously. Lastly, the Group expressed the hope that Governments which had contributed generously in the past would continue to increase their contribution.

17. In his report, the Commissioner-General suggested that informal consultations should be held on the apportioning of the Agency's expenses. The Working Group supported the Commissioner-General's efforts to explore that proposal as one possible way of consolidating the Agency's financial basis.

18. The Working Group continued to believe that as long as a just and lasting settlement of the problem of the Palestine refugees had not been achieved, the humanitarian services provided by the Agency would remain indispensable.

19. The Working Group was determined to continue to assist the Commissioner-General in his fund-raising efforts. In the light of the Agency's critical financial situation, the Working Group hoped that Governments would make an effort to advance the payment of their contributions for 1982.

20. Mr. SHAMMA (Jordan) thanked Mr. Rydbeck for his detailed introduction of his report on the activities of UNRWA through June 1981 (A/36/13) and thanked the Commissioner-General and his staff for their tireless dedication to alleviating the suffering of some 2 million Palestinian refugees.

21. He also paid a tribute to the Chairman of the Advisory Commission for the deep concern he expressed each year over the financial difficulties facing UNRWA. Jordan supported his appeal to the Special Political Committee to give serious thought to the Agency's financial difficulties and try to find a radical solution for them. His delegation also warmly thanked the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts to help the Agency morally and financially.

22. He recalled with grief that that very day marked the anniversary of the infamous Balfour Declaration which was at the root of the sufferings of the Palestinian people. It was through that Declaration that the British Government and some Western nations, especially the United States, had created the fiendish entity called Israel, in the heart of the Arab nations and at the expense of the Palestinian people. The creation of Israel in 1948 was a veritable crime against the region, which had not known peace and tranquillity since. As long as Israel, the criminal State, continued to defy the United Nations and the principles embodied in its Charter, and as long as nothing was done to restore their basic rights and dignity to the Palestinians, there could never be peace in the Middle East. Until a just peace was established,

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(Mr. Shamma, Jordan)

2 November would remain a stain on the conscience of those who had helped to create Israel and an infamy in the annals of history.

23. He expressed the hope that the current visit to Washington of the Head of State of Jordan, His Majesty King Hussein, would bring about a just peace and that the United States Government would come to realize that piecemeal agreements such as the Camp David accords could never bring lasting peace to the region. Peace would be possible only when the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was restored and recognized and when Israel's war machine was withdrawn from the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem. Israel and its protectors should remember what King Hussein had said more than 10 years earlier: "Israel cannot have peace and land; it can have either peace or land, but not both".

24. It was regrettable that the Commissioner-General's report had not focused properly on the origin of the Palestinian refugee problem, its political and humanitarian aspects and the need to deal with it justly and realistically in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. Indeed, the whole report referred only twice to the Israeli military authorities as occupiers, and the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were referred to only once or twice as "occupied areas".

24a. On the other hand, the report clearly showed not only that UNRWA had failed to carry out the solemn mandate entrusted to it with regard to the Palestinian refugees and the host countries, but that the Agency was planning to abandon some of its most elementary programmes in a gradual but calculated plan of retrenchment which would finally result in the disintegration of the Agency. Needless to say, that plan had been forced upon the Agency by a concerted political decision, clearly designed to relieve the international community of its responsibility to assist the Palestinian refugees until they returned to their homeland. To propose, as the report did, a reduction in the Agency's services, particularly in the field of education, as a means of solving its financial troubles, was to pose the problem in the wrong terms. In fact, such a step would heighten the danger of instability in the region and would impose additional hardships upon the Palestinian refugees and greater burdens upon the host countries. Jordan was therefore in complete agreement with the Commissioner-General, who had told the Advisory Commission on 12 December 1980 that "the future of UNRWA must be resolved in the course of 1981 if the Agency is not to be tossed into 1982 on the tide of unpredictable financial fortune".

25. Paragraph 21 of the Commissioner-General's report stated that the estimated deficit in the Agency's 1982 budget was \$80.3 million, slightly more than the deficit for 1981. That increase did not in any way reflect an upgrading or increase in Agency services, but simply represented the inflation that currently plagued the world economy.

26. Jordan paid more than its fair share of assistance to the refugees. In addition to its contributions to UNRWA, Jordan's direct assistance to the Palestinian

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(Mr. Shamma, Jordan)

refugees for the current fiscal year amounted to more than \$35.5 million. It had, further, been providing food aid to 250,000 persons displaced from the West Bank since the 1967 aggression. It would only be fair if other States, especially those responsible for the tragedy of the refugees, increased their refugee aid. It was all the more unjust because Israel, the cause of the Palestinian tragedy, had received over the previous four and a half years more than \$12 billion in official development assistance from the United States, in addition to the billions of tax-exempt contributions made at the expense of American taxpayers. In addition, the United States was building two air bases for the Israelis, at a cost of over \$2 billion. He wondered whether the cost of the American bombs showered over Beirut upon Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and upon the Lebanese themselves in recent months would not enormously outweigh the small sum that the Agency needed to survive.

27. Jordan joined with the Commissioner-General in his urgent appeal to the international community to take steps to place the Agency's financing on a sounder footing, and wished to propose to the Committee certain measures that would cure UNRWA's financial troubles: the integration of the Agency's budget in the regular budget of the United Nations; if that proved impossible, the financing of the Agency's deficit from the regular budget of the United Nations; the payment of rent due to their Arab victims by the Israeli usurpers who had occupied the homes and property of the Palestinian refugees. Jordan urged the General Assembly to appoint a neutral international civil servant to function as guardian of the homes and property of the Palestinian refugees in occupied Palestine.

28. His Government took a most serious view of the attempt by the international community to back out of its responsibility towards the Palestinian refugees. Jordan's position on the matter could be summed up in the following manner: Jordan was opposed to any reduction or cancellation of the services rendered by UNRWA; it was also opposed to any attempt to terminate the services of the Agency's local employees; any attempt to transfer to the host countries the burden of services theretofore performed by the Agency was unacceptable to his Government; in its view the international community was responsible not only for assisting the Palestinian refugees to survive but also for helping them to return to their homeland; UNRWA's budget should be tailored to providing for the basic and real needs of the refugees; his Government also hoped that those UNRWA headquarters services that were still outside its area of operations could be consolidated in Beirut or Amman as soon as possible.

29. In short, the continuation of UNRWA's work was a factor for stability and peace in the Middle East, and the Agency should continue providing for the Palestinian refugees until they returned home.

30. In documents A/36/558 and A/36/559, the Secretary-General reported that the representative of the Zionist entity in Palestine had brazenly refused to abide by the provisions of sections E and F of General Assembly resolution 35/13

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(Mr. Shamma, Jordan)

regarding those persons displaced since the act of aggression of 1967 and the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip. In view of the latest defiance, Jordan believed the time had come for the international community to tell the Zionist entity that it had no place in the community.

31. In conclusion, he thanked the Australian Government for the scholarship it had granted to Palestine refugees and urged the Australian authorities to speed up the granting of the other five awards previously offered. Jordan also extended its thanks to the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic and all those organizations that had offered scholarships. It urged other Governments and organizations to follow suit. His delegation expressed its gratitude to the members of the Working Group, and particularly to its Rapporteur, for their efforts to ensure the financial security of the Agency.

32. Mr. NISIBORI (Japan) noted with regret that the financial situation of UNRWA had continued to deteriorate and that the level of the expected deficit for the coming year, more than \$80 million according to the Commissioner-General, was twice that of the initial forecasts. His Government believed that there was no way for UNRWA to overcome its financial crisis other than through increased voluntary contributions from more countries and through the rationalization of programmes. He urged those countries which had never contributed to UNRWA and those which had contributed only a part of their fair share to fulfil their humanitarian obligations. His country hoped that the secretariat of UNRWA would henceforth pursue stringent budget management policies by eliminating less important programmes and non-essential personnel so that it could emphasize those activities which were of highest priority, such as the continuation of the education programme.

33. His Government was unable to support the suggestion made by several delegations that the General Assembly should abandon the voluntary system and include the expenses of UNRWA in the regular budget of the United Nations. Even if that were done, it was doubtful whether those countries which had refused to contribute voluntarily for political reasons would ever fulfil an obligation to pay their assessed contribution to UNRWA. The only result would be to compound the financial difficulties of the United Nations as a whole. Moreover, if the expenses of UNRWA were included in the regular budget, then it could be argued that the costs of all United Nations refugee assistance programmes should likewise be covered by the regular budget. Such a move might also set an undesirable precedent for other United Nations bodies, such as UNDP, whose budgets were based upon voluntary contributions.

34. His Government had long recognized the significance of UNRWA and had been contributing to it since 1954, even before his country had become a Member of the United Nations. It had steadily increased its annual contributions and, foreseeing a serious financial crisis, was increasing its 1981 contribution by approximately 10 per cent over that of the previous year. Resolved to co-operate fully in all the international efforts to find a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East, his Government pledged itself to continue to support the efforts of the Commissioner-General and to help UNRWA to function properly.

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35. Mr. TERZI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that the item under discussion was older than the United Nations itself, since it was by means of the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 that the British Government had facilitated the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. As the latter, however, represented 90 per cent of the population, the Jewish community could only hope to establish a national home by becoming a majority at the expense of and against the will of the Arab majority existing in the country. Already in 1925 the spiritual leader of the present rulers of Israel, Jabotinsky, had foreseen that necessity and declared that an "iron wall" of Jewish armed force would have to protect the process of achieving a majority. Those who were referred to as Palestinian refugees, displaced and stateless Palestinians, owed their present situation to that Zionist doctrine. For, of all the options envisaged - intense nationalism, mass immigration, the transfer of populations, the elimination of the original inhabitants - it was the last-mentioned that Begin and his like had chosen. They had used Jewish armed might for the physical elimination of the majority in order to replace it by the minority. He recalled the massacre of Deir Yasin and the campaigns of terror aimed at ridding Israel of an Arab population in malignant growth, in the words of Meir Kahane, author of the introduction to Begin's book, The Revolt.

36. It was the necessity to survive which had forced the Palestinian Arabs to leave their homes, but the Commissioner-General's report did not mention that crime bordering upon genocide.

37. Referring to the words of Count Bernadotte, the United Nations mediator, he stressed the fact that almost the whole of the Arab population had fled or had been expelled from the area under Jewish occupation. The party at present in power was still willing to expel entire communities which had participated in demonstrations and riots. The right of return was sanctioned by international law and was recognized by civilized nations. In July 1948, Count Bernadotte had tried to bring Israel to respect that norm, thereby bringing about his own assassination by elements close to the present Israeli Government. In spite of his intervention and in spite of the fact that the General Assembly had appealed for their return, the number of registered refugees had increased from less than half a million in 1948 to almost two million at the present time. During all that time, Israel had always rejected the principle of the return of the refugees to their homes and had effectively avoided its implementation, thus creating a situation which constituted a threat to international peace and security.

38. As long as the problem of the Palestinian refugees was still unsolved, the United Nations remained fully responsible for the survival, security and welfare of those refugees, and the right of return should not be confused with the services rendered by UNRWA.

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(Mr. Terzi)

39. With respect to the very serious financial situation of UNRWA as revealed in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/36/13), the international community had the duty to provide the funds which the Agency needed since it had been the recommendation of that same international community which had been the origin of the disastrous situation of the Palestinian people. That situation, and the threat to international peace and security which it represented, stemmed, on the one hand, from the policy adopted by the Zionists both before and after the establishment of their State and, on the other, from the political, diplomatic, human, financial and military support which they received from the Government of the United States and other governments. The financial problems of UNRWA were only secondary, for \$80 million was nothing in comparison with the advantage which could be derived therefrom by hundreds of thousands of school children and millions of persons receiving medical care, or in comparison with the billions of dollars in commitments by the Government of the United States to support the aggression of the invaders and to bring about the expulsion of thousands more Palestinian Arabs. Those who refused to allow the refugees to return and those who supported Israel's inflexible position ought to defray the costs incurred by that palliative, UNRWA.

40. The international community might consider the possibility of setting up a fund to cover UNRWA's financial deficit. That fund, which would be financed in accordance with an agreed scale of assessments, should be provided essentially by those who refused the only real solution. It would be unjust if the peoples and Governments which were not responsible for the present tragedy were called upon to contribute.

41. Moreover, since the greater part of the UNRWA budget was devoted to expenditure on education and health care, the Agency's overheads should be charged to the regular budget of the United Nations. Likewise, if the Organization did not develop a method of allowing the Palestinians, formerly the owners of the greater part of an area which had enjoyed a surplus budget, to benefit from the income from the property of which they had been deprived thus decreasing UNRWA's expenditure, the financial problems would persist.

42. The Palestinians and the entire world would no longer tolerate the fact that more than 700,000 Palestinians continued to rot in camps and that almost 2 million were denied their inalienable right to return to their homes.

43. He wished to express the appreciation of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the contributing Governments, particularly to the Governments of those peoples which had themselves been victims of colonialism in 1947.

44. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Jordan had departed entirely from the subject under discussion. It was not the first time that the Jordanian delegation had, using the obscene language characteristic of it, expressed the hostile policy of its Government towards the State of Israel. It was no good trying to rewrite history. Without going into detail for the moment, he would like to correct one of the points raised.

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(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

45. The statement that Israel was at the bottom of the Palestinian Arab refugee problem was grossly biased and unfounded. The representative of Jordan knew very well that the problem was the outcome of the war launched in 1948 by the Arab States hostile to the establishment of the State of Israel. The Arabs themselves had admitted that from the very beginning, as was proved by the following examples, all of them from Arab sources:

Interview with Mr. Emile Khoury, Secretary of the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee, published in the Beirut Telegraph of 6 September 1948. Mr. Khoury said: "At the time of the first truce the number of Arab refugees was 200,000. By the time the second truce began, this number had risen to 300,000. It is impossible to foretell how many more refugees there will be if the hostilities are renewed. The fact that there are these refugees is the direct consequence of the act of the Arab States in opposing the Jewish State. The Arab States agreed upon this policy unanimously, and they must share in the solution of the problem." Article published in the Jordanian daily newspaper Falastin on 19 February 1949: "The Arab States, which had encouraged the Palestine Arabs to leave their homes temporarily in order to be out of the way of the Arab invasion armies, have failed to keep their promises to help these refugees." Interview given to the Associated Press by King Hussein of Jordan (from an Associated Press Despatch, Amman, 17 January 1960): "Since 1948, Arab leaders have approached the Palestine problem in an irresponsible manner. They have not looked into the future. They have no plan or approach. They have used the Palestine people for selfish political purposes. This is ridiculous and I could say, even criminal".

46. The representative of Jordan might also remember that, in attacking Israel in 1948, the Arab States too had created a refugee problem, the problem of the Jews who had been forced to leave their ancestral homeland, leaving all their possessions behind them.

47. Once again the venomous language used by Jordan demonstrated that it was not the problem of the refugees which was an obstacle to peace, but the attitude of the Arab countries which were still always opposed to the very principle of a State of Israel and were incapable of recognizing that it had a right to exist. However, it was time for Jordan to abandon its obsessional hatred of Israel since, as long as the Arab States refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, there would be no future either for them or for the region. Everything depended on peace.

48. Mr. SHAMMA (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Jews - whether they had immigrated into Palestine in the nineteenth or the twentieth century - had had only two objectives: to lay claim to the land and expel the Palestinians. Their usurpation of territory now extended to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Together with South Africa, Israel provided the only example in history of racist immigrants claiming sovereign rights over the territory in which they settled. The roots of the problem of the Palestinian refugees lay in that usurpation and plundering of the land. Jordan had had to bear the consequences of that for 34 years. From 1948 onwards, the Arab States had

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(Mr. Shamma, Jordan)

opened their frontiers to all the Jews of the Diaspora; but Israel had never done the same for the Palestinians. However, if Israel genuinely wanted peace and security, nothing would be more in keeping with justice and the law than to let refugees return to their homes - those refugees who between 1947 and 1949 had been forced to leave everything behind in their flight from the Jewish terrorist forces which were threatening their lives. He hoped that the present discussions in the Committee would induce the Israeli Government and its sympathizers to give the refugees the choice between returning to their homes or receiving compensation for the loss of their property in Palestine.

49. Mr. TERZI (Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization), replying to the representative of Israel, referred once again to article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under which everyone had the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. In the opinion of the organization which he represented, that article applied to all persons including - and he wished to stress that point - the Jews who had considered it necessary to leave in 1947 and 1948; a number of Arab countries had even expressly affirmed that inalienable right in their national legislation. Was it to be understood, on the other hand, that the Israeli Government was no longer subscribing to the Jabotinski theory which had been mentioned earlier, to the effect that the sine qua non for the fulfilment of zionism was the evacuation of Palestine by the Arabs? What was the position of the Israeli Government with regard to the theory, which had also been mentioned earlier, that the Arabs must go because the growth of the Arab population was a negative factor which might jeopardize the survival of Israel? It was against the background of that ideology that the sufferings of the Palestinians must be viewed.

50. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out to the representative of Jordan that Jews could not obtain Jordanian nationality. That was an officially authenticated fact.

51. Mr. SHAMMA (Jordan), speaking on a point of order, said that the representative of Israel should keep strictly to the item under consideration, which related to the Palestine refugees, and not the domestic legislation of Jordan.

52. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) replied that it was precisely the representative of Jordan who had just suggested that certain Jews should return to other countries. However, the Arabs should have no illusions about the possibility of uprooting the Israelis; the Israelis had no intention of leaving. On the other hand, it should be noted that hundreds of thousands of the Arabs registered with the Office for Refugees were Jordanian nationals; there were many people who held Jordanian nationality under Jordanian law, but were still applying to be admitted into Israel.

53. If Jordan really wished to settle the refugee problem there was only one way of demonstrating its willingness; and that was by peace negotiations. Nothing would ever be achieved by mere preaching, and it was unreasonable to ask a

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(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

sovereign country to open its borders to hundreds of thousands of nationals of a foreign country and at the same time to refuse to have any dealings with it and to deny its right to existence. It was only when Jordan accepted the fact that Israel formed an integral part of the Middle Eastern region that there could be any hope of settling the dispute between Israel and Jordan.

54. Mr. SHAMMA (Jordan), replying to the representative of Israel, said that Jordan did indeed issue passports to certain Palestinians, but the persons concerned would be free to go wherever they chose once the Palestinian problem had been settled. Jordan did not impose its nationality on anyone; and people could enter and leave the country as they pleased. If Israel genuinely wanted peace negotiations, it should approach the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization who was present in the committee room; and it should make peace with him, rather than take issue with Jordan.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.