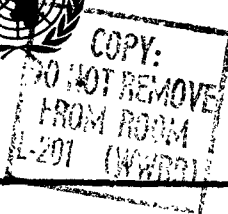


United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**
THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION
*Official Records**



SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
27th meeting
held on
Monday, 9 November 1981
at 3.30 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

CONTENTS

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

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

81-57843

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/36/SR.27
18 November 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

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

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/36/13)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/36/615)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/36/529)

1. Mr. SINGH (India) wished to place on record the appreciation of his delegation for the services rendered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) against considerable financial odds, to further the humanitarian cause of the displaced people of Palestine, who had been deprived of their fundamental human rights and forcibly and unjustly uprooted from their homeland. It was clear from both the report of the Commissioner-General (A/36/13) and the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/36/615) that the Agency's precarious financial position left the Commissioner-General with no alternative but to make severe reductions in the vital services provided to the refugees unless a marked improvement in the Agency's financial prospects could be achieved before the end of the year.

2. The delegation of India considered that any curtailment or cessation of part or all of such vital services as health, education and training, the distribution of basic rations, the provision of shelter and welfare assistance would not only cause untold misery and suffering for the refugees but would moreover exacerbate the political situation in the region. It was therefore the bounden duty of all States, irrespective of size or wealth, to contribute generously to the funding of UNRWA so as to avoid any interruption in those vital services. For its part, India had always accepted its fair share of international obligations, regularly contributing to UNRWA funds from the Agency's inception in the form of supplies and regularly providing scholarships and training facilities for the displaced Palestinian people.

3. However, the services provided by UNRWA could at best be only temporary palliatives to the problem of the Palestine Arabs, the ultimate solution to which lay in Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people to live in freedom and dignity, and to have a State of their own. Until such a solution was achieved, the humanitarian activities of UNRWA must be allowed to continue as smoothly and effectively as possible.

4. Mr. VAZHNIK (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which had been adopted in 1948, resolved that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date. Israel, however, encouraged by its supporters for years, had blatantly ignored that resolution and all other United Nations resolutions on the question under consideration. Only a comprehensive political settlement which guaranteed the rights of all countries of the region could settle the problem of the Palestinian refugees and ensure peace and stability in the Middle East. Such a

/...

(Mr. Vazhnik, Byelorussian SSR)

settlement must include the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and the implementation of the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to establish their own State.

5. With regard to the proposal put forward by certain delegations to change the existing financing system of UNRWA, his delegation felt that such a change would be tantamount to accepting the exile of millions of Palestinians and would place those countries which were impeding a just solution to the Palestinian problem on the same footing as the countries which consistently upheld the just cause of the Arab people of Palestine. Israel and the countries which supported it should bear the expenses incurred by UNRWA. His delegation had consistently supported the struggle of the Arab peoples for their legitimate rights, which had been violated by Israeli aggression. The holding of a special international conference with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, would lead to a comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, on a just and realistic basis.

6. Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen) said that his delegation was saddened to see that the discussion of such an important problem as that of the Palestinian refugees had become restricted to the question of financing essential services for them. The international community seemed to have become hardened to the suffering of the Palestinian people after living with it for close to 40 years. The great Powers had participated in the creation of that tragedy, together with a majority of the Members of the United Nations at that time, which had agreed to the resolution on the partition of Palestine. That resolution had legitimized the seizure of the land of Palestine by the Zionist aggressors after they had expelled its inhabitants. Subsequently, in order to appease their consciences, those countries had taken upon themselves the obligation of returning those refugees to their homes and of providing them with the services necessary for their survival until they returned. With the passage of time, some of those countries had forgotten their commitment to the rights of the refugees and had begun to conceive of the refugee problem as a purely humanitarian issue. Those same countries were now trying to evade their responsibilities completely, as was clear from their tardiness in financing the services provided by UNRWA.

7. The United Nations, in establishing UNRWA, had considered it an interim measure until the refugees could return to their homes within a short period of time. Few Member States had been aware of Zionist intentions gradually to empty Palestine of its population in order to establish a purely Jewish State. The fact that nearly 2 million Palestinians still remained in camps was a test case for the modern man who persisted in thinking that his ethical standards were of the highest. Israel's continued practice of imposing faits accomplis by force of arms, in open defiance of the resolutions of the United Nations and of international conventions, raised doubts as to the effectiveness of the Organization and of the practical value of its Charter. It was strange to see the disdain of the representatives of Israel for the intellectual capacities of others, which was reflected in their statements that the usurpation of Palestine was, in reality, the exercise of a right and that the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians was a natural and legitimate act. In his statement at the 24th meeting of the Committee, the representative of Tel Aviv had said that the expulsion of the Palestinians, the occupation of their homes by Jewish immigrants and the usurpation of their property had been a normal process of the exchange of population, such as had taken place between

/...

(Mr. Mubarez, Yemen)

India and Pakistan and between Greece and Turkey, evidently assuming that others were ignorant of the facts of history. In order to set the record straight, his delegation wished to reaffirm that the appropriation of the land of Palestine by armed force and the violent expulsion of its population had been an unlawful act which the United Nations, by international consensus, had condemned and declared null and void. The representative of Israel had seen fit to forget that the exchange of populations in the instances he had quoted had taken place with the agreement of the Governments concerned, in the interest of certain sectors of the population, with their consent, and in conditions of security. The expulsion of the entire Palestinian people had been an attempt on the part of the Zionists to destroy the political and cultural existence of the Palestinian people, and that was a matter which was sui generis and unprecedented in history.

8. The report of the Commissioner-General showed that UNRWA's financial crisis threatened the Agency with collapse at any moment if the General Assembly, through the Special Political Committee, did not find a permanent solution to the problem of funding. Any deficit on the budget of the Agency for the coming year would principally affect its educational services. His delegation supported the Commissioner-General's decision to give priority to those services over the others provided by the Agency.

9. It was a matter for concern that those great Powers which had contributed to the establishment of the State of Israel as a solution to their own problems at the expense of the Palestinian people, were trying to shirk their obligations towards the Palestinian refugees. There were those who said that responsibility for the refugee problem should be borne by the Arab States, but that was simply another aspect of the Israeli call for the integration of the refugees in the populations of the host countries. While rejecting that concept, his country considered its adoption by any other State as a major change in that State's position on the Palestine issue.

10. There was consensus among delegations that the existence of UNRWA and the continuation of its services in a normal manner were an expression of the commitment of the Organization to the refugees and that its collapse would lead to grave consequences which would have a negative effect on the peace and stability of the region. The United Nations must reaffirm its commitment by meeting the financial requirements of UNRWA from its own regular budget. The continued dependence of the Agency on voluntary contributions would create permanent confusion in its programmes and would even threaten its very existence. A permanent solution to the financial problem must be found by at least making up the deficit in the budget of UNRWA from the regular budget of the United Nations if it was to continue in existence until the refugees returned to their homes. The Palestinians were a proud people and refused to live in a state of dependence on others but the options open to them were limited, since they had lost the homes and the property acquired by their forefathers.

11. When UNRWA had been established it had been assumed that Israël would act in conformity with United Nations resolutions, but more than 33 years later the plight of the Palestinians continued while the Zionist occupiers enjoyed their usurped homes and property. The refugees had a legitimate right to the income from their property pending their return and it would be equitable if that income was used to finance the services provided to them instead of their having to depend on the generosity of others. The representative of Israel had said that Jewish immigrants from Arab countries had left

/...

(Mr. Mubarez, Yemen)

behind them property which could be considered compensation for the property of the Palestinian refugees, but he had seen fit to forget that the Jews who had left the Arab countries had done so voluntarily and at the instigation of Zionist envoys, and that many of them had sold their property before leaving. That was totally different from the way in which the Palestinians had lost their land and property, which had been plundered by Zionist bands. It should always be remembered that the Palestinians had the sole legitimate right to their property and that they would never be satisfied with any substitute. His delegation urged the Committee to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.8, which called for appropriate steps to be taken for the protection and administration of that property and for the use of its income for the benefit of the refugees.

12. The right of the Palestinian people to return and its right to self-determination remained the core of the problem and the basis for its solution. However, some of the great Powers were still trying to treat the matter from the point of view of their special interests. A number of plans had been devised over the past three decades to solve the Palestine problem but their goal had, in reality, been the liquidation of that problem and not its solution. The most recent of such plans was embodied in the Camp David accords, and it had taken less than two years for all to see that that framework was not only incapable of solving the problem but had even aggravated it. That was so for one simple reason; it was, fundamentally, a plan which had been prepared in order to serve other objectives and other interests than those of the Palestinians.

13. Mr. ANSELMO (Guyana), referring to the warning issued by the Commissioner-General in his report (A/36/13) regarding the likely collapse of the Agency in 1982 unless the necessary financial support was forthcoming, said that the international community, which had long been aware of UNRWA's precarious financial position, must respond generously and realistically to ensure the survival of the Agency and to enable it to maintain its valuable humanitarian services. Although it might be argued that the Agency must be rationalized and the existing funds thus used more effectively, the delegation of Guyana felt that any curtailment of the services currently provided would not only result in untold hardship for the refugees but also entail serious political consequences in terms of peace and stability in the entire area. In point of fact, the Commissioner-General himself had expressed the fear, in connexion with a possible curtailment of the Agency's educational programmes, that the political consequences of closing down schools in just one of the Agency's areas of operation might bring about the collapse of the Agency.

14. Any discussion geared to maintaining the humanitarian programmes of UNRWA must inevitably focus on the political dimension of the problem. The General Assembly itself, in establishing UNRWA in 1949, had recognized that humanitarian assistance could not be dissociated from the ultimate peace and stability of the area. The international community had been sadly remiss in failing to ensure the continuation of the services offered by UNRWA to a people which had been denied its inalienable right to a homeland for over three decades. The United Nations, having committed itself to providing those services, would be guilty of a breach of faith vis-à-vis the Palestinians if it did not intensify its pressure for their return and for the restoration of their inalienable right to live in dignity as free individuals. The Palestinian problem was not merely a problem of refugees; it was essentially that of a nation which had been dispossessed.

/...

15. Mr. LAKHMIRI (Morocco) said that the General Assembly had frequently demanded that Israel take immediate steps to ensure the return of all displaced persons and called upon it to desist from all measures obstructing their return. The Assembly had declared that no attempt should be made to limit the free exercise of that right, had stated its belief that any agreement imposing limitations or conditions on return was null and void, and had condemned the persistent refusal of the Israeli authorities to adopt the necessary measures for the return of the refugees. Israel had nevertheless continued to defy world public opinion and had gone so far as to claim that such resolutions were a hindrance to the peace process. The savage acts perpetrated by Israel on a daily basis, such as the shelling of refugee camps, the destruction of houses and random air raids on camps in southern Lebanon leaving behind them many innocent Lebanese and Palestinian victims, increased the dimensions of the problem and the complexity of the situation.

16. The General Assembly had noted that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) because of Israeli obstinacy.

17. The General Assembly had demanded that Israel desist from removing Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip and from destroying their houses, but Israel had gone on to destroy more houses, leaving thousands of refugee families without shelter. UNRWA had argued that such demolition was a violation of international law, but Israel had disregarded that view. In Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel had caused the Agency losses in life and property, making enormous difficulties for its personnel. With reference to the question of the establishment of a university at Jerusalem in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6 of General Assembly resolution 35/13 B, Israel had, in spite of the fact that the project had the support of the Council of the United Nations University, UNESCO and UNRWA, imposed restrictions on academic freedom in the universities in the occupied territories. Because of the severe shortage of institutions of higher education in the region, Palestinian students were forced to seek admission to universities abroad. According to UNESCO estimates, of the 40,000 Palestinian students who successfully completed their secondary education, only 10,000 were able to gain admission to universities, and the number of such students would increase in coming years.

18. UNRWA had, since its establishment, given proof of a spirit of human solidarity and had alleviated the suffering of the refugees, but it was today faced with a financial crisis which threatened its very existence and which would increase instability in the region. The operations of the Agency represented an element of stability and peace and it should therefore continue to provide services to the refugees pending a solution to the Palestine issue. The financing of the services of UNRWA was the responsibility of the entire international community and his own and the other Arab delegations therefore demanded that its expenditures should be met from the regular United Nations budget. The Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had decided that the Agency's humanitarian services in the form of education, health care and relief assistance remained indispensable and it was therefore the view of his delegation that the United Nations should bear the cost of those programmes.

19. Since its establishment, Israel had persisted in claiming that it was the victim of Arab aggression and had led world public opinion to believe that it might be pushed

/...

(Mr. Lakhmiri, Morocco)

into the sea and that the Jewish people, which had suffered grievously at the hands of the Nazis, continued to have to defend its existence and its right to life against the Arab threat. The agenda item under discussion, however, showed matters in their true light, for Israel had expelled an entire people from its homeland in order to establish an Israeli State and was still pursuing the same plan in occupied Arab Jerusalem and in other occupied Arab areas. World public opinion was slowly coming to realize the full extent of Israeli tyranny. The voice of Palestinian coexistence calling for peace and justice found no echo with the Israeli authorities and new generations of Jews were opening their eyes to the spectacle of human dignity being trampled underfoot and of an entire people being deprived of its rights. It was incumbent upon the international community to adopt effective measures to extricate Israel from the pit into which it had fallen and to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian refugees. It was up to new generations of Israelis, who would always find themselves obliged to coexist with their Arab neighbours, to oppose the policies of expulsion and of disregard for the rights of the Palestinians and seek a way of establishing peace and security in the region. The Palestine issue would always remain a running sore for the Israelis whenever the matter was discussed in any international forum; it was a human cry for the rejection of war and an appeal for truth, love and peace. His delegation hoped that wisdom would prevail and that the refugee issue would be overcome not merely through the provision of the funds required to deal with such crises but through the return of the refugees to their homes and the solution of the problem at its root.

20. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco had stated in the General Assembly that Israel was persisting in its aggressive policy and its colonialist settlement practices and, through its policy of exterminating the Palestinian people, its attempt to distort the history of Palestine, its destruction of religious and cultural institutions and its alteration of the demographic balance, was seeking to eliminate Palestinian identity completely without regard for world public opinion or for the United Nations. He had added that the Organization had adopted many resolutions on the Palestine question and on the persistent Israeli acts of aggression against the Arab nation, and that it must now adopt the necessary measures for their implementation, including sanctions against Israel under Chapter VII of the Charter.

21. Morocco had always distinguished between the hostile and expansionist policy of Israel, and its Jewish inhabitants and Judaism as a religion. His Majesty the late King Mohammed V had stood up to the Vichy Government, exposing his life and his throne to grave danger, when, during the Second World War, he had been requested to oblige Moroccan Jews to wear a special sign identifying them as Jews for the purpose of oppressing them and discriminating between them and their Moroccan brothers. Given its Islamic identity which imposed non-discrimination as a duty, his country prohibited discrimination between its inhabitants on grounds of religion, colour or sex. After the Jewish inhabitants of his country had been induced by Israeli propaganda and appeals to their religious feeling to leave for Palestine as a result of which they had had to endure severe hardships during their journey and during their residence in Israel because of the racial discrimination which they encountered there, His Majesty King Hassan II, the President of the Al Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, had opened the way for them to return to their country in dignity. That action was indicative of the peaceful spirit of the Arabs and of the Muslims and of their readiness to solve that problem in a radical manner while, in exchange, they encountered nothing but obstinacy and insistence on the continuation of hegemony and aggression.

/...

(Mr. Lakhmiri, Morocco)

22. His delegation wished to express its gratitude to the Commissioner-General for his efforts to ensure the continuation of the operations of the Agency and to assure him that Morocco would participate in any scheme for helping the Agency to overcome its financial crisis.

23. Mr. KANAKARATNE (Sri Lanka) said that the matter currently before the Committee, which was of crucial importance not only by reason of its humanitarian implications but also in terms of the maintenance of peace and security in the Near East, had been under active consideration for over three decades. The passage of time, far from alleviating the plight of the millions of displaced persons whose lives had been affected by decisions imposed on them from outside for the convenience and rational self-interest of others, had on the contrary increased their numbers, intensified their suffering and institutionalized their status. It was a matter for considerable concern that 33 years after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 194 (III), the Palestinian people were still being denied their inalienable right to return to their homes.

24. In fact, the problem of the Palestine refugees involved two major issues: the immediate financial crisis facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which called for urgent attention on the part of the international community in the short term, and the inevitable consequences for the international community of any curtailment or breakdown of the services provided by the Agency, which called for an evaluation of their far-reaching implications for the maintenance of peace and security. The international community, which had been responsible for their plight in the first place, must act without further delay to redeem its moral obligation towards a people who had been living for so long on international charity.

25. The report of the Commissioner-General (A/36/13) could not fail to arouse universal concern and distress. To link the statement made by the Commissioner-General in paragraph 7 of his report to the effect that further savings to compensate for insufficient income might result in "irreparable damage to the education programme" with the opening lines of the UNESCO Constitution, i.e., "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed", would give an inkling of the very serious consequences for peace which such damage might entail. The report contained ample factual evidence of the wide-ranging achievements of UNRWA not only in the field of education, but also with regard to medical care, vocational training, nutrition and the provision of shelter. It would be dangerous indeed for the international community to ignore the warning clearly spelt out by the Commissioner-General in paragraph 30 of his report, namely, that the collapse of UNRWA would be a disaster for the Palestine refugee community, for the host Governments, and for the peace and stability of the Near East region.

26. His delegation was very conscious of the fact that Sri Lanka was not a major contributor to UNRWA. If it were not hamstrung by serious economic difficulties due to circumstances totally beyond its control, its contribution would be substantially greater and more commensurate with its deeply felt commitment to the cause of the Palestine refugees. It would however do everything within its economic capability to keep the interests of the Palestine refugee community in mind. Although Sri Lanka itself was economically disadvantaged, it appealed to the more wealthy nations to increase their contributions to the UNRWA funds in order to avert disaster.

/...

(Mr. Kanakaratne, Sri Lanka)

27. The delegation of Sri Lanka also wished to convey the concern of its Government in the face of the continued arrest and detention without charge or trial of staff members of the Agency in some of its areas of operation, as described in chapter II, section F, of the Commissioner-General's report, and appealed to the Governments concerned to refrain from such unlawful practices and policies, which not only impeded the work of the Agency but also added to the sense of frustration and disappointment of the refugee community. It also found grounds for concern in the punitive action taken by the Israeli occupying authorities against the refugee community referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/559), which had led to 13 refugee families being left homeless after the demolition of their shelters. The very concept of collective punishment rightfully belonged to a bygone age. Sri Lanka trusted that such offensive policy would be discontinued forthwith as being both contrary to the norms of international law and civilized conduct and a discredit to the Government responsible.

28. The delegation of Sri Lanka wished also to draw the Committee's attention to the political dimension of the problem of the Palestine refugees, which must be viewed against the historical background outlined by the Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization and the representative of Iraq. No political solution would be achieved without a proper understanding of the root causes of the current deadlock or without due recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to a State of their own. The international community, which was bound by moral responsibility and obligation to the Palestine refugee community, must accept the need for a political solution and endeavour to channel the inexorable forces of history away from violence and disaster into understanding and rebuilding. Successive Governments of Sri Lanka had consistently held that peace in the Middle East was conditional on an adequate redress of the grave injustice done to the Palestinian people and on the fulfilment of their legitimate and inalienable rights.

29. Although Sri Lanka was geographically remote from the region of the Near East, political, military and economic developments in that region had nonetheless had an impact on its economic and social advancement. It could not be denied that peace in the Near East was vital for peace throughout the world. The region was at the crossroads of three continents, the birthplace of three great world religions and a cultural junction, and it had now become a vital source of energy resources for a substantial segment of the international community at a time of ever-increasing world competition for energy sources and raw materials. Its continued political instability, combined with the growing human frustration and bitterness of a people noted for its industry, ingenuity and determination, was fraught with dire consequences for the world community.

30. The delegation of Sri Lanka therefore appealed for an immediate solution to be found to the financial problems of UNRWA, which was an essential instrument in cushioning and softening those forces which, if unleashed, would cause world-wide disaster. A collective effort was also required as a matter of urgency to settle the underlying political problem. Such a settlement would be a lasting one only if all concerned recognized the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and their right to a State of their own, just as the similar aspirations of another people had eventually been fulfilled in the aftermath of a world war. Two wrongs would never make a right, and it was time for that axiom to be universally recognized and accepted.

/...

31. Mr. SALONEN (Finland) said that UNRWA had an important political function, even though the services provided by the Agency in no way detracted from the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East. There was no doubt that the activities of UNRWA had a stabilizing effect on the highly volatile situation in the region, which was why the delegation of Finland subscribed to the view expressed by the Commissioner-General that the Agency played a peace-keeping role in the Middle East.

32. The bleak situation in which the Agency now found itself had been described both by the Commissioner-General, who had warned in his report (A/36/13) of a possible reduction or suspension of the education programmes, and by the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/36/615), which had drawn attention to the serious social and political consequences that a curtailment of the Agency's educational activities might have for a just and lasting peace.

33. Clearly, the international community must prevent the collapse of the main area of activity of UNRWA by creating the minimal financial conditions for the continuation of not only its educational programme but also its other humanitarian activities. The precarious financial position of the Agency must be studied urgently in co-operation with the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA. The Government of Finland, for its part, was willing to participate in informal consultations on the apportionment of UNRWA's expenses. In the meantime it had decided, as a further demonstration of its continued support to UNRWA and subject to parliamentary approval, to raise its regular contribution to the Agency by 12 per cent over the next fiscal year, thereby bringing it up to a total of 1.5 million Finnish marks or \$US 300,000.

34. Mr. TUENI (Lebanon) said that he did not wish to prolong the deliberations but his delegation had been disturbed by some of the statements made in the course of the debate.

35. As the representative of Lebanon, he was well aware of the great difficulties faced by UNRWA in the circumstances afflicting his country. The clear and frank warning given by the Commissioner-General could not be met by political escalation and should not become an occasion for paying off old scores or flexing muscles. The societies receiving the Palestinian refugees had changed greatly since the establishment of the Agency and some, his own country in particular, were in a situation that he did not need to describe. Those societies could not support the political and human consequences resulting from any suspension of the operations of UNRWA or from a reduction of its services. All, both in the Arab world and the world as a whole, were anxious that UNRWA should continue to exist, that its deficit should be made up and that it should be enabled, within a short period of time, to continue all of its operations without curtailment. Everyone knew that UNRWA did not represent a political solution to the Palestine issue. Some speakers in the Committee had addressed themselves to that political aspect, but his delegation, while reaffirming its position on that matter, hoped that the anticipation of a political solution and speculation with respect to it would not open the way for the use of the issue of the refugees as a pretext for political recriminations or as a means of bringing pressure to bear either on the Arab world or by the Arab world on its own behalf. He warned against the ongoing confrontation within the Committee evolving into a situation where delegations would become prisoners of academic positions, their minds set, and would be prevented from arriving at practical solutions which could contribute to the creation of an atmosphere appropriate to the search for peace in the region and the just resolution of the issue under discussion.

/...

(Mr. Tueni, Lebanon)

36. His delegation joined those who had appealed to all countries capable of assuming greater financial burdens to do so, and it wished to express its gratitude to those States which had borne the greater part of the budget and of the programmes. It did not doubt that they would continue to carry those burdens and even to add to them. It was encouraged in making that appeal by some of the statements made in the Committee and by what had taken place in the past.

37. The Arab countries, on examining the possibilities of ensuring a degree of stability for UNRWA, had submitted a draft resolution (A/SPC/36/L.14) which would open the way for the deficit to be covered by funds drawn from the regular budget of the United Nations, ensure UNRWA the stability desired and render the Arab societies and the Palestinian refugees immune from the dangers which could result from the suspension by UNRWA of some of its programmes.

38. His delegation, which had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.14, requested the Chairman to postpone the vote on the draft resolutions which was to have taken place on the following day. It strongly supported some of them, but considered that the Committee should be given more time to conduct further consultations in order to reach an agreement which would ensure the positive response of the economically stronger States to the appeals made to them and consequently to ensure UNRWA of the required degree of stability.

39. Mr. RYDBECK (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) expressed appreciation of the support voiced in the Committee for himself and the staff of UNRWA. It was clear that many Member States shared his view that UNRWA was a stabilizing influence in the Middle East and that the maintenance of its programmes, particularly its education programme, was essential for humanitarian and political reasons. He had noted the various suggestions made with the aim of helping to overcome the Agency's financial problems and was encouraged by the active interest in finding a lasting solution to UNRWA's problems. He wished to make his own position clear, however. He had made one suggestion, on the basis of the present system of financing, namely that those Governments which had shown concern for UNRWA should consult together informally with a view to agreeing to a reasonable apportionment of UNRWA's expenses among themselves. He deeply appreciated the support given to that suggestion and was particularly grateful to the Chairman of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA for his offer to assist in that connexion. As to the other suggestions made, which presupposed a change in the system of financing, the position defined in paragraph 27 of his report (A/36/13) had not changed.

40. The representative of Japan had said that UNRWA should rationalize its programmes so that existing funds were used more effectively, and that it should eliminate less important programmes and non-essential personnel in order to concentrate on those activities to which it had given priority, namely the education programme. He wished to assure the Japanese representative that every effort had been made to concentrate available resources on the education programme. The relief and health programmes had been severely cut back in recent years. Rations had been reduced by half and the Agency now simply distributed the food it received in kind from donor countries. Further savings could be made in that programme and diverted to education only if Governments converted their food contributions into cash, which they had been unwilling to do. The remainder of the relief programme had also been reduced and was now directed mainly

/...

(Mr. Rydbeck, UNRWA)

towards the aged, the handicapped and the destitute, who received only minimal assistance. The health programme had been reduced to a bare minimum and no further reductions were practicable without eliminating it entirely. Moreover, in recent years buildings had not been replaced or repaired, vehicles had not been replaced and agency staff had been denied agreed cost-of-living increases. Those false savings only stored up future expense for the Agency and, as could be seen from paragraph 7 of the report, had been increasing steadily. In 1981, they had amounted to almost \$45 million. The reduction of less essential programmes had in fact been in operation for some five or six years and could not be pushed further. As he had stated in paragraph 4 of his report, there were no additional resources which could be diverted from other programmes to support the education programme.

41. His staff shared the hope expressed by a number of representatives that the Agency would soon re-establish its headquarters in the Near East. He had remained in contact with the Governments of Lebanon and Jordan to that end.

42. He had forecast a deficit of some \$80 million for 1982, which, if not covered, would force a severe reduction in the Agency's programmes. Some \$39 million represented the shortfall in the education programme. He hoped to apply \$5 million from cash balances to that shortfall, leaving \$34 million as the bare minimum required in additional contributions over projected contributions if the education programme was to be maintained intact in all fields until the end of 1982.

42a. If sufficient funds to cover that bare minimum were not available by the beginning of 1982, he would have to begin to reduce services. His responsibilities would not permit him to continue all services, including schools, until funds were exhausted, since that would mean the end of the Agency. He would also have to give priority to services in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where there was no Arab government or administration to take over responsibility, and in Lebanon. While he appreciated the difficulties that such priorities would create for some host countries, unless the General Assembly decided otherwise, he would have to follow the same course in 1982 as had been envisaged in 1981 in order to keep the Agency solvent. He would of course spare no effort to raise the necessary additional funds and looked to the support of the international community in that endeavour.

43. The CHAIRMAN announced that the representative of Jordan wished to introduce draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.12 and L.13.

44. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking on a point of order, said that to the best of his knowledge draft resolutions could not be introduced until the texts were available.

45. The CHAIRMAN, responding to the point of order raised by Israel, said that it was not unprecedented for a draft resolution to be introduced before it had been distributed in order to expedite a Committee's work. In any event the draft resolutions would be distributed shortly.

46. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America) commended the Chairman on the way in which he had skirted around the point raised by Israel. His answer did not satisfy the United States delegation, however, which reserved the right to raise that point of order for a resolution could be made to sound perfectly acceptable and then prove to be quite the opposite when its actual text was made available.

/...

47. Mr. SHAMMA (Jordan), introducing draft resolutions A/SPC/36/L.12 and L.13, said that draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.12 entitled "University of Jerusalem for Palestine Refugees", reiterated the General Assembly's commitment to establish a university at Jerusalem to cater to the needs of Palestine refugees in the area. The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/36/593 showed that it would be possible to establish such a university but that Israel was creating all kinds of obstacles. The draft resolution called on Israel to remove those obstacles and to co-operate in the implementation of General Assembly resolution A/35/13 B and requested the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures, including a feasibility study for establishing the university. He expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

48. Draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.13, entitled "Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for the Palestine refugees", was modelled on General Assembly resolution 35/13 B and it reproduced operative paragraphs 1 and 2 thereof. He trusted that all Member States would contribute generously to that noble cause.

49. Speaking in exercise of the right of reply, he recalled that, at an earlier meeting, the representative of Israel had distorted the facts when he had quoted the former Prime Minister of Jordan as saying that Palestinians and Jordanians were one family. It was true that Palestinians and Jordanians had enjoyed very close relations and intermarried long before the creation of Israel and that there had been open borders and mobility between the two countries. The Palestinians had their own nationality, however, and were entitled to a homeland of their own like anyone else.

50. The representative of Israel had also accused Jordan of attacking Israel in 1948. In actual fact, 15,000 Arab troops had crossed into Israel in 1948 at the Palestinians' request, to save Palestinian survivors of Jewish atrocities perpetrated against the Palestinian people even before the British had withdrawn. Those 15,000 Arab troops had been met by 62,000 well-trained Israeli troops.

51. The Israeli representative had also said that Jordan was inhabited mainly by Palestinians. He wished to stress that Jordan was for the Jordanians and Palestine must be for the Palestinians. If Israel wanted peace it should agree to talk to Palestine's representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

52. Mr. AL-ZAHAWI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that at an earlier meeting the representative of the Tel Aviv régime had alleged that most of his family had been refugees from Iraq. He himself, as representative of Iraq, wished to point out that Jews had left Iraq of their own free will. He referred the Tel Aviv representative to the United Nations Human Rights Yearbook for 1953, which quoted Iraqi laws governing the conditions under which Jews had left that country.

53. The Zionist representative had also alleged that Jews had begun to be persecuted in Iraq as early as 1934, citing his own father as an example. In a confidential report to the British Foreign Office in December 1934, however, the British Ambassador to Iraq had noted that Jews in Iraq had enjoyed a privileged position prior to the First World War and that only from the 1920s onwards had the situation changed as zionism provoked tension and conflict between Jews and Arabs. Non-Zionist Jews had deplored that situation, which was encouraged by Zionist propaganda publications.

/...

(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

It was logical therefore, and in the interest of Iraqi Jews, that the Iraqi authorities should have banned such publications. In the early 1940s, an English Jew working as war correspondent for the Observer and the Evening Standard of London had reported from Iraq that, while the Arabs were very antagonistic to the British, French and Americans, the Jews had never been the object of Arab xenophobia. No Baghdad Jews had been assaulted or harassed, even at the height of the anti-Zionist campaign.

54. There was abundant documentary evidence to show that the Jewish emigration from Iraq had been the result of intensive Zionist activity there. Zionist Jews had forced Iraq's hand. When the future Israeli Minister of Police had visited Iraq in the 1940s, he had expressed bitterness at the Iraqi Jews' lack of co-operation with the Zionist underground. In 1950 and 1951, it had been Zionist bombs planted in places frequented by Jews in Baghdad that had prompted the Jews to leave for Israel. Again, according to Rabbi Berger in He who knows better, the British High Commissioner in Jerusalem had had to intercede with Ben Gurion in 1943 because Zionist intervention in Iraq was creating serious problems for Iraqi Jews. In an account published in the Israeli Digest in 1974 a Jew who had been airlifted from Baghdad recalled how the Jews from Iraq had been more prosperous and better educated than those from Europe yet, when they had arrived in Israel, they had been expected to live in appalling conditions in camps and later in overcrowded housing worse than that offered to European Jews. The Zionist representative had also claimed that the Government of Iraq had collaborated with Hitler, but then it should be recalled that Israel's close ally, South Africa, had collaborated with the Nazis.

55. Mr. TERZI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that he wished to assure the Commissioner-General of UNRWA that there was no spirit of confrontation in the Committee but simply a great concern that adequate funds should be forthcoming to cover UNRWA's deficit before the consideration of item 60 was completed. He therefore wished to join the representative of Lebanon in calling for a postponement of the vote on the various draft resolutions on the item, pending further consultations.

56. Speaking in exercise of the right of reply, he recalled that at an earlier meeting, the representative of Tel Aviv had said that in 1948, Palestinian Arabs had been urged by their leaders to leave their homes. What he had not mentioned was that that warning had come on 12 May, after and not before the Deir Yassin massacre on 19 April 1948.

57. At the Committee's 26th meeting, the United States representative had said that peace could be achieved in the Middle East by solving the Palestinian problem. That was welcome news, but the only way to solve that problem was for the Palestinians to return to their homeland. The United States representative had also stated that, since 1948, the United States had contributed \$1 billion for assistance to the Palestine refugees. That was a shameful amount if one recalled that, in three years, President Carter had given Israel more than \$10 billion in military assistance. If the United States was really concerned at UNRWA's persistent financial crisis, the only solution was to provide more funds to cover the deficit. Only the other day, the United States had allocated \$127 million to station 1,000 troops in Sinai. Why could it not give the same amount to UNRWA for the victims of aggression? The United States representative had also said that peace could be achieved when the root of the conflict in the Middle East was eradicated. Since everyone agreed that the root of the conflict was the Palestinian question, he hoped that that did not mean that the United States wished to eradicate

/...

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

the Palestinian people! The only way to eradicate the conflict was for the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination and return to their homeland.

8. The United States representative had also said that the Camp David accords were designed to solve all aspects of the Palestinian problem. He wished to recall that, on 8 September 1978, Menachem Begin had stated that the Camp David accords were based entirely on security for Israel. The Israelis could not therefore view the Camp David accords as a means of bringing peace to the region and restoring Palestinian rights.

9. There were various aspects to the Palestinian problem. First, there was the human aspect of 4 million Palestinians displaced from their homeland. The Camp David agreement had made no mention of the right of return, however. Instead, it had proposed the creation of a commission to consider the modalities for admitting persons displaced from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967. Nor did the Camp David accords refer to the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. Instead, they referred to "autonomy" for Palestinian Arabs. President Sadat had assured President Carter that Egypt would assume the Arab role emanating from the accords, following consultations with Jordan and the representatives of the Palestinian people, but he had not made any commitment to Palestinian self-determination.

10. Finally, the future of Jerusalem was the key to peace in the Middle East and the Camp David accords made no reference to it. On the contrary, on 17 September, Menachem Begin had assured the President of the United States that the Israeli Government had already settled the question of Jerusalem since, by a decree of July 1967, it had declared Jerusalem to be one indivisible city and the capital of Israel. He would like to know therefore, what contribution the Camp David accords could be claimed to have made to peace.

11. Mr. HAMDI (Saudi Arabia) said that if Israel and its supporters were sincere about seeking a just and durable solution to the problem of the Palestinian people, they should undertake negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He expressed astonishment at the statement made the previous week by the representative of the Soviet Union, who had expressed regret at the plight of the Palestinian refugees and had called upon the international community to assist UNRWA so that it might continue to provide its humanitarian services. The Soviet Union was one of the members of the Security Council which had voted for the displacement of the Palestinian people in 1949. In spite of the fact that other countries which had also voted in that way had contributed to the budget of UNRWA over the past 30 years, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries had neither contributed to the budget of UNRWA nor given it any assistance whatsoever. If the Soviet Union was a true friend of the Palestinian people it would contribute to the budget of UNRWA or at least announce its support for the demand made by Arab countries that the United Nations should cover the UNRWA budget deficit that year.

12. The representative of the United States, in introducing draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.11, had expressed regret that the Palestinian refugees had not returned to their homes and had not received compensation in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). In spite of that, the United States, by

/...

(Mr. Hamdi, Saudi Arabia)

providing military and political support, encouraged Israel to continue to deny the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and to refuse to compensate those refugees who did not wish to return. The delegation of Saudi Arabia would like to know whether that was a new position taken by the Government of the United States or whether those were just empty words, as was usually the case. Lastly, he appealed to his brother representatives from Arab States to desist from engaging in sharp exchanges with the delegation of Egypt. Such exchanges would only be harmful to Arab interests. Regardless of the Camp David accords and their consequences, Egypt was part of the Arab nation and would never forsake its Arab character or Islam for promises made to it. It was clear that Israel was not sincere when it spoke of peace even to those who had sacrificed so much for the sake of peace.

63. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said that the representative of Iraq had attempted to rewrite the history of the Jews of Iraq and their exodus from that country. He had made no mention of the pogroms which had been perpetrated against the Jews by the régime in power in 1941. He could not deny that Jews had been hanged in the squares in Baghdad and Bosra as a result of persecution even after the exodus of the Jews. It was necessary to understand that there were two refugee problems, a double exodus which had taken place as a result of the war unleashed by the Arabs against Israel. The exodus of Jews from Arab lands must be clearly understood in order to appraise the refugee question correctly. The expulsion of the Jews from Arab countries where they had lived for centuries and the confiscation of their property had not been brought about by collusion between the Zionist forces and the imperialist Powers. The historical results of that persecution could not be dismissed on such a simple pretext, but had very practical repercussions on the future of the Palestinian problem.

64. Mr. AL-ZAHAWI (Iraq) said that the so-called persecution of Jews in Iraq had taken place after the fall of the Government in question. In the ensuing chaos more Moslems and Christians had been massacred than Jews. But as always, the representative of Israel sought to make a special case for the Jews. He wished to set the Jews above the law. The Jews hanged in Baghdad had been executed for treasonable acts in accordance with the laws of the country. Furthermore, the Jews who had left Iraq were not refugees since they had been allowed to leave that country in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and laws published in the United Nations Yearbooks. If Iraq had refused to let the Jews leave, it would have been accused of holding them hostage. The Jews had been allowed to leave and had been given the right to return. Israel, however, did not recognize, even in principle, the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes.

65. Mr. YOUSEF (Egypt), referring to the statement made by the observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization on the Camp David accords, said that paragraph 4 of the Framework for Peace provided that Egypt and Israel would work with each other and with other interested parties to establish agreed procedures for a prompt, just and permanent implementation of the resolutions on the refugee problem. His Government had always held the position that the accords were only one step on the path to peace. Egypt was prepared to undertake any other steps which would achieve more than what was set out in the accords.

/...

66. Mr. TERZI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that the Camp David Framework for Peace sought to impose modalities of admission for persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and made no mention of the right of the refugees to return to their homes in accordance with Security Council resolution 237 (1967), which called upon the Government of Israel to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who had fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities. The Palestinian people did not want to be integrated into Israeli society, but sought to return to their homes and retain their own national identity.

67. Mr. SHAMMA (Jordan), referring to the statement made by the representative of Israel, said that there was no international law which recognized the sovereignty of refugees in a host country. There was, however, an international law which recognized the right of refugees to return to their homes. Some of the Arab countries from which Jews had emigrated recognized that right and granted it. Israel, therefore, should recognize the right of the Palestinian refugees to return and ensure that that right was exercised.

68. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), in exercise of his right of reply to the representative of Jordan, said that there was also a fundamental international law guaranteeing the sovereignty of every Member State of the United Nations. It was within the sovereignty of every Government to decide who would cross its frontiers. Furthermore, all the questions concerning the Palestinian and Jewish refugees should be settled at the negotiating table. With regard to the statement made by the representative of Iraq, he said that persecution of and discrimination against Jews continued to exist in Iraq. The Baath party newspaper had recently published a children's supplement which contained a poem praising the terrorist murderers of children in an Israeli kibbutz. The poem praised the terrorists as angels and noted with pride that the murders had been carried out under instructions from the Government of Iraq itself. The Baath party newspaper had also published an article on 9 February 1979 which linked the Talmud, Jewish tradition and zionism with idoltry, witchcraft and human sacrifice. Lastly, the International Air Transport Association directory of travel information published in January 1979 stated that the Government of Iraq refused entry and passage to Jewish travellers whose religion appeared in their passports.

69. Mr. ADHAMI (Syria) said that during the debate on the question under consideration the representative of Israel had not sought to help the Committee deal with the subject, but had attempted to waste the time of the Committee and divert its attention from legal, humanitarian and political considerations to secondary issues. His statements, like the statements of his predecessors, reflected the special logic of Zionist thought and racist Zionist theory which upheld the supremacy of the chosen people, setting them above the rest of mankind. Those same arguments invoked by the representative of Israel had been discredited on many occasions in the past. Zionist propaganda, which was based on contradiction and blatant lies, reflected the bankruptcy of the position of the Zionist entity. Israel, supported by the United States, openly defied the will of the international community. The representative of Israel continued to ignore the fact that the core of the problem was the denial of the basic rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination. In the statement he had made the previous week calling for peace between Israel and the Arab States, the representative of the Zionist entity had avoided any mention of the Palestinian people or the expulsion and the persecution which they had suffered at the hands of the

/...

(Mr. Adhami, Syria)

Israelis. If Israel was sincere about the search for peace, it should recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions and stop trying to impose a false solution based on a so-called autonomy, which was designed to deprive the Palestinian people of the right to return to their homeland.

70. The CHAIRMAN announced that India had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.8 and that Trinidad and Tobago had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.10.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.