

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

*Official Records**



SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
25th meeting
held on
Friday, 6 November 1981
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD (PARTIAL) OF THE 25TH MEETING**

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/36/PV.25
10 November 1981

ENGLISH

AGENDA ITEM 60 (continued)

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/SPC/36/L.6, L.7, L.8, L.9):

- (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)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/385 and Add.1 and 2, A/36/558, 559 and 593).

Mr. AL-ZAHAWI (Iraq): I should first like to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Olof Rydbeck for the dedication and the sincerity with which he has undertaken his difficult task as Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Rydbeck and working closely with him when we were representing our respective countries in the Security Council in the mid-1970s. I was deeply impressed by his understanding of the Palestinian problem and his sympathy with the plight of the Palestinian refugees. That understanding was clearly reflected in Mr. Rydbeck's statement introducing the Commissioner-General's report to this Committee. I for one shall never forget the role that Mr. Rydbeck played in casting Sweden's decisive vote in the Security Council for allowing the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the debates of the Council on the same footing as States Members of the United Nations which are not members of the Council. That historic decision of the Council was arrived at in spite of the machinations and the notorious methods used to bring pressure to bear on other delegations by one Mr. Patrick Daniel Moynihan, then the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

Our thanks also go to the Chairman and members of the Advisory Commission for their efforts on behalf of UNRWA. Last but not least I wish to express our deep appreciation to the staff of UNRWA, who are discharging their duties under intolerable conditions.

Iraq, together with the other Arab States, firmly believes that the responsibility for the plight of the Palestinian refugees rests squarely upon the Zionists who usurped Palestine and dispossessed the Palestinians and upon those Zionist sympathizers who voted for the partition of Palestine. Nevertheless, the gravity of the situation in which UNRWA finds itself has led Iraq to increase its contributions appreciably within the last couple of years.

One cannot escape the fact that the Palestinian refugees' problem is basically political and not merely humanitarian. Mr. Rydbeck, like his predecessors, has rightly pointed out this basic political factor. This fact emanates from the unique character of the problem; there is no other refugee problem like it in modern history. No people in modern times have been the target of a plan whereby they are forcibly uprooted from their homeland by a minority, for another entirely different and foreign people to occupy their lands homes and cities, to establish an exclusivist theocratic State which not only prevents the indigenous people's return but also refuses to recognize their right to return.

The Palestinian refugees, of course, are bitterly aware of that fact themselves. In his report for the year 1963-64, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA makes the following point regarding the attitude of the refugees:

"In their own eyes they are not refugees at all in the sense in which that term is used to describe persons who have uprooted themselves and broken with their past in order to seek a new life in new surroundings and in a new country. The Palestine refugees regard themselves rather as temporary wards of the international community whom they hold responsible for the upheaval which resulted in their having to leave their homes. As they see it, the international community has a duty to enable them to return to their homes and, meanwhile, to provide for their maintenance and welfare."(A/5813, para.16)

In his report for the following year, the Commissioner-General once again pointed out that the feelings of the refugees continue unchanged:

"From their standpoint, a nation has been obliterated and a population arbitrarily deprived of its birthright. This injustice still festers in their minds and they hold the United Nations responsible for their lot and for extending assistance to them until a solution can be found to their problems. Their longing to return to their homes...remains unabated."

(A/6013)

The representative of the Tel Aviv régime, purportedly giving the genesis of the refugee problem, accused the Arab countries of distorting history by blaming Israel for the creation of the problem. He proceeded to repeat the Zionist big lie that the problem was the result of the war of the Arab States against Israel. Yet, let us hear what his superiors and the leaders of Israel have to say; let us hear what David Ben Gurion states in his memoirs "Rebirth and Destiny of Israel". While boasting of the exploits of the Haganah, he inadvertently reveals the truth about the cause of the refugee problem. He said:

"Until the British left, no Jewish settlement, however remote, was entered or seized by the Arabs, while the Haganah...captured many Arab positions and liberated Tiberias and Haifa, Jaffa and Safad. So, on the day of destiny (15 May 1948), that part of Palestine where the Haganah could operate was almost clear of Arabs."

As the Nazis wanted the Reich to be judenrein - clear of Jews - so the Zionists wanted Palestine to be clear of Arabs.

Begin himself, then the leader of the terrorist gang, the Irgun, boasted in his book "The Revolt" of his group's exploits:

"In Jerusalem, as elsewhere, we were the first to pass from the defensive to the offensive. Arabs began to flee in terror...Haganah was carrying out successful attacks on other fronts, while all the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing shouting 'Deir Yasin'."

Begin added:

"In the months preceding the Arab invasion, and while the five Arab States were conducting preparations, we continued to make sallies into Arab territory. The conquest of Jaffa stands out as an event of first-rate importance in the struggle for Hebrew independence early in May on the eve of the invasion by the five Arab States."

Deir Yasin, to which Begin referred, was the deliberate and unprovoked massacre on 9 April 1948 - that is, before the end of the Mandate and before Israel was announced as a State and before the Arabs moved - of the inhabitants of the village of Deir Yasin, which is on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

An account of the slaughter of the innocent villagers was given by Jacques de Reynier, the Chief Delegate of the International Red Cross, who was able to

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reach the village and record the aftermath of the tragedy in his book "A Jérusalem un drapeau flottait sur la ligne de feu", published in Switzerland in 1950. Mr. de Reynier said the following:

"Three hundred persons were massacred...without any military reason or provocation of any kind; old men, women, children, newly-born were savagely murdered with grenades and knives by Jewish troops of the Irgun, entirely under the control and direction of their chiefs."

Mr. de Reynier described Jewish troops whom he met on the scene, men and women, armed with pistols, sub-machine guns, grenades and "large knives most of which were still blood-stained".

In the original Hebrew version of his book "The Revolt", Begin - leader of the Irgun butchers of Deir Yasin boasts that: "The massacre was not only justified, but there would not have been a State of Israel without the 'victory' at Deir Yasin." That was quoted in the Jewish Newsletter of 3 October 1960.

Deir Yasin was indeed a turning point in the exodus of the Palestinians, as it was in the whole history of Palestine; the Zionists having perpetrated the crime, broadcast it among the Palestinians to induce them to flee in terror. Zionist underground forces - as this was still before the end of the Mandate - using loudspeakers roamed the streets of cities threatening the Arab inhabitants. "The Jericho road is still open", they told the Jerusalem Arabs, "flee Jerusalem before you are killed." That was quoted by Sir John Bagot Glubb in his book "A Soldier with the Arabs", published in London in 1957.

This was the truth of the matter: before the British left and before a single Arab from any Arab State set foot on Palestinian soil the Zionists had waged their campaign of terror against the Palestinian Arabs, occupied territory reserved for the Arab State and the International Zone of Jerusalem, as well as the area assigned to the Jewish State; there were 300,000 Palestinian Moslems and Christian Arabs who were refugees in adjacent Arab countries before any soldier from any Arab State entered Palestine. As Sir Anthony Nutting, a former Minister of State in the British Government, remarked in a speech he delivered in New York on 2 November 1967: "It would be truer to say that the refugees were the cause of the first Arab-Israeli war and not the result".

Thirty years after the events of 1948 details of the Zionist atrocities keep surfacing from Zionist sources. The following testimony of a soldier who participated in the occupation of the Arab village of Duwayma in 1948 was quoted in the Israeli daily Davar of 6 June 1979:

"They killed some 80 to 100 Arabs, women and children. The children were killed by smashing their skulls with clubs...in the village there remained Arab men and women who were put in houses without food. Then the sappers came to blow up the houses. One officer ordered a sapper to put two old women into the house he was about to blow up. The sapper refused and said that he would obey only such orders as were handed down to him by his direct commander. So the officer ordered his own soldiers to put the old women in and the atrocity was carried out. Another soldier boasted that he raped an Arab woman and then shot her. Another Arab woman with a day old baby was employed in cleaning jobs in the yard...she worked for one or two days and then was shot together with her baby...cultured and well-mannered commanders who are considered good fellows ... have turned into low murderers and this happened not in the storm of the battle and blind passion, but because of a system of expulsion and annihilation. The less Arabs remain the better..."

The extract from Davar was also quoted in the Spectator of London of 3 November 1979 in an article by Edward Mortimer, under the heading "The Murderers in Israel's Army". Having quoted Davar, Mr. Mortimer goes on to say the following:

"This story also helps to demolish another Israeli myth, in this case one effectively challenged by Erskine Childers in the Spectator nearly 20 years ago - the myth that the Palestinian Arabs left their homes voluntarily, in response to calls from Arab radio stations...But even more deadly to that myth is the public admission by the most authoritative possible source that, at least in one key area (the towns of Lydda and Ramla, on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road), a formal decision was taken at the highest level, by Ben Gurion himself, to drive 50,000 Arab inhabitants out of their homes and into the area controlled by the Arab Legion. The admission comes in the memoirs of Yitzhak Rabin, who commanded the brigade which carried out the operation, and who has since been Prime Minister of Israel (1974-1977)."

Mr. Mortimer goes on to say:

"But here again Israelis have had to wait for the foreign press to tell them what Rabin had written, since the passage in question was deleted from the book by a special Cabinet committee of censors. Slowly Israelis are having to face the reality of the relationship between themselves and the Palestinian Arabs, Few of them now believe that Palestine was a land without people -"

This was the famous slogan adopted at the time of Hertzog by the Zionists according to which Palestine was a land without people for a people without a land. Mr. Mortimer goes on to say:

"-before the Jews 'returned' to it, or that the Palestinians did not exist, as Golda Meir once said".

Mr. John H. Davis, who occupied the office of Commissioner-General of UNRWA for five years has remarked that: "The extent to which the refugees were savagely driven out by the Israelis as part of a deliberate master-plan has been insufficiently recognized." Mr. Davis goes on to explain how the Zionist concept of a Jewish State called for the ousting of the indigenous Arab population from its homeland and emphasized that this objective was achieved by means ranging from "expert psychological warfare to ruthless expulsion by force". This is quoted from Mr. John Davis' book "The Evasive Peace", published in London in 1968.

Expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs was only half of the Zionist programme for the takeover of Palestine; the other half was the the so-called ingathering of world Jewry into Palestine - the raison d'être for the establishment of the Jewish State. The Zionists launched and still continue to pursue a world-wide policy aimed at uprooting Jewish communities from countries where they had been established for centuries and transferring them to Palestine.

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Zionist methods of persuasion ranged from lavish promises to the instigation of anti-Semitism to outright terrorist attacks against the Jews themselves in order to force them to emigrate to Israel, and to Israel alone.

The representative of the Tel Aviv régime accused the Arab Governments of exploiting the Palestinian refugees and abusing humanitarian concern for them to pursue their own belligerent policies. These false accusations sound doubly false coming from a Zionist spokesman. The most important feature of the Zionist drive for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine was the deliberately arranged campaign that the plight of the wretched survivors of Hitlerism should be a moral argument which the West and the Gentile world had to accept. It was the Zionists who abused humanitarian concern by channelling that concern into one premise: Jewish statehood in Palestine.

Arthur Hays Sulzberger uttered this cri de coeur in the New York Times of 27 October 1946:

"Why in God's name should the fate of all those unhappy people be subordinated to the single cry of statehood? I cannot rid myself of the feeling that the unfortunate Jews of Europe's displaced persons camps are helpless hostages for whom statehood has been made the only ransom.

Richard Crossman, the champion of the Zionist cause on the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry writing in 1946 in his Washington Diary said

The Zionists are terrific. Their main preoccupation is not to save Jews alive out of Europe but to get Jews into Palestine.

(Richard Crossman, "Palestine Mission: A Personal Record", Harper and Bros., New York, 1947)

The most damaging evidence comes from the mouths of the Zionist leaders themselves. In 1937, Dr. Chaim Weizman, then President of World Zionism, said of Europe's six million Jews:

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"They are economic and moral dust...in a cruel world...They must meet their fate...Only a branch shall survive. They must accept it.

This was quoted by Ben Hecht in his book "Perfidy", on page 149. What Weizman meant by 'branch' of course, was the Zionist branch, which believed in statehood for Palestine.

Itzhak Greenbaum, chief of the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency announced in Tel Aviv in 1943.

When they asked me, couldn't you give money out of the United Jewish Appeal funds for the rescue of Jews in Europe, I said 'No.' and I say again 'No'. In my opinion one should resist this wave which pushes the Zionist activities to secondary importance.

The statement by Mr. Greenbaum addressed to the Zionist Executive Council on 16 February 1943 was published in his book entitled "In Days of Holocaust and Destruction" in 1946. This was also quoted by Ben Hecht in his book "Perfidy" on page 50.

David Ben-Gurion, in a letter to the Zionist executive dated 17 December 1938, wrote the following:

The dimensions of the refugee problem demand an immediate territorial solution [that is the Jewish refugees, of course]: if Palestine will not absorb them, another territory will. Zionism is endangered...If Jews will have to choose between the refugees, saving Jews from concentration camps and assisting a national museum in Palestine, mercy will have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channelled into saving Jews from various countries. Zionism will be struck off the agenda, not only in world public opinion, in Britain and the United States, but elsewhere in Jewish public opinion. If we allow a separation between the refugee problem and the Palestine problem, we are risking the existence of Zionism.

This is quoted in the book "The Other Israel", edited by Arie Bober and published by Anchor Books, New York, in 1972.

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The Zionist representative has the nerve to come here and accuse the Arabs of exploiting the refugees when it was the Zionists who sank to such unprecedented cynicism and inhumanity towards those whom they claimed to save and to protect.

This Zionist exploitation of the Jews did not end with the establishment of their entity in Palestine. They next directed their energies towards the uprooting of Jewish communities throughout the world resorting to the provocation, as I said, of anti-Semitism, or, as they did in Baghdad in the early fifties, throwing bombs into synagogues and cafés frequented by Jews in order to create panic that would force Jews to flee to the Zionist haven, of course. This was the other phase of the Zionist plan to implement the so called exchange of population of which the Zionist representative spoke here, as if it were merely the outcome of the hazards of war and Arab aggressions.

Let us look at some of the statements of Zionist leaders concerning the uses of anti-Semitism for advancing the cause of Zionism. In 1963, Moshe Sharett, then Chairman of the Jewish Agency, told the thirty-eighth annual congress of the Scandinavian Youth Federation that the freedom enjoyed by the majority of Jews imperiled the political Zionist cause at the twenty-sixth World Zionist Congress, the delegates were told that the Jew is endangered by the diminution of anti-Semitism in the United States of America. We are endangered by freedom, he declared. Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, declared: Not always and not everywhere do I oppose anti-Semitism. These are quoted from the Jewish Guardian, published in New York in February 1975.

In a report on the situation of European Jewish communities, Mr. Gevaryahu states, as reported in the Jewish paper Yediot Aharonot of 9 February 1969:

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Swedish Jewry is also corroded by assimilation, and even the idea of immigration to Israel is still remote...Anti-Semitism has a certain role to play in preserving Jews and Jewishness...It reminds the Jews who they are and forces them to stick to their people and remain loyal to their ancient homeland.

So much for the Zionist spokesman's boasts about the absorption of Jews in occupied Palestine. Israel is a settler-colonial entity it can survive only through the expulsion of the indigenous Arab population and the settlement of the greatest number of Jews possible in their place.

In 1967, the Zionists repeated in the rest of occupied Palestine the criminal tactics they had pursued during the Mandate and their aggression against the Palestinian people in 1948. In his report to the Security Council, H.G. Gussing, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, mentioned the following:

...persistent reports of acts of intimidation by Israel armed forces and of Israel attempts to suggest to the population, by loudspeakers mounted on cars, that they might be better off on the East Bank. There have also been reports that in several localities buses and trucks were put at the disposal of the population for travel to the East Bank. (A/6797 p.13)

The situation in Lebanon deserves special attention. The conflict and instability in that beleaguered country was part of the Zionist plot against Lebanon, long before the Palestinian refugees became a significant political factor and long before the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization. According to the diaries of Moshe Sharett, then Prime Minister, Moshe Dayan, who was Chief of Staff, told a private meeting in 1954:

The only thing that is necessary is to find an officer, even just a major. We should either win his heart or buy him with money to make him agree to declare himself the saviour of the Maronite

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population. Then the Israeli army will enter Lebanon will occupy the necessary territory, and will create a Christian régime which will ally itself with Israel. The territory from the Litani southward will be totally annexed by Israel and everything will be all right.

This was quoted by The Times of London of 10 April 1961.

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If we come back to the question of Palestinian refugees, we find that it was repeatedly pointed out in UNRWA's report that the major obstacle to the accomplishment of UNRWA's objective of re-integration of and self-support for the refugees was Israel's refusal to give the refugees an opportunity to choose between repatriation and compensation in accordance with the General Assembly resolution. I merely wish to point to those documents which contain this assertion, documents A/2717, A/2978, A/3212, A/3686 and A/3931. The report for the year 1956 contains the following highly pertinent observation:

"During the discussion of the Director's report of the tenth session of the General Assembly, it was stated that there was inadequate understanding of the close connexion between the continuous tension in the Near East and the problem of the Palestine refugees. During the period under review there has been an increasing awareness in public discussions of the situation that the nearly 1 million people whose lives were disrupted by the events of 1947-1948 are today, in 1956, one of the most important causes of the continued unrest and at the same time the victims of it. But that awareness has not yet been transmuted into constructive political action." (A/3212)

These facts are not, as Mr. Rydbeck so rightly emphasized in his statement, matters of historical or academic interest. Time has not obliterated the feelings of the refugees, nor has it negated their inalienable rights. During the past decade, the General Assembly has become increasingly aware of the fact that the rights of the Palestinian people are the cause of and the key to the question of Palestine. With this awareness came the Assembly's efforts slowly but steadily to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable right in the knowledge that therein lay the only way to establish a just and lasting peace in the region.

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References have been made here to the Camp David accords. The Israeli representative spoke of them as the only way towards peace and towards a solution. But what did transpire at Camp David? The Camp David accords were in fact just one attempt among others to sabotage the efforts and the trend within the United Nations itself and to impose the Zionist plan devised by Menachem Begin in 1977 and based on the denial of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian refugees and their rights are an integral part of the Palestinian problem. They are, in fact, the touchstone with which the international community can test the viability and the legitimacy of any peace proposal.

The Secretary of State of the United States, Cyrus Vance, told the General Assembly on 29 September 1978 that:

"... the United States is irrevocably committed to bringing about a satisfactory solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees. We will play an active role in the resolution of this problem. A solution must reflect the relevant United Nations resolutions relating to the refugees." (A/33/PV.14, pp. 52-53)

Yet the fact remains that the United States has done nothing to implement this assertion. It has, rather, done everything to encourage Israel to be ever more intransigent and aggressive in its policies. The so-called framework for peace of Camp David made no reference to, nor did it reflect, the United Nations resolutions which Mr. Vance asserted should be taken into account. The refugees' absolute and inalienable right to return is distorted by Camp David into a selective process of admission by which Israel would hold a veto power and this process is to be applied only to persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. No reference is made to the refugees of 1948 for whom UNRWA was established, nor to the refugees displaced since 1967. No mention whatsoever is made of the principle affirmed by the United Nations of the refugees' free choice between repatriation and compensation.

(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

The Commissioner-General, Mr. Rybeck, has confirmed in his statement what all other previous reports of his predecessors had stated. It is the refugees themselves who utterly refuse to surrender their right under resolution 194 (III), which is indeed an inalienable right, as they refuse to surrender their identity as Palestinians. What the Zionists are really criticizing Arab Governments for is their refusal to coerce the Palestinian refugees to accept the Zionist master plan of uprooting them permanently from Palestine and consolidating the exchange of population of which the Zionist representative here spoke.

Israel was admitted to the United Nations in 1949 after giving specific assurances that it would abide by the terms of resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III), which called for the return of the refugees. The Israeli assurance was given at a time when neither resolution 181 (II) nor 194 (III) had been accepted by the Arab Member States of the United Nations. Israel's acceptance of these resolutions was therefore not conditional on their acceptance by the Arab States. In denying the refugees' right to return, the Tel Aviv régime is in breach of its obligation as a Member of the United Nations and as a signatory of the Geneva Convention. The Zionists have no right to sit here and try to unload on others the crimes and the consequences of their crimes for which they and they alone are responsible.

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The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker, who wishes to speak in the exercise of his **right** of reply, is the representative of Egypt.

Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): I regret having asked for the right of reply at such a late hour, but I should nevertheless like to explain a few points.

First of all, the delegation of Egypt has always repeated that it respects objective differences of opinion and viewpoints opposed to its attitudes. It has never pretended and does not now pretend that the Camp David framework is a complete or ideal or final solution. But at the same time, the delegation of Egypt rejects any qualification of or accusations against its intentions as a basic party to the Camp David agreements. Egypt has always said and now repeats that the Camp David framework is an operative framework and a first preparatory step and has never been the end of the road. Egypt, which is a party to the Camp David agreement and is committed to it, welcomed, continues to welcome and proclaims that it welcomes any other objective, constructive initiatives if they will truly help to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East and if they win the agreement of the parties concerned.

The Camp David framework is directly aimed at three objectives. First, it is aimed at alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Secondly, concluding the occupation of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. Thirdly, placing them under the rule of a Palestinian authority. The question of the return of the Palestinians who left after 1967 has been solved within the framework of paragraphs 3 and 4 and I hope that these paragraphs will be read carefully in order that members might understand them. Fourthly, since the representative of Jordan has proposed that that the full text of the Iraqi statement be distributed verbatim, I should like to have the reservations entered by the representative of Egypt attached to that document, including the objections that I have just stated.