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at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. EL-CHOUFFI (Syrian Arab Republic)

later: Mr. FIGUEROA (Argentina)

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THE NEAR EAST (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 50: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

1. Mr. van SUCHTELEN (Netherlands) introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/34/L.6.

2. Mr. JUSEIBEH (Jordan) introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/34/L.5.

3. His Government considered that the over-all response to General Assembly resolution 33/112 C of 18 December 1978 left much to be desired, in view of the plight of the nearly 1.8 million Palestinian refugees, particularly those eligible for higher education and special training. Only a handful of States had responded positively to the resolution, and even then the response had been on an extremely limited scale. To those States and specialized agencies which had made some commitment, he wished to express his deep appreciation. He hoped that all States in a position to do so would provide concrete assistance to the Palestinian refugees in diaspora by helping them to acquire the skills they needed in order to lead independent lives instead of remaining in the refugee camps.

4. Their minimum education needs were being satisfied less and less, as reflected in the reduced number of scholarships that had been offered for higher education in the past six years. New offers fell far short of filling the gap. Almost 55 per cent of the Agency's budget was already allocated to education and that the lower levels of schooling would be in serious jeopardy unless the projected \$50 million deficit in the Agency's allocations was reversed.

5. Drawing attention to the new proposal contained in operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.5, he said that it referred to centres to be established in areas with the greatest concentration of refugees. It had been included because for a variety of reasons, some countries found it difficult to place stateless refugees in their universities and others were reluctant to make direct contributions to UNRWA. The paragraph was non-political and was designed to enable such States to assist the refugees by establishing vocational training centres in the host countries. The request, which was addressed to members of the various regional and other groupings in the United Nations, was being made at a time when the universities of Jordan were already granting substantial scholarship funds for the training of Palestinian refugees.

6. Mr. AL-ATIYYAH (Iraq) said that the Palestinian people were living under occupation or as refugees because of the Zionist invasion of Palestine and any solution to their problem must take into account who was primarily responsible for their plight. It was well known that the establishment of the Zionist State had led

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(Mr. Al-Atiyyah, Iraq)

to the displacement of the Palestinian people, as predicted by Theodor Herzl, the Zionist leader, 50 years before its establishment and admitted by Moshe Dayan, the Minister of Defence, in 1969. There was no truth in the claim made by the Israeli representative that the Arab States were responsible for the exodus of the Palestinian refugees; the Zionist information agencies were always trying to distort the facts regarding the displacement of the Palestinians in order to promote the resettlement of the refugees in other countries. He quoted an extract published in The New York Times from the memoirs of Yitzhak Rabin, the former Prime Minister of Israel, regarding the decision of the Zionist leaders to terrorize the Arabs of Palestine into leaving the country in 1948.

7. The adoption of resolutions endorsing the Zionist presence in Palestine in 1949 was made possible by the fact that the membership of the United Nations at that time consisted of imperialist or imperialist-controlled States. When those resolutions led to war and the displacement of a large segment of the Palestinian people, those imperialist States established UNRWA as a temporary instrument in the hope that the refugees would eventually be resettled rather than returned to their homeland. However, the expanded and more representative membership of the United Nations in the years that followed had recognized the national rights of the Palestinian people. UNRWA must, therefore, continue to receive support for its humanitarian work until the Palestinian people were able to exercise their right to self-determination in their independent State.

8. As a result of Zionist expansion, the numbers and problems of the refugees had grown, aggravating UNRWA's financial crisis. An alternative must accordingly be found to UNRWA's dependence on voluntary contributions. Since the issue of the Palestinian refugees could become a fuse which would ignite the whole of the Middle East, the United Nations should shoulder the financial burdens involved in the maintenance of minimum living standards for the refugees in pursuance of its peace-keeping objectives.

9. UNRWA's budget should be incorporated in the United Nations regular budget and a scale of assessment should be established to determine the contributions of Member States in accordance with their financial capacity. He was sure that the Arab States would be more than willing to pay the contributions required. He found it difficult to understand the objections of some States to the merging of the two budgets, unless the underlying political objective was to maintain hegemony over UNRWA in order to keep the Agency under constant threat of losing support. The United States, for example, was in practice paying more in contributions to UNRWA than it would pay under the scale of assessments applicable to the United Nations budget.

10. A further possible objection, namely that the merging of the budgets might subject UNRWA to political pressures, was groundless since the Agency's current financial situation had already made it dependent on voluntary contributions and, therefore, subject to political rather than humanitarian considerations. The only way to free UNRWA from political pressures was to free it from financial pressures

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(Mr. Al-Atiyyah, Iraq)

by providing funds from the United Nations rather than from individual States. The suggestion that the oil-producing Arab States should assume UNRWA's financial burden was only a tactic for exonerating Israel from responsibility for the plight of the refugees; it implied acquiescence in Zionist aggression. Since United Nations resolutions had acted as a catalyst for the establishment of the Zionist entity but had failed to guarantee Palestinian rights under the partition plan, the United Nations should not be absolved from its political, moral and financial responsibility towards the Palestinian people. Under the proposed merger of the two budgets, the Arab States would, in any case, be increasing their contributions to UNRWA. The Palestinian refugees themselves rejected the transfer of responsibility to the Arab States as an attempt to force them to settle in countries other than Palestine.

11. Certain States sympathetic to the Palestinian cause might have reservations regarding the merging of the budgets because of their limited financial resources. However, under the scale of assessments, the additional contributions of the smaller States would not exceed 0.1 per cent or a maximum of \$16,000 for UNRWA. A special scale of assessments for UNRWA might be worked out in order to reduce or remove the financial burden from the poorer countries by increasing the contributions of countries able and willing to bear the extra cost. However, he was confident that the smaller countries, which had achieved independence after a long struggle against imperialism and racism, would be willing to contribute as an expression of solidarity and support for the just cause of the Palestinian people.

12. Some friendly States might object because countries which had supported the Palestinian cause were being asked to contribute as well as those which had been responsible for the displacement of the Palestinians and were seeking their resettlement. However, since UNRWA's services were needed, it was essential to preserve the refugees from the political blackmail inherent in leaving their fate in the hands of contributor States which might have political aims and ambitions in the region.

13. In conclusion, he once again called for a solution to UNRWA's financial crisis by the incorporation of the Agency's budget in the regular budget of the United Nations. If necessary, the Secretary-General should be requested to establish a group of experts to examine that proposal, submit appropriate alternatives and prepare a feasibility study of the various proposals and the difficulties that might impede their implementation.

14. Mr. Figueroa (Argentina) took the Chair.

15. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan), speaking on a point of order, suggested that, in view of the valuable information and practical suggestions contained in the statement made by the representative of Iraq, that statement should be reproduced in extenso.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided that the full text of the statement by the representative of Iraq should be issued as a separate document.

17. It was so decided.

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18. Mr. MUSSA (Somalia) paid tribute to the work done by the former Commissioner-General of UNRWA, and expressed confidence that the new Commissioner-General would accomplish the difficult mission entrusted to him.

19. The problem of the Palestine refugees had been created by Israel and its mentors, who had uprooted and dispersed the Palestinians three decades earlier and continued to deny them their inalienable rights to repatriation, self-determination and national independence. UNRWA's humanitarian services were not and could not be a substitute for the restoration of those rights: that could be achieved only by the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine. As host to hundreds of thousands of refugees who had fled from persecution, genocide and denial of their right to self-determination, Somalia knew only too well the suffering which refugees had to undergo.

20. His delegation agreed that until a just and lasting settlement of the Palestine refugee problem was achieved, UNRWA's services would remain indispensable. UNRWA's chronic financial crisis required an in-depth appraisal if yet another catastrophe in the Middle East was to be averted. His delegation had given due consideration to the alternatives open to the Agency, as described by the Commissioner-General, and agreed that the only possible course in the present circumstances was to continue to curtail the Agency's services to match available resources. At the same time, however, it believed that the solution to UNRWA's financial crisis, lay in placing the Agency's financing on a firmer and broader basis. The international community had a solemn moral and political obligation to keep the Agency in operation and to prevent a further cutback in its services. Any further reduction in relief assistance, health care or education would be interpreted by the refugees as yet another move by the international community to abandon them.

21. His delegation therefore supported the suggestion made on many occasions in the Committee that UNRWA's entire expenditure should be met from the regular budget of the United Nations, or the wages of its local employees should be paid by the Organization. It also hoped that the Agency's headquarters would be relocated and consolidated in the area of operations. His delegation wished to commend those countries which had contributed generously to the financing of the Agency.

22. Mr. MUNRO (Canada) expressed regret at what he regarded as the unfortunate politicization of the debate on UNRWA's activities. All Member States were aware that the issue had serious political implications, but there were other more appropriate forums in which they could and would be discussed. The Committee's present task was to review the latest report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and to decide what action to take in the light of that report.

23. His country had always attached great importance to UNRWA's work in dealing with one of the most obvious humanitarian concerns of the United Nations. All Member States, whatever their views on the political issues involved in the situation in the Middle East, must recognize that that situation had brought human tragedy to the Palestinians. His country had consistently taken concrete steps to alleviate that tragedy by supporting the Agency, and had recognized the importance of providing the Agency with adequate resources to implement its programmes. The Commissioner-General had made abundantly clear the financial constraints which impeded the fulfilment of his mandate.

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(Mr. Munro, Canada)

24. Canada was opposed to incorporating UNRWA's costs in the regular United Nations budget, for it believed that the international community should show its concern for the plight of the Palestinians by making voluntary contributions towards their support and rehabilitation. His country had contributed, and would contribute even more generously in the future, to that objective and only wished that other Member States would adopt the same attitude and share more adequately in the United Nations common responsibility to alleviate the plight of the Palestinian refugees.

25. Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen) said that rarely in history had there been such a tragedy as that which had befallen the Palestinian people. Even colonialist régimes such as that which had dominated the southern part of his own country had been motivated only by the desire to extract profits from the territory and to exploit the labour of the peoples of conquered lands. World zionism, however, unlike any other plot, was predicated on the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland by all possible means of terrorism and the eradication of their culture and civilization. Ever since the Zionist entity's occupation of Palestine in 1948, it had tried to banish the Palestinian presence, even outside the occupied territories. The news media carried regular reports about Israeli acts of aggression against refugee camps and civilian targets in southern Lebanon.

26. The 1947 General Assembly resolution on the partition of Palestine was one of the blunders for which the whole world was still paying. That resolution had created the racist, expansionist State of Israel, which had gone beyond the frontiers set in 1947 by the United Nations and had made war on the neighbouring Arab States with a view to annexing the whole of Palestine. The aggressive aspirations of the Zionist entity had more than once posed the threat of another world war. There was no need to remind the Committee that the Palestinian people had been living in inhumane conditions in camps for over 30 years. UNRWA had been established by General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) to provide essential services to the Palestine refugees as an interim arrangement until such time as they could return to their homes and property. That resolution had, undoubtedly, been adopted as an affirmation of the responsibility of the States Members of the world Organization towards the Palestinian people. But what was happening now, 30 years later, was a cause for deep concern, despite the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council affirming the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes, their right to compensation for their property and their right to self-determination in their own land in accordance with their free will and aspirations.

27. Even the basic services of UNRWA were now in jeopardy, as was clear from the Commissioner-General's report (A/34/13). Like earlier reports, it showed clearly that the education services and rations provided for the refugees had been constantly decreasing and that, in any case, the services provided did not cover all persons coming under the definition of "refugees".

28. The deficit in the Agency's budget was steadily increasing. His delegation commended the United Nations on its efforts to fulfil its obligations towards the Palestinian people, but appealed to all Member States, particularly those which

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(Mr. Mubarez, Yemen)

had participated in the creation of the Palestinian tragedy, to make regular and adequate contributions. Failure of Member States to contribute to UNRWA constituted a breach of the obligations incumbent on the international community under many United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.

29. His delegation fully agreed that, as stated in the letter from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/34/201), the contemplated eliminations and reductions in the Agency's services would impinge on public security and order and political stability, not only in the areas where refugees were living but throughout the Middle East.

30. His delegation emphasized that the tragedy of the refugees was only the humanitarian aspect of the question of Palestine, which was first and foremost a political issue, and that the services of UNRWA must not be regarded as a substitute for a solution to that broader question. Any solution must guarantee the Palestinians' right to return to their homes or receive compensation for their property and to build their independent State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

31. Just as Zionist acts of aggression had been the cause of the diaspora of the Palestine refugees, Israel's acts of aggression against the camps now occupied by those refugees, particularly in southern Lebanon, increased their daily sufferings, exacerbating UNRWA's problems.

32. In defiance of contemporary morality and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, at a time when the world was celebrating the International Year of the Child, Palestinian children lacked all the basic necessities, namely, shelter, food and adequate health and education services. Even more important, they lacked identity and lived with uncertainty as to the future. To provide care for the Palestine refugees, ensure their return to their lands and property and give them the opportunity to exercise their right to free self-determination, as laid down in the resolutions and Charter of the United Nations, was a moral and political responsibility of all peoples and States.

33. Mr. El-Choufi (Syrian Arab Republic) resumed the Chair.

34. Mr. PINIES (Spain) paid tribute to the work of the former Commissioner-General of UNRWA and welcomed his successor.

35. UNRWA symbolized the international community's support of a people which had lost everything except its will to exist and its national identity. As a temporary, emergency solution, it had enabled a part of the Palestinian people to survive materially and to educate their children under the most adverse conditions.

36. Spain had for many years been one of the main contributors to the Agency, providing a total of \$9 million in assistance, mainly food aid, or an annual contribution of \$1 million. In that connexion, he wished to point out that the differences in value of Spain's annual contribution, as recorded in the

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(Mr. Pinies, Spain)

Commissioner-General's report, were due to differences between international prices for flour and prices on the Spanish market, from which the contribution was drawn. Those figures should in any case be considered in the light of the fact that Spain's contributions to other United Nations funds such as UNDP were not as high as the \$1 million it contributed to the Agency owing to the constraints imposed by its economic situation.

37. The Agency's precarious financial situation threatened the continuance of some of its services. The situation was all the more tragic because many countries remained indifferent to the Agency's situation. Although some countries had made special contributions and others had made major contributions for the first time in 1979, the burden of the Agency's financing was still borne overwhelmingly by a handful of countries. The undeniable fact that certain countries bore a historic responsibility for the plight of the Palestine refugees, could not justify the indifference of others to the suffering of that people.

38. He did not mean to imply that his Government regarded the refugee problem as a purely humanitarian matter. Fundamentally, the problem was a political one and, in that connexion, he wished to recall that on the occasion of the recent visit of Yasir Arafat to Madrid, the Spanish Government had reiterated in a communiqué its conviction that peace could not be achieved in the Middle East without a comprehensive, just and lasting solution based on the principles and resolutions of the United Nations and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights.

39. Mr. ABLOU-NASR (Oman) said that it was clear from the Commissioner-General's report (A/34/13) that UNRWA was still suffering from the crises which had precipitated a large-scale reduction of the services it provided to the Palestine refugees, who had been driven out of their country by Israel, which had seized their property and deprived them of their legitimate rights, as established in numerous international documents and United Nations resolutions. He commended the Commissioner-General and his colleagues, on their work, but regretted that the Agency was still in a position to provide only a minimum of services.

40. Refugee status was not the only dilemma of the Palestinian Arab people. Other problems which exacerbated the dilemma included the paralysis threatening UNRWA, which, for a large proportion of refugees, was the only source of hope and confidence in the international community. In addition to its financial deficit, the Agency, together with the Palestinian and the Lebanese peoples, was suffering the results of repeated Israeli acts of aggression in southern Lebanon and other places where the Palestinian people had taken refuge. Paragraph 26 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/34/13) was adequate proof that Israeli terrorism and aggression were a daily threat to the lives of many Palestinians. They affected the Agency's operations and increased the already large burden of work which it had to carry out with extremely limited financial resources.

41. The Commissioner-General had proposed two alternatives for solving the Agency's financial crisis. The first would be to reduce the Agency's rate of expenditure beginning with January 1980 to the level of the voluntary contributions anticipated up to the end of 1980, which would mean a reduction of essential services for the

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(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, Oman)

refugees. Since the accommodation and health services were definitely below the internationally accepted levels, such reductions must necessarily be made in the field of education. As the Commissioner-General said, in paragraph 21 of his report (A/34/13), the refugees would interpret such action 'as, in their view, another and vastly more significant move by the international community to abandon the Palestinian people'.

42. The second alternative was for the Agency to continue all operations until its resources were approaching exhaustion and then to announce the cessation of all operations from a given date unless additional income was forthcoming in time to permit the Agency to continue. The second alternative would mean, quite simply, that the international community was shirking its responsibility towards the Palestinian people. It would unquestionably cause profound disappointment for many generations and lack of confidence in the resolutions and commitments of the United Nations.

43. Neither of those alternatives would resolve the Agency's financial crisis, which called for stable long-term resources. The United Nations must play a major role in finding such resources, and all the nations of the world, without exception, must contribute to them. His delegation supported the proposals to include the Agency's budget in the regular budget of the United Nations, as was already done in the case of the salaries of the international employees of UNRWA.

44. Oman, like all Arab countries, gave all the assistance within its means to the Palestinian people, in addition to its annual financial contribution to the Agency's budget. His delegation joined the Secretary-General, the Commissioner-General and the Working Group, in seeking additional funding for the Agency by appealing to those Governments which had not made monetary contributions in the past to participate in the financing of UNRWA, urging those which had made relatively small contributions to increase them and those which had contributed generously to be even more generous.

45. His delegation considered it essential that the Agency's headquarters and all its officers should be relocated in Lebanon as soon as possible, so that the staff would be able to give immediate attention to the refugees' needs. In that connexion, he expressed his Government's gratitude to Austria and Jordan for the facilities which they had extended to UNRWA.

46. UNRWA had been established as a temporary organ of the United Nations in 1950 in order to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees made homeless as a result of the repeated acts of aggression committed by Israel since 1948. The international community, which had permitted the establishment of Israel without the establishment of a Palestinian Arab State, bore direct responsibility for providing assistance to the Palestinian Arab people until such time as they returned to their homeland. The material aid which UNRWA was able to provide would not resolve the refugee problem, because it was basically a political issue arising from the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes and the usurpation of their property. It was self-evident that the solution of the problem required that the refugees be enabled to return to their homes and their property and to exercise their right to self-determination in their own homeland.

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47. Mr. ZAHKEVICIUS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the course of events in the Middle East provided convincing evidence that the problem of the Palestine refugees was a very political issue and could not be considered in isolation from the larger Palestinian problem. Failure to solve the latter and the fact that the Palestinian Arabs were deprived of their rights as a nation were among the primary causes of Middle East tension. The United Nations had repeatedly recognized the right of the Arab population of Palestine to self-determination and national independence, and their right to return to their homes and recover their property, inter alia in General Assembly resolution 33/28. Despite the clear stand taken by the international community, however, as reflected in many other resolutions of the United Nations, the Palestinian problem remained unresolved and the Palestinian people were still without rights.

48. It was a well known fact that the problem had arisen as a result of Israeli aggression against the Arab countries and that Israel and those who supported Israel's expansionist policies were to blame for the failure to solve it and for the sufferings of many hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs. A solution to the problem was crucial to any general settlement in the Middle East. To achieve such a settlement, all the Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967 would have to be freed, the Palestinian Arabs would have to be assured the right to self-determination and to the establishment of a State of their own, and the independence and security of all States in the region would have to be guaranteed. That had always been and that remained the position of the Soviet Union on the Middle East problem.

49. Israel bore primary responsibility for the growing tension in the Middle East, but that responsibility must be shared by those who had supplied the aggressor with weapons. The separate deal between Egypt and Israel, far from constituting a genuine settlement of the Middle Eastern problem, was an attempt to perpetuate the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and to deprive the Palestinians of their inalienable rights. The so-called "peace" treaty between Egypt and Israel was imbued with a spirit of hatred for the legal rights of the Arabs, and it was small wonder that it had been so harshly condemned in the international arena.

50. Having secured its position on one flank, Israel had been stepping up its campaign to annex Palestinian Arab lands and carrying out acts of aggression against neighbouring Arab States by means of artillery attacks and bombings which brought death to many Lebanese civilians and Palestinian refugees.

51. In negotiations over the so-called "autonomy for the Palestinians", Israel had demonstrated that its idea of autonomy had nothing to do with the rights or interests of the Palestinian Arabs, but was designed to reinforce Israeli rule over occupied Palestinian lands and to prevent the exercise of self-determination by the Palestinian Arabs, whose sole legitimate representative was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The only way of achieving stable peace in the Middle East was through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, not by granting the "Palestinian autonomy" proposed by the participants in the Camp David agreements.

52. The just cause of the Palestinians continued to receive unflagging support from the Soviet Union, as could be seen in a recent telegram addressed to PLO leader, Yasir Arafat, by Chairman Leonid Brezhnev.

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(Mr. Zankevičius, USSR)

53. He concluded by saying that the position of the Soviet Union on UNRWA, favouring retention of the voluntary system for financing the work of the Agency, remained unchanged.

54. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that his delegation shared the deep concern expressed by the new Commissioner-General and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA about the Agency's chronic financial plight. The estimated deficit for 1979 was \$23.7 million, and the prospects for 1980 were extremely alarming, unless substantial additional income could be obtained. UNRWA must have full support if it was to continue to provide education, health care and relief services, including food and shelter, to the Palestine refugees displaced by the fighting in 1948. Almost 2 million were registered with the Agency, not including people displaced by the war in June 1967, although the General Assembly had also endorsed emergency humanitarian assistance for that group. His delegation was therefore co-sponsoring draft resolutions A/SPC/34/L.4 and L.6.

55. The alternatives described by the Commissioner-General - keeping expenditure within anticipated income by reducing operations, especially educational services, or continuing services while risking bankruptcy - were both unacceptable. The only solution was substantially increased income. The Commissioner-General had warned that any discontinuance of UNRWA's services would be seen as a failure of the international community to meet its moral and political obligations towards the Palestinians. Pending a political solution to the Palestinian question, UNRWA's humanitarian task must continue unimpeded under its mandate from the General Assembly. His delegation therefore supported the urgent appeal of the Commissioner-General and the Working Group to Member States to respond generously. Those Member States which had not yet contributed to UNRWA should begin to do so; those which had been contributing, particularly the more affluent ones, should increase their contributions. The Philippines had always supported the humanitarian work of UNRWA and had responded, within its modest means, to appeals for increases in its voluntary contributions.

56. It was essential for UNRWA to reconsolidate its headquarters in the area of operations, as requested by the General Assembly the previous year, and as mentioned by the Commissioner-General. He therefore hoped that, for the sake of the Agency's effectiveness and in the interests of the refugees and the staff, consultations on the matter would be held with host Governments in the near future.

57. His delegation was concerned that the security situation in southern Lebanon had continued to displace large numbers of both the Palestinian and Lebanese populations. Indeed, up to an estimated 50,000 Palestinian refugees had been displaced from the camps and elsewhere in southern Lebanon. The international community should not tolerate such a dangerous situation, and should steadfastly support Lebanon's efforts to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The staff of UNRWA should not be subjected to harassment or restrictions on their movements.

58. His delegation appreciated the offers of scholarships for higher education made by various Governments to qualified Palestinian refugees, pursuant to General

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(Mr. Verceles, Philippines)

Assembly resolution 33/112 C of 18 December 1978, and 32/90 A of 13 December 1977. He hoped that more Member States would make similar offers.

59. There would be no just and enduring peace in the region until a political solution, consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), was devised, recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and to independence in their homeland. It was imperative for General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 to be implemented in all its aspects. Pending such a solution, UNRWA existed by mandate of the General Assembly and deserved continued support.

60. Mrs. LWININGDAL (Norway) said that the Commissioner-General's report presented a comprehensive picture of UNRWA's activities during the past year. It also highlighted the difficulties with which the Agency had to cope. Several events in UNRWA's area of operations had complicated its task, such as the displacement of a large number of refugees in southern Lebanon, necessitating emergency programmes and placing an additional administrative burden on the staff.

61. It was clear from the statement of the Commissioner-General and the Report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA that finances continued to be a critical problem. Income in 1979 had again been insufficient and unpredictable, and her Government regretted that it had not been possible during the year to secure a broader participation in the financing of UNRWA, as called for by General Assembly resolutions. The existing situation, with the major burden borne by a relatively small number of countries was unsatisfactory. Services to the refugees had been gradually cut back over a period of years due to insufficient income and her delegation was therefore pleased to note that further reductions in the programmes had been avoided during the past year due to last-minute special contributions by some Governments. She was also glad that the Commissioner-General, upon receipt of additional income, had decided to compensate the area staff in some measure for the rise in the cost of living. The staff, who were themselves Palestinian refugees, should not bear the brunt of the Agency's financial difficulties.

62. At the beginning of each year UNRWA was faced with a very large projected deficit, and that situation would continue as long as its expected income was insufficient to cover its estimated budget expenditures. In her Government's view, the Commissioner-General had no alternative but to continue the existing practice of reducing the Agency's rate of expenditure from 1 January to the level which foreseeable income would support until the end of the year. It would be inconsistent with responsible management to continue all operations until UNRWA's resources were approaching the point of exhaustion, and then to cease all operations unless additional income was forthcoming. That would almost certainly lead to the collapse of the Agency, with serious consequences for the refugees and the staff.

63. The financial outlook for 1980 gave rise to serious concern. UNRWA's expenditure would continue to rise due to inflation and increased demand for education services. As the relief and health programmes had already been cut to a minimum, any further reductions were bound to affect the education programme, although education was essential for the future well-being of the Palestinians.

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(Mrs. Lønningdal, Norway)

64. It was the responsibility of the entire international community to enable UNRWA to continue its services to the Palestinian refugees until a just and lasting settlement was achieved in the Middle East. Her Government would continue to shoulder its responsibility, and would increase its contribution to UNRWA for 1980. She urged other Governments in a position to do so also to participate more fully in the financing of UNRWA. Further cutbacks in UNRWA's services would have serious consequences not only for the refugees, but also for the host countries and for the prospects of a just and lasting peace.

65. Mr. DORON (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he agreed with the representative of Canada regarding the undesirable and unnecessary politicization of the debate. Instead of dealing with the item on the agenda, certain delegates had gone back into history, with references to Theodor Herzl, and had made vicious charges against Israel. Iraq, in particular, had no right to lecture his country, as its Government respected neither democracy nor human rights. The authorities there had recently executed 18 political leaders, including a Deputy Prime Minister who was also a member of the Revolutionary Command Council.

66. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan), speaking on a point of order, observed that those remarks did not seem to have any connexion with UNRWA.

67. Mr. DORON (Israel), continuing his remarks, said that for years the régime in Iraq had been brutally decimating the Kurds, a classic example of genocide. Moreover, when resolution 181 (II) had been adopted by the General Assembly in 1947, the then representative of Iraq had placed his Government's name on record as not recognizing the validity of the decision. Replying on 22 May 1948 (document S/769) to a Security Council questionnaire of 18 May 1948 asking whether Arab States had armies operating in Palestine, Iraq had replied that it was in fact maintaining forces there. At that time, the new State of Israel was being attacked on all sides by its neighbours, and also by Iraq.

68. With regard to the memoirs of Yitzhak Rabin, mentioned in The New York Times of 23 October 1979, he stated that it had clearly been impossible for Rabin to leave the armed and hostile populace of Lod in the rear, where it could endanger the supply route to the Yiftach Brigade. In both O Jerusalem by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre and Genesis 1948, by Dan Kurzman, the eviction from Lod was attributed to the local residents' opening fire on the Israelis shortly after surrendering. In fact, it had been the deliberate policy of the Arab leaders to force the population of Palestine to leave the area assigned to Israel. With regard to the statement ascribed to Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, in her autobiography, related that he had subsequently begged the Arab refugees to return. They had refused to do so, presumably not because they were frightened of the Israelis, but because they were terrified of being regarded as traitors to the Arab cause. On 6 August 1948, the Greek Catholic Archbishop of Galilee had stated in a Lebanese newspaper that the Arab refugees were not afraid of a long exile, as their leaders had promised to return armed in a few days to crush the Zionist gangs. In February 1962, an eye-witness had told an American audience that the refugees had been asked by the Arab High Command to leave the area for two weeks to make the

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(Mr. Doron, Israel)

battle easier. Yet the Jewish Mayor of Jaffa had asked them to come back, and the Histadrut had distributed leaflets containing the same message.

69. Having waged war against Israel from the beginning, Iraq and other Arab States which were Members of the United Nations had voted against resolution 194 (III), which was not an article of faith. Iraq still did not accept Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which had been adopted unanimously 20 years later. That was typical of the Iraqi attitude to Israel. It was further illustrated by the statement of the Iraqi Ambassador in New Delhi on 24 October 1978 that he did not accept the existence of the Zionist State in Palestine, and that the only solution was war. Iraq's contribution to the refugees only amounted to \$120,000 a year. It would therefore be better if Iraq refrained from giving advice.

70. The remarks of the representative of the Soviet Union illustrated the tendency of that country to write history in loose-leaf bindings. The Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Malik, had stated in the Security Council on 4 March 1949 that there was no reason to blame Israel for the Arab refugees, as the responsibility for the problem lay with outside forces. An article in Pravda on 30 May 1948 by a Mr. Viktorov had stated that the operations by the Arab States amounted to sheer unprovoked aggression. On 9 June 1948, Novoye Vremya had stated that Soviet public opinion would condemn the Arab aggression against the State of Israel.

71. In Committee meetings like the present meeting, delegates frequently betrayed abysmal ignorance of the subject on the agenda, and made it clear that their intention was not to contribute to the debate but to try to further their countries' political ambitions in other areas of United Nations activities. That unfortunate phenomenon was not restricted to representatives of the Middle Eastern countries.

72. Mr. NUSEIBLH (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Israel had grossly distorted and misrepresented what had occurred in the lives of the Palestinians in 1947 and 1948. He had been the Assistant Director of the Palestine Broadcast System at that time and had personally been in Ramallah when the people driven from Lydda (Lod), Ramle and the surrounding villages had arrived exhausted and hungry after nearly three days of forced march at gunpoint without any provisions. The some 70 soldiers assigned to defend those towns had been murdered, and the civilians had remained defenceless against massacre or brutal eviction. Thus, the problem of the Palestinian refugees had been created. He had visited the 75-year-old Mayor of Ramle, who had made the three-day trek and had confirmed the suffering of those people; he had died a few weeks later.

73. With regard to the article in The New York Times of 23 October 1979 concerning the memoirs of Yitzhak Rabin, the figure of 50,000 people, whom Mr. Rabin said had been expelled from their homes, should read 250,000. The 1950 report of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization corroborated that figure.

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(Mr. Museibeh, Jordan)

74. He drew attention to the fact that most of the refugees had been expelled prior to the end of the British mandate. In 1947, after the Arabs had protested verbally at the United Nations, Israel had launched a massive attack against Arab civilians.

75. With regard to the assertion of the representative of Israel that the Arabs had not been prevented from returning to their homes, he cited the example of the Mayor of Jaffa, who had tried to return on two occasions, once by land and once by sea, and who had been brutally turned back.

76. Security Council resolution 242 (1967), as everyone knew, had been pre-empted by events. Israel had already taken over the land and sequestered the people of Palestine. It was therefore impossible to separate the political dimensions of the problem from its human content.

77. Mr. ABDEL RAHMAN (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) pointed out that The New York Times article had revealed that Mr. Rabin's memoirs had been censored and that the truth about what had happened to the Palestinian Arabs in 1948 had presumably been deleted. That raised a serious question about the credibility of what Israeli representatives had been telling the international community for years.

78. He also drew attention to the hypocrisy which permeated Mr. Rabin's interpretation of what had happened. Mr. Rabin had said that the Israeli soldiers who had been obliged to lead 50,000 people at gunpoint for 10 to 15 miles had felt conscience-stricken. He asked members of the Committee to imagine how the people who had been forced to walk those miles had felt.

79. With regard to the logic that hostile populations should be expelled, he pointed out that such reasoning merely confirmed what the Palestinians had been saying all along: that every Palestinian in Palestine was considered hostile by the Israeli occupiers. Israel had used the same logic to expel 15,000 people from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, to demolish 22,000 houses and drive out an additional 1,600 community leaders. Any indigenous population subjected to occupation was bound to be hostile to the occupier; on that basis, Israel sought to expel every Palestinian from Palestine.

80. Mr. AL-ATTIYYAH (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, recalled the representative of Israel's assertion that Iraq had refused to accept Security Council resolution 242 (1967); he asked whether Israel had respected the 1947 partition decision to create both a Jewish and a Palestinian State, or whether it might wish to accept that decision retroactively.

81. With regard to The New York Times article about Mr. Rabin's memoirs, he asked whether the representative of Israel was prepared to try to convince the Israeli censors to accept his own interpretation of events. The elimination of censorship in Israel would be proof of democracy and freedom of thought in that State founded on racism and zionism.

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(Mr. Al-Atiyyah, Iraq)

82. The representative of Israel had not addressed the real issue of the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine. In that connexion, he quoted from an article published in the London Times of 23 April 1948, describing a night attack launched by Jews against Arabs living in Haifa, in which 150 Arabs had been killed and 200 more wounded. He also quoted from a book entitled Seven Fallen Pillars, by Jon Kimche, which stated that on 25 April 1948, the Jews had conducted intensive bombing of Jaffa, creating terrible havoc and fear among the Arab population, which had been obliged to flee; the Zionists had then plundered the city. He also quoted from the book entitled The Revolt, by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, describing how the Israelis had used explosives to reduce the Jaffa police headquarters to a heap of rubble. Another book by Jon and David Kimche, entitled Both Sides of the Hill, contained a description by Moshe Dayan of the first attack on that city and of the fear which gripped the 30,000 Arab inhabitants. Mr. Dayan had reported that other Arab towns had received the same treatment. Those descriptions of events had been confirmed in Mr. Rabin's memoirs.

83. Apart from the insults, directed against Iraq, he asked whether the representative of Israel had ever discussed UNRWA or how Israel planned to support the Agency.

84. Mr. ZENKEVIČIUS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reminded the representative of Israel that the year was 1979 and that the sooner the Israeli authorities realized that their policy of refusing to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their rights and of expelling them forcibly from their homes was shortsighted, the sooner a genuine and lasting peace could be established in the Middle East.

85. Mr. DORON (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the remarks of the Soviet representative merely confirmed what he himself had said with regard to the way in which the Soviet Union rewrote history.

86. With regard to the comments made by the representative of Iraq, he pointed out that nobody could reverse the wheel of history. The Arab States had rejected General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and Security Council resolution 242 (1967). In that connexion, the Iraqi Prime Minister had been quoted as having said in 1948 that Iraq would smash Israel with its guns and would destroy every place the Jews sought shelter, and that the Arabs should go to safer areas until the fighting had died down.

87. The representative of Jordan's eye-witness account might be true but the figure of 250,000 people he had cited only confirmed how figures concerning the Palestinian refugees were juggled in an irresponsible manner. As for the question of why the Arab villagers had left their homes, he drew attention to a book written by Moslem leader Muhammad Nizar Al Khalib, entitled Consequences of the Catastrophe, which described a situation in which an Arab legion officer, in other words, a member of the Jordanian Army, had supervised the evacuation of the Arab villages of Tira. Moreover, the Jordanian daily newspaper Ad-Difa' of 6 September 1954 had reported that the Arab Governments had told the Arab villagers to leave so that the

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(Mr. Doron, Israel)

Arab Governments could come in and that the villagers had left but the Arab Governments had not entered the village. He was certain the representative of Jordan regretted that evacuation order and its consequences.

88. Mr. NUSEIBEH (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that the village referred to by the representative of Israel lay within the Triangle, which ran from Habbus to Jenin to Tulkarm, which was the original Palestinian homeland and which the Palestinians should never have lost. At that time, Israel had issued an ultimatum ordering the evacuation of the village of Tira, and threatening that the Israelis would invade the whole Triangle. President Truman had been asked to intervene, but had refused. That was why Jordanian officers had supervised the evacuation of Tira. Israel had merely implemented its premeditated plan forcibly to expel all Palestinians.

89. A just and comprehensive settlement could still be achieved by the establishment of a Palestinian Arab State which would enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable right to return to their homes, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Iraq had not refused to accept that resolution; indeed, no Arab country had refused to accept that resolution.

90. The CHAIRMAN announced that Kuwait and Pakistan had joined the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.5 and that the Committee had received another draft resolution, which would be circulated as document A/SPC/34/L.7.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.