



Friday, 26 November 1971
at 3.30 p.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mr. Cornelius C. CREMIN (Ireland).

AGENDA ITEMS 38 AND 12

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/8366, A/8383 and Add.1, A/8403, A/8413, A/8432, A/8476, A/8526, A/SPC/147, A/SPC/148, A/SPC/L.225, A/SPC/L.226, A/SPC/L.227, A/SPC/L.228/Rev.1, A/SPC/L.229):

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General (A/8413);
- (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/8476);
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General (A/8366);
- (d) Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapter XVIII (section D)) (A/8403)

1. Mr. BAHADUR SINGH (India) said that his delegation did not think it either desirable or possible to divide the problem of the Palestine refugees, which had always been of great concern to his country, into watertight financial and political compartments. Any attempt to deal with the 21-year old problem on an *ad hoc* basis would delay and prevent a permanent solution. The provision of food and shelter, the first necessities for any refugee, was not a solution. The only permanent and just solution was the return of the refugees to their homes, an inalienable right set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The adoption of 220 resolutions by various United Nations bodies had done little to lessen the frustrations of the refugees.

2. The debate on the financial aspects of the problem had shown that more attention was being paid to interim arrangements than to permanent solutions. The international community could not absolve itself from its duty to deal with such gross violations of human rights by paying conscience money for the maintenance of refugees in camps.

3. More disconcerting than the increase of over 500,000 in the total number of refugees registered with UNRWA between 1949 and 1971 was the increase among babies and children, from 2,174 to over 352,000 during the same period. A new generation had been born in the camps with no home and no hope. Over 1.5 million people had been displaced, some of them for the third time. For over 20 years that gross violation of human rights had remained unresolved while the Special Political Committee was considering penny-pinching alternatives. His delegation in particular felt the full impact of the tragedy because India itself was at the moment burdened with nearly 10 million refugees.

4. The only solution to the problem of the refugees was that they should go back to their homes and, as the representative of Kuwait had said (783rd meeting), their return could not be made contingent on peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Refugees were the direct responsibility of the State that had forced them to flee and not of the States that had succoured them. The influx of refugees to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria had created political pressures, social problems and economic difficulties for those countries. Israel's Arab neighbours were not bound either legally or morally to discuss the subject of the refugees with Israel. It was Israel's duty to create a climate of confidence in which those refugees could return home safely with dignity and honour and could enjoy the full exercise of the right to self-determination. Although the plight of the refugees was a humanitarian problem, no humanitarian argument should divert the international community from its political ramifications.

5. Despite its own burdens, India had increased its contribution for 1972 to UNRWA by 20 per cent, a symbolic gesture which it hoped would be matched by those Governments that in previous years had made substantial contributions.

6. Mr. CAHANA (Israel) said that although the problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees was a source of continued concern for the United Nations, few nations were as directly interested in its solution as Israel. The settlement and full rehabilitation of the refugees would be an element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours, which was vital for the region as a whole. The critical question was how the solution could be reconciled with the safeguarding of the rights and sovereignty of the State of Israel. Contact with the refugees, with Arab visitors and with those living in the administered territories had convinced Israel that that was possible. The main obstacle was that the Arab policy had been to exploit the refugees in order to pursue unabated belligerency against Israel. Progress towards peace had not been made easier by the acquiescence of certain States Members of the United Nations in that policy, the victims of which had been the refugees themselves.

7. The Security Council had put the refugee problem in its proper context in its resolution 242 (1967), of 22 November 1967, which made the solution of that problem one of the interdependent elements of peace agreements to be negotiated between Israel and the Arab Governments. It was regrettable that four years had elapsed without the parties entering into the negotiations envisaged. Arab speakers had given particular prominence to paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and allowed it to be misrepresented and built up as a barrier to possible progress. However, in earlier paragraphs the resolution

spoke of establishing contact between the parties and of seeking agreement by negotiations and, even in paragraph 11, it made the readiness of the refugees to live in peace with Israel a clear condition of their return.

8. Since then, the Arab States had used the refugees as a political and military weapon to undermine Israel's independence and had openly advocated assigning to them the role of a fifth column. In 1949 the Egyptian Foreign Minister had declared that the Arabs intended that the refugees should return as masters and annihilate the State of Israel. In 1961 the Egyptian President had said that if the Arabs returned to Israel, Israel would cease to exist. The Arab Governments had consequently obstructed all efforts to deal constructively with the refugee problem. Even the King of Jordan had said that, since 1948, Arab leaders had approached the Palestine problem in an irresponsible manner and had used the Palestine people for selfish political purposes. In pursuance of their war-like aims, the Arab Governments had inspired, organized and trained terrorist organizations bent on carrying out murderous attacks on Israeli territory. Under the guise of defending their rights, they made it clear that their objective was to deprive the Jewish people of their rights in their homeland, to uproot the majority of the Jewish inhabitants and replace Israel by an Arab State; they had categorically rejected any means of achieving that aim other than by war. Some Arab Governments openly expressed such views in the United Nations; others disguised them by using terms which they hoped would mislead Members of the Organization and world public opinion. Israel however was not deceived by such manoeuvres.

9. It was therefore clear why Israel could not envisage a large-scale return of the refugees. The Arab terrorist organizations had repeatedly claimed credit for the murder of children on school buses, for exploding dynamite charges in public places, for hijacking aircraft and detaining their passengers as hostages. In the past year, they had tortured and assassinated men, women and children in the Gaza camps and publicly proclaimed that they intended to continue those violent crimes. Through sound administration of the territories for which it was responsible, Israel had been able to curb terrorist activities and secure relative tranquillity, but events in Gaza had shown that refugee camps could continue to serve as centres for terrorist activities. The news agencies reported that the Jordanian Government was preparing a new agreement with the terrorist organizations that would facilitate their reactivation in the warfare against Israel. In November 1969 the Lebanese Government had concluded an agreement with the leaders of those organizations granting them the right to cross the Lebanon-Israel cease-fire line for the purpose of sabotage and terrorist activities, and, despite a protest by UNRWA, the Government of Lebanon had handed the control of the refugee camps in that country over to the terrorist organizations. In 1970 the Prime Minister of Syria had declared that his country would continue to serve as a springboard for terrorist operations.

10. The Israeli Government had shown by its policies and actions that it was prepared to take considerable security risks for the sake of the refugees. Since 1967 it had granted permits for the return of over 38,000 west bank and Gaza inhabitants. The special arrangements for family reunions

and hardship cases remained in force and of the 110,000 tourists from Arab States, mostly Palestinians, who had made extensive visits to the Israeli-administered areas in 1971, a considerable number had applied for authorization to remain. The Israeli security authorities spared no effort to approve as many applications as possible, but the recent hostilities in refugee camps in Jordan had shown the dangerous effect that a large-scale return of refugees could have on public order and security.

11. As a result of the war in the Middle East, Jewish refugees from Arab lands, who were approximately equal in number to the Arab refugees from Israel, had gone to Israel and had become self-supporting citizens within a relatively short time. A virtual exchange of population had thus taken place between Israel and the Arab countries, with the acquiescence of the Arab Governments. There was some parallel between that exchange of population and those which had taken place between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, and between India and Pakistan in the late 1940s. The search for a possible settlement must be based not on a reversal of those two parallel movements of large masses of people, but on the successful experience acquired in all parts of the world in integrating refugees into the societies in which they had found refuge.

12. Since 1949 Israel had taken several steps to contribute to the solution of the Arab refugee problem. By the early 1950s 50,000 Arab refugees had returned under the family reunion scheme and another 50,000 displaced Arabs had been resettled within Israel. Since 1952 the Israeli Government had released some \$10 million from bank accounts and safe deposits belonging to Arab refugees. An agency had been appointed by the Government to protect and assess property abandoned by refugees, so that fair compensation could be paid when an agreement was ultimately reached. Throughout the years Israel had offered to participate in any programme to assist the resettlement of the refugees in the Arab world. It had offered to place the refugee question at the top of any peace negotiation agenda and to pay compensation to the Arab refugees even before the conclusion of peace agreements. The Arab Governments had turned down all those offers. Since 1967 about 40 per cent of all refugees registered with UNRWA had been living in areas administered by Israel, and Israel had naturally become closely involved with their conditions of life and with the Agency's work. Its policy had been to ensure normal life and development in those territories for both local inhabitants and refugees. It was ready to aid refugees who wished to become self-supporting and, except for hard-core cases, which were to be found mainly in the camps, the majority of refugees had become assimilated in the economic, social, cultural and public life of the towns and villages where they lived.

13. Evidence of the willingness of the Government of Israel to work with UNRWA was contained in an exchange of letters on 14 June 1967¹ constituting a provisional agreement between the two. However, the stipulation in the Israeli Government's letter that the co-operation was subject only to considerations of military security assumed practical importance in the light of the security factors he

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Supplement No. 13*, annex III.

had already mentioned. Since 1967, however, conditions had improved and security measures had been further relaxed during the past year. The measures still taken were magnified for purposes of political propaganda but a comparison with the treatment of refugees by Arab Governments and with the security practices of other Governments throughout the world would show the moderation of measures adopted by Israel in much more difficult situations.

14. His delegation wished to set the record straight regarding conditions in Gaza. Of the 340,000 inhabitants of that area, some 250,000 were refugees, about 170,000 of whom lived in camps. During the 19 years of Egyptian occupation, the refugee camps of Gaza had been allowed to grow into overcrowded slums. The Egyptian authorities had not permitted the refugees to leave the area. Between June 1967 and June 1971 Arab terrorist organizations had killed 219 Arab residents and refugees in the Gaza area and wounded 1,314, including women and children. In June 1971 alone, there had been 24 acts of violence. Israel, whose responsibility it was, under Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967, to ensure the safety, welfare and security of all the inhabitants in areas under its control, could not allow that slaughter of Arabs by Arabs to continue.

15. In the course of constructing roads in order to enable some camps to be policed, the Israeli authorities had had to demolish a number of dwellings, most of which had been dilapidated and some of which had been empty or had served as shops. Of the 1,900 families evacuated, 250 had gone to a town in northern Sinai, 30 to the west bank and the rest had been given, or had found themselves, new homes in the Gaza area. In every case, evacuated families had been offered alternative accommodation of at least the same standard as their previous habitation. No one had been obliged to move to any particular location and each family had been offered compensation for the investments it had made in improving its dwelling. While it was not surprising that measures aimed at ensuring peace in the refugee camps should have aroused objections by the Arab Governments, to describe them as violations of the rights of civilian persons in time of war was, to say the least, misleading. The allegations that for many refugees current conditions were worse than their previous ones was entirely unfounded. One of the by-products of the transfer of the refugees from camps to new homes might be the unfreezing of the restrictions under which they had lived since 1938. It had always been the objective of the Arab Governments that the refugees should remain refugees, but that could surely not be in the interests of the international community.

16. The steps taken in the Gaza camps had already resulted in improved security conditions and a decline in terrorist activities. Economic and civic initiative had been encouraged and the curfew had been entirely lifted. That situation contrasted sharply with the period of Egyptian occupation, when appointed military Governors had imposed an autocratic rule.

17. Insufficient appreciation of security considerations was reflected in complaints about the steps which the Israeli authorities had been compelled to take with regard

to a few local Arab employees of UNRWA. Except for some 120 international officials, the 13,000 members of the Agency's staff consisted of Palestinian Arabs, most of whom were undoubtedly loyal and devoted to its international humanitarian responsibilities. It would, however, be naive to expect that none of them would engage in activities contrary to the welfare and security of the population. Terrorist organizations naturally made special efforts to enlist the co-operation of UNRWA employees. Although some UNRWA employees had exploited the machinery of the Agency to engage in spying or sabotage, such cases were limited. On 30 June 1971 only four Agency employees had been under detention by the Israeli authorities, as against twenty-two in Jordan, according to the Commissioner-General's report (A/8413, paras. 161 and 165). Except for the temporary difficulties in Gaza, security conditions in the administered areas had been satisfactory. Refugees and non-refugees alike continued to enjoy freedom of movement throughout the administered territories and Israel and travelled back and forth across the River Jordan.

18. The fighting in Jordan in September 1970 had caused public disquiet on the west bank, where the Palestinian Arabs had compared their life under Israeli jurisdiction with that of their brethren in Jordan and had been enraged. With UNRWA's operations in Jordan disrupted, Israel had extended all possible facilities to the Agency, the Red Cross and local inhabitants and refugees to rush emergency aid across the cease-fire lines (*ibid.*, para. 17). Immediately following the end of the Jordanian attacks on the west bank, the inhabitants and refugees had returned.

19. The considerable economic, social and civic progress brought about by the efforts of refugees and non-refugees, helped by the Israeli authorities, had led to the smooth operation and extension of services. In the west bank the rate of economic activity had continued to rise and unemployment to diminish (*ibid.*, para. 23). That was mainly true also for Gaza. Almost any refugee who desired work within those areas or in Israel could find it. The labour exchange offices served refugees and non-refugees alike. In addition to practically full employment within the west bank area and growing opportunities for work in Gaza, nearly 50,000 Arab workers from those areas, including numerous refugees and an increasingly large number of girls and women, earned relatively high wages in Israel. Refugee workers earned six to twelve times the value of the rations received from UNRWA. The new opportunities for earning a living had had an immediate effect on housing, food and clothing conditions for entire families and had led to an improvement in health and social welfare facilities and to growing social mobility.

20. The constructive work performed by UNRWA in the field of educational and vocational training was one of its most important responsibilities. As indicated in the report (*ibid.*, para. 119), the education of refugee children in the west bank area had proceeded undisturbed, apart from some absenteeism in September 1970, attributable to reactions to the fighting within Jordan, and there had been temporary interruptions caused by terrorist activities and related security measures in Gaza. However, life in Gaza, including education, now proceeded normally.

21. In paragraph 109 of his report, the Commissioner-General discussed the situation concerning the import of text-books into the Israeli-administered areas. Arab Governments and their representatives both in the United Nations and in UNESCO had tried to misrepresent the true character of that problem. For years the Government of Israel had objected to the use, in refugee schools supported by the United Nations, of books containing derogatory passages regarding Jews and Israel. Since it was the responsibility of United Nations organs not to lend themselves to the dissemination of incitement to national, religious or racial hatred, such books should have been excluded even in the absence of protests by Israel. In many cases, Israel's objections had finally been accepted, but discussions between Israel and UNESCO had not yet been concluded with regard to several objectionable books. However, out of 118 text-books submitted to Israel by UNESCO, only 7 remained contestable, 111 having been approved. Thus, the text-book question was no longer 85 per cent solved, as indicated in the Commissioner-General's report (*ibid.*, para. 26) but 95 per cent solved.

22. Israel's attitude towards the education of refugee children was demonstrated by its continuous efforts to ensure the normal functioning of the school systems under all circumstances. In co-operation with UNESCO, it had arranged to hold Egyptian secondary school leaving certificate examinations in the Gaza area in September 1970 and again in the summer of 1971. The Israeli authorities also continued to facilitate the exit and re-entry of refugee students desiring to study in universities in Arab countries.

23. While the mandate of UNRWA provided only for assistance to refugees, the Government of Israel held that needy persons should be assisted irrespective of their status. In that connexion, co-operation with various international public and private organizations had been found useful in averting complaints by local inhabitants to the effect that preferential treatment was accorded to refugees. Israel had expanded the system of vocational training schools and centres for the general population, including the refugees. While 89,000 refugees attended UNRWA/UNESCO schools, 27,000 studied in public and private schools. The Israeli authorities had spent \$1.7 million on education for refugees in the year under review.

24. While expanding services for the population at large, the Israeli authorities had also undertaken to improve living conditions in refugee camps by installing or improving water, electricity and sewage facilities, constructing playgrounds, paving existing streets and constructing new roads to make the camps more accessible. They ensured that the new shelters constructed were of a higher standard and provided the funds for basic sanitary facilities which had not been available in the past. Israel provided aid to the refugees through three main channels, namely contributions to UNRWA, services extended directly to refugees, and general services for the population as a whole, half of which were refugees.

25. Israel's contribution to UNRWA for 1971 had been \$486,000, and its total contribution over the past four years had amounted to \$3,555,000. In addition, it had provided educational, medical and social services directly to the refugees at a cost of \$4 million. Its total contribution to

the refugees for 1971, including miscellaneous services and administration costs, had amounted to nearly \$4.8 million, or about 14 per cent more than in the previous year. The 1970 budget for services provided by the Government of Israel to the general population of the administered areas, half of whom were refugees, had amounted to approximately \$50 million, subsidized from the taxes paid by Israeli citizens.

26. Israel's experience over the past four years provided encouraging signs of improvement in the refugees' living conditions and indications of their progress towards self-support and rehabilitation. Notable achievements had been made in the west bank area, and there was hope of improvement in the Gaza area as well. It was thus apparent that the adoption of a constructive attitude could lead to satisfactory solutions. However, there were still many refugees who could not work, and complete resettlement was still remote. Conditions in the camps left much to be desired, even though the camps were only temporary, and the work of UNRWA was still indispensable. Comprehensive solutions must still await adequate international security and political arrangements.

27. The problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees had been created by a war against the establishment of the State of Israel and could be fully solved within the context of a just and lasting peace between Israel and the neighbouring Arab States. The refugee problem had already been solved to a considerable extent because the refugees had been able to supply needed skills in the areas in which they lived. Indeed, after 23 years, the majority of the refugees had been practically integrated into the economies of the countries in which they resided. In the territories administered by Israel, the refugees lived among other, non-refugee, Palestinian Arabs, and they enjoyed full citizenship in Jordan, too. About 80 per cent of the Palestinian Arabs, including about 80 per cent of all refugees on the rolls of UNRWA, lived in Jordan and the Israeli-administered territories, and most of them were either already integrated or were in an advanced stage of self-support. The promotion of employment and self-support could lead to further progress in that direction even before a comprehensive peace settlement was achieved. The report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/8476) contained replies from several United Nations agencies indicating their readiness to consider requests by the host countries for technical or economic aid for projects which might alleviate the conditions of refugees and promote self-support. However, those aspects of the problem which could not be solved without a degree of co-operation between the Arab States and Israel would inevitably remain pending until the conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement or a special agreement on the refugee question.

28. In view of the pressing nature of the refugee problem, Israel was prepared to accord it priority and take it up as the first subject for negotiation and settlement. His Government had also proposed the convening of an international conference of Middle Eastern States, together with the specialized agencies and Governments which had contributed to refugee relief, in order to chart a five-year plan for the solution of the refugee problem and the integration of refugees into the economic life of the area. In the meantime, opportunities for gradual progress should

not be missed. The Governments and international organs concerned must not aim at preserving the *status quo*, but rather at alleviating hardship, improving living conditions and allowing the refugees the mobility and opportunities necessary for self-support. In that regard, it was indispensable that the Arab Governments should cease to regard the refugee problem as an instrument of war but look on it as a question to be solved in peace through mutual respect for the rights of Israel and the Arab States. For its part, his Government pledged itself to work towards that end.

29. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the time available to the Committee was far too limited for him to respond to every mis-statement of fact in what the representative of Israel had just said. He would therefore confine his reply to a few of the points regarding which corrections were most urgently required.

30. According to the representative of Israel, the Arab States had abused the spirit of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) by taking paragraph 11 out of context, while ignoring its other provisions. In fact, however, the General Assembly had taken the position over the years that the implementation of paragraph 11 did not require the prior implementation of preceding paragraphs and that the provisions of that paragraph could stand on their own merits. That was made clear by the fact that many organs of the United Nations, year after year, had quoted and reaffirmed the provisions of paragraph 11 without reference to other paragraphs. Paragraph 11 merely asserted that the Palestine refugees had the right to return to their homes or to receive compensation in the event that they freely chose not to do so; that inalienable right, which was recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was in no way dependent on the rights referred to in other paragraphs of that resolution.

31. It was significant that the representative of Israel, in citing the provisions of paragraph 5 of the same resolution, had referred only to direct negotiations, although the paragraph in fact referred to "agreement by negotiations conducted either with the Conciliation Commission or directly". Negotiations had indeed taken place through the Conciliation Commission, and later through the Jarring Mission, but they had been obstructed by Israel. By deleting essential references and placing the emphasis on direct negotiations, the representative of Israel was merely attempting to cast blame on the Arab States. Under the circumstances, it was difficult to accept the validity of the statements attributed to Arab leaders by the representative of Israel.

32. The Israeli representative had said that all aspects of the Middle East question could be resolved in the context of a peace agreement between Israel and the Arab States. That implied that the problems of the Palestine refugees, whose rights as individuals and as a people had been recognized repeatedly by the General Assembly, could be solved only through arrangements of other parties, without the participation of the refugees themselves. The Israeli position had apparently changed over the years in that regard, for Mr. David Ben-Gurion had informed officials of the United States of America in 1945 (United States,

Department of State, publication No. 8427,² pp. 713-715) that the Zionists did not recognize the interest of outside Arab authorities in the Palestine question, but only that of the Palestinians themselves.

33. The statements made by the representative of Israel regarding the "exchange" of populations required some comment. He recalled that among the Palestinians expelled from Israel had been many who on 15 May 1948 had merely happened to be visiting friends and relatives in other parts of what was now Israeli territory; nevertheless, their property had been confiscated and they had been prevented from returning to their homes. Those individuals could in no way be equated with the Jewish "refugees" from Arab countries. It was well known that Israel desired to attract Jews from all over the world, even going so far as to plead with the USSR authorities to allow Jews to emigrate. He wondered whether those who immigrated to Israel under such conditions were refugees in any sense of the word. It was impossible to characterize as refugees those Jews who had pleaded for permission to leave Arab countries. The intention of the Israeli authorities was clearly to expel the Palestinians from Israel in order to replace them with Jews. Under the circumstances, it was extremely difficult to understand how the accommodation of Jewish immigrants by Israel served to counterbalance the expulsion of Palestinians into neighbouring Arab countries. In the view of the Israelis, Jews in Arab countries fell into two categories, namely "refugees" who were permitted to leave and "captives" who remained there.

34. The representative of Israel had stated that the cruel policies applied against refugees in the Gaza area were merely designed to fulfil Israel's obligations under Security Council resolution 237 (1967). It was hard to see how one could regard the eviction of refugees from their shelters in the middle of the night, on very few hours' notice, as simply a form of urban renewal designed to safeguard their welfare. Although the Israeli authorities had tried to disguise such policies as a response to terrorist activities, the mass transfer of refugees from Gaza to the Sinai had in fact been contemplated as early as 22 July 1967, long before the first acts of terrorism, according to the *Washington Post*. Indeed, in the first issue of *Israel* magazine, an Israeli general had been quoted as stating that much of the population of Gaza could not be supported locally and would have to be moved to the El Arish area, the west bank or neighbouring Arab countries. Some 15,000 refugees had already been expelled in that way. Moreover, according to *The Jerusalem Post* of 26 October 1971, the Israeli authorities had taken over a tract of 8,500 acres in Gaza for the construction of six Jewish settlements, despite the fact that 3,500 acres of that land were already being farmed by local residents. Israel's activities in Gaza merely reflected that country's policies of territorial expansionism and demographic exclusionism.

35. Turning to the question of Israel's contributions to UNRWA, he wondered what fraction of the annual revenue from the property of refugees which continued to be exploited by Israel those contributions represented.

² *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1945, vol. VIII—The Near East and Africa* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1969).

36. In his references to the integration of the Palestine refugees into the economic life of the Arab host countries, the representative of Israel had vacillated between the feeling that the problem was being resolved and the view that the Arab States were using the refugees as a political football. While one or the other of those opinions might be correct, it was difficult to see how they could both be true at the same time.

37. In general, the Israeli representative's statement had treated the Palestine refugees as something less than human beings, without roots or aspirations. That was indeed the primary drawback of Israel's policy towards the refugees, who were characteristically seen as individuals without rights who must be expelled to make room for Jewish immigrants.

38. Mr. CAHANA (Israel) said that it would be pointless to try to refute all the repetitious arguments voiced by the representative of Kuwait. However, in evaluating his statement, it was important to bear in mind the fact that the representative of Kuwait, serving as spokesman for a group of Arab States, had made a statement on 4 November 1970³ rejecting the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

39. It had not been his intention to conceal any of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), the full text of which was easily accessible for consultation by members. He had merely been trying to show that the solution of all aspects of the Middle East question, including the refugee problem, had been viewed as a single package by the General Assembly in 1948. The fact that the Arab countries had been successful in singling out one paragraph of that resolution for special attention in the United Nations merely demonstrated that they enjoyed a parliamentary advantage which enabled them to sway other Governments to support their views. With over 40 votes committed to them in advance, it was hardly surprising that the Arab States had been able to obstruct every resolution condemning even one of their number, while securing the adoption of numerous resolutions condemning Israel, which did not enjoy the support of any bloc. The other paragraphs of resolution 194 (III), like many provisions of other resolutions and the original mandate of UNRWA, had simply been eroded by the political manoeuvres of the Arab countries.

40. It was certainly true that paragraph 5 of resolution 194 (III) provided for indirect negotiations through the Conciliation Commission, but the record showed that those negotiations had been blocked by Arab intransigence. The 1951 progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine,⁴ explicitly stated that the refugee problem could not be solved without reference to other provisions of the resolution in question, that all elements of the problem were interdependent and formed a homogeneous whole and that nothing was to be gained by concentrating on a single paragraph taken out of context.

41. The representative of Kuwait had been concerned about who was to speak for the Palestine refugees. For over 23 years the representatives of the Arab States had spoken

for them and had used different agenda items to bring up the Palestine issue whether it was relevant or not. The Arabs now had 17 delegations and no one stopped them from advocating the cause of the Palestine refugees.

42. As to the question of Jewish refugees from Arab countries, there had been times when the Jews had been well treated in the Arab States but the situation had changed radically during the last 20 or 30 years as the Arab Governments had become more autocratic. In some countries the Jews had been treated as scapegoats and were a persecuted minority. For example, Jews had been hanged in Iraq in the 1940s. It was fortunate that the Jews had had a Jewish State to go to since their fate could have been very bad if they had had to remain in the Arab countries. During the last 23 years approximately 600,000 Jews from Arab countries had moved to Israel. That constituted an unplanned but historic demographic change in the area. There had been many other examples of such changes but it was only in the case of the Palestine refugees that the attachment to a certain village or town had become so sacrosanct.

43. Mr. NUSEIBEH (Jordan) said that since he had not heard the Israeli statement in its entirety he would speak in exercise of the right of reply to the whole statement later and for the moment would comment only on the latter part of the statement. The representative of Israel had spoken of Jews living in Arab countries and had mentioned Iraq specifically. He pointed out that 20 or 30 years previously the entire market place of Baghdad was closed on a Saturday and that the Jewish community not only enjoyed equal rights but even certain privileges. The Israeli representative had said that there had been an abrupt change in the attitude of the Arabs to Jews living in their countries. The reason for that was not that the Arab Governments had become more autocratic but that the Zionist leadership had made a colossal error in persecuting almost two thirds of the population of Palestine and expelling them from their homeland. For 22 years the plight of the Palestine refugees had been the only refugee question on the United Nations agenda. Reference had been made to the most recent refugee problem. In that case, the Government of Pakistan had said unequivocally that it was willing to readmit any Pakistan refugees while the Government of India thought that the refugees could not return until propitious conditions were achieved. Both Governments agreed, however, that the place for the East Pakistan refugees was East Pakistan itself. That migration could not be called a migration over thousands of miles. He wondered whether the Palestine refugees had been given that basic right of choosing whether they wanted to go home or not. No one had suggested that the East Pakistanis had no right to return because East Pakistan was over-populated.

44. As to the situation of the refugees in the occupied territories, the Israeli representative had painted a rosy picture of full employment. Obviously, a country that was fortunate enough to receive hundreds of millions of dollars in aid could have full employment, and the refugees were made to work on Israeli projects designed to ensure that the Palestinians living there would not be able to continue to do so. During the Nazi occupation of Europe, many people had not only been working but had been working for the Nazi war effort, since there was nothing else for them to do

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1897th meeting, para. 16.*

⁴ *Ibid., Sixth Session, Supplement No. 18.*

but work. The problem was that that kind of work had justly been called slave labour in the United Nations.

45. The representative of Israel had referred to the tragic and unfortunate events in Jordan the previous year and had even shed crocodile tears over the plight of the refugees. It had not occurred to him that those events had been neither the fault of the Government of Jordan nor the fault of the Palestinian leadership but the result of Israel's action in sending great numbers of refugees to Amman, which was already over-populated. Israel was fully responsible for that tragedy. The representative of Kuwait had been justified in stating that the mass transfer of refugees from Gaza to Sinai had been planned in advance.

46. As to the Israeli representative's contention that the Arab States were able to manipulate a parliamentary majority, he pointed out that they did not hold an automatic majority either in the United Nations or elsewhere. What they had was a just cause and that was why the cause of the Palestine refugees had always been supported. No one could vote in good conscience against the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their homes. That was a fundamental human right. As to General Assembly resolution 194 (III), the Arab States had never singled out paragraph 11 in isolation from an over-all solution of the problem. He did not know whether the Israeli representative had been wise to refer to the Conciliation Commission since the reason its work had not been successful was that Israel had always been bent on expansionism and exclusiveness.

47. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait) said that the representative of Israel had quoted selectively from one report of the Conciliation Commission. He appealed to all the members of the Committee to read *in toto* the report of the Mediator, all the reports of the Conciliation Commission, the report on the mission of Dag Hammarskjöld and the report of the Secretary-General on the Jarring mission. It would then be evident who had been intransigent and who had been accommodating.

48. Although General Assembly resolution 194 (III) contained many provisions, paragraph 11 thereof did not make the right of return contingent upon the implementation of the other provisions. Any doubt about that would be cleared up by an examination of the resolutions adopted since 1967, which dealt with nothing else.

49. The Arab delegations had championed the cause of the Palestine refugees but did not believe that their advocacy of that cause was any substitute for the Palestinians having the right to determine their own future. The Israeli representative had spoken of the support the Arab representatives received automatically and had said that there were many resolutions condemning Israel but none condemning the Arabs. If Israel did not want to be condemned, it should not do anything which merited condemnation.

50. Mr. OSMAN (Egypt) said that all the arguments and rhetoric used by the Israeli representative could not conceal the facts, which were that Israel had conquered the occupied territories by force and intended to keep them. Israel, a strong country, was not concerned about respecting the United Nations Charter and the territorial integrity

of other States. Israel used the Organization for its own purposes and chose not to comply with United Nations decisions calling upon it to respect international law. Israel had attacked the prestige and spirit of justice of all Members of the United Nations. There had been a point in history when the cleverly engineered propaganda of the Zionists could conceal the truth but that was no longer possible.

51. Mr. MAHJOUBI (Morocco) said that although he would wait until he saw the Israeli statement in French before commenting on it at length, he had already noticed certain contradictions in it. For example, the representative of Israel had at one point tried to relate paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) to the preceding paragraphs but had also said that his Government was prepared to discuss the refugee problem separately.

52. As to the description the Israeli representative had given of the conditions of Arabs living in Israel, he too wished to mention some facts. Under Israeli laws, Jews coming to Israel were given Israeli citizenship as soon as they arrived, while Arabs had to prove that they had a permanent residence, a perfect knowledge of Hebrew and five to ten years of residence in the country even though their ancestors might have lived there for hundreds of years. In addition, Israel did not even allow them to have a permanent residence to meet the legal requirements. The situation of Arabs inside Israel was similar to that of blacks in South Africa; they lived under a number of legal restrictions and could have their lands confiscated at any moment.

53. As to the transfer of population, the Israeli representative had forgotten that his country's territory had been taken over by the Zionists and by those States that helped the Zionist movement to make Israel a place of refuge for Jews throughout the world. Some Jews, however, were categorically opposed to that. Jews from Morocco had not found Israel to be a paradise but lived there like second-class citizens. Before speaking of the rights it gave to Arabs, Israel should give all the Jews in Israel their rights.

54. Mr. CAHANA (Israel), replying to the representative of Jordan, said that he was aware that Jews had at times lived in harmony with Arabs. He was not pessimistic, since the two peoples were similar; the problem could not, however, be solved if Jews lived as subordinate minorities but only if they lived as a sovereign people. He was also aware that Jews in Morocco were relatively satisfied but pointed out that they were afraid for the future. In the Libyan Arab Republic it was impossible not only for the Jews but for almost all the non-Arab segments of the population to look to the future with assurance.

55. When he had referred to India and Pakistan, he had not been thinking of the current situation but of the exchange of population when the two States had been established.

56. In addition to the documents mentioned by the representative of Kuwait, he recommended that the Committee should also read the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,⁵ which described solu-

⁵ *Ibid.*, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12.

tions to refugee problems throughout the world. The High Commissioner felt that the best solution was the integration of the refugees into the life of the countries where they had taken refuge. That had been the case in Asia and Africa and he suggested that it might be possible to apply the same approach to the Middle East.

57. The representative of Jordan had made a revolting reference to slave labour. No one forced the Arab refugees to work; they could stay in their camps and live on UNRWA rations. The Government of Israel offered them opportunities to support themselves and they were pleased to accept those opportunities. He did not underestimate the problems of Jordan. The trouble was that both Israel and the Arab States had spent too much for military purposes and if only part of that expenditure had been used in other ways everyone's standard of living would have been higher.

58. As to the Kuwaiti representative's statement concerning the right of return of the refugees, the Israeli Government could not expose itself to the threat of admitting potentially hostile people to its territory when the Arab States were threatening its existence. It was easy to have resolutions adopted, but the countries that voted in favour of them would not bear the cost or have the security problems involved in a return of the refugees. Israel alone would do so.

59. He had not understood the points made by the representative of Egypt.

60. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) said that the attitude of the representative of Israel, who had complained of the way his country had been treated by the United Nations and impugned the integrity of those Members who had voted in favour of resolutions condemning it, was like that of the

accused who, on being found guilty by the jury, complained that there were 12 of them and only one of him.

61. Mr. RAOUF (Iraq) reserved his delegation's right to reply at length to the statement by the representative of Israel at a later stage. He agreed with the Israeli representative that Jews living in Iraq had been subject to persecution and terrorism in the 1940s, but it had been at the hands of the Zionists and not the Iraqis. He hoped that the Israeli representative would find time to provide an explanation of the terrorist campaign initiated by the clandestine Halutz movement, the part played in it by Israel Gallili and the Obahdiah family and the role of the movement in the massive departure of Jews from Iraq.

62. Mr. TREKI (Libya) pointed out that the majority of members of the Committee represented peace-loving countries of the third world, and not the United States of America and the other imperialist countries that had controlled the United Nations in the 1940s and had established a State in Palestine, in flagrant violation of the rights of the indigenous Arab people. His delegation would reply to the statement made by the representative of Israel at a later date.

63. Mr. CAHANA (Israel), replying to the statement made by the representative of Iraq, explained that the Halutz movement had been established as a reaction to the persecution and hanging of Jews by the Iraqi régime, in collaboration with the Nazis, during the Second World War. Similar persecution had been experienced more recently by Jews, Assyrians, Kurds and various other minorities living in Iraq. At least the Jews had been fortunate enough to be able to seek refuge in Israel.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.