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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 25:</i>	
<i>Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued)</i>	301

Chairman: Mr. Yordan TCHOBANOV (Bulgaria).

AGENDA ITEM 25

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/4861; A/SPC/58 and Add.1; A/SPC/L.79 and Corr.1 and 2, L.80) (continued)

1. Mr. DJERMAKOYE (Niger), exercising his right of reply, wished on behalf of the Brazzaville group to correct certain misconceptions arising out of the discussion on draft resolution A/SPC/L.80 at the 316th meeting.
2. If the representative of Iraq had the impression that the delegations of that group had been guided by selfish considerations in submitting their draft resolution, he must be misinformed. Since no specific solution had been suggested either by Israel or by the representatives of the Palestine refugees, with whom the Brazzaville group delegations had been in contact, the sponsors of the draft resolution had purposely drafted their text in very general terms, so as to give the parties concerned an opportunity to work out a solution for themselves.
3. Mr. USHER (Ivory Coast), exercising his right of reply, in response to the questions put to him by the representative of Iraq at the 316th meeting, wished to clarify his delegation's position, which seemed to have been misunderstood.
4. First, he had not suggested that anyone had helped the Ivory Coast to become independent. As it happened, his people had fought for years against a cruel and repressive colonial system, unbeknown to all and without even a single resolution to show that the United Nations was taking the slightest interest in those events.
5. The Ivory Coast maintained good relations with the Arab countries and, on such questions as "apartheid", it was glad to co-operate with them, as with all anti-racists wherever they hailed from. He recalled that the African population of South Africa, which was suffering unparalleled hardship and oppression, had nevertheless agreed to use peaceful means in their struggle—an attitude which had earned Mr. Albert Luthuli the Nobel peace prize. The Ivory Coast delegation would have preferred it if the prize, which had once been awarded to Mr. Bunche for his mediation

efforts in Palestine, had been won at that time either by an Arab or a Jew.

6. As regards whether the Africans would agree to the South African whites becoming a majority from a minority, there was certainly no way of preventing the white population from increasing as much as it wished, even if that led to such results. Any policy designed to exterminate a minority that was in danger of increasing—such as the Jewish minority in Egypt in biblical times—would only lead to the emergence of a new Moses. If, however, South Africa established a multiracial society based on absolute equality, as the Africans demanded, it could pursue a policy of white or yellow immigration which no one would have the right to oppose. Similarly, Israel, being an independent State, was entitled to follow any demographic policy it chose. It seemed illogical to try to prevent immigration into a State whose creation had originally stemmed from a desire to preserve the Jewish minority that had been decimated by the Nazi persecutions.

7. The Ivory Coast firmly upheld the principle of self-determination; but those who spoke of self-determination for the Palestine Arabs did not make it clear what they meant. If it meant asking all Palestinians, whether Arabs or Jews, to choose between partition and the creation of a unified State to be Arab or Jewish according to the prevailing majority, it would amount to declaring resolution 181 (II) of 1947 null and void, and that fact should be stated openly.

8. If it merely meant asking the refugees to choose between repatriation and integration, it should be realized that, just as integration necessitated discussions with the State that would be asked to accept and naturalize the refugees, so repatriation required negotiations with Israel, which was just as much an independent State as the Arab States. In fact, the fundamental question of Israel's existence as an independent State had been settled when Israel had been admitted to the United Nations upon the recommendation of the Security Council.^{1/} It was no use pretending that the situation still was what it had been in Palestine in 1947. There would have to be negotiations in keeping with the established principles of public and private international law, the theory of obligations and reciprocity and the like, instead of creating new law *ex nihilo*. So far, only Israel had spoken of peace and negotiations. It was for those who accused it of hypocrisy to put Israel to the test by taking it at its word. Those who feared that Israel would not apply any resolution that might be adopted were forgetting that over one hundred United Nations resolutions still remained to be applied. Of course, the resolutions were not in themselves enforceable. They could only become so if embodied in legally binding bilateral agreements which were capable of judicial interpretation. It was therefore for the parties concerned to

^{1/} Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year, Supplement for March 1949, document S/1277.

negotiate such agreements. Accordingly the Ivory Coast delegation, which had no axe to grind and was ready to undertake an objective analysis of any resolutions submitted, would continue to uphold the principle of negotiation.

9. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq), exercising his right of reply, said that the Arab States had not been consulted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.80. It was strange that, despite the contacts between the Brazzaville group and the Palestine Arab delegation, the text made no mention of the need to take into account the views of the refugees. Another fact should also be made clear. In 1953, Iraq and the other Arab States had upheld the right of self-determination of the Ivory Coast and other then dependent Territories in the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories and other United Nations bodies, Israel, on the other hand, had at the time supported the policy of the French colonialists. Those facts were to be found in the records of the United Nations. To pursue the analogy drawn between Palestine and South Africa, he would recall that in Palestine the Arabs had formed the majority of the population until 1947. The reversal of the situation was due not to the natural growth of a more prolific group, but to a policy of unlimited immigration imposed against the wishes of the Arabs. As regards peaceful intentions, it was not enough simply to proclaim them. The number of incidents for which Israel had been condemned in the United Nations, the attack against Egypt in 1956 and the massacres carried out by the Zionists ever since 1947—of which the representatives of the Arab countries had given detailed accounts—were all evidence of the aggressive designs of Israel and of the wide divergency between its words and its deeds.

10. As to the argument that it was only just to allow the survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe to set up a Jewish national home, he did not see why the Arabs should have borne the entire brunt of that operation when certain great Powers, self-proclaimed protectors of the Jews, had closed their doors to them. One refugee problem could not be solved by creating another. The Palestine Arabs were the only nation which had been consistently denied the right of self-determination, despite incessant appeals, and that was a state of affairs which no people could accept. At the time of the Mandate the United Kingdom Government, when approached on the subject, had replied that it could not grant Palestine that right until the Jews constituted the majority of the population. The Israelis had been the first to violate resolution 181 (II) of 1947, long before the first Arab soldier had set foot in Palestine. In order to alter the territorial provisions of that text to their advantage, they had had no hesitation in illegally occupying various parts of the country by force, at the very moment when their representatives had been promising to abide by the decisions of the United Nations. Lastly, what could be the object of the negotiations contemplated in draft resolution A/SPC/L.80? Mr. Ben-Gurion had declared that he would not surrender one inch of Israel territory, even in the zone assigned to the Arab State under the partition plan; the Knesset had decided during the previous November that it would not permit the repatriation of the Arab refugees, and Israel made no secret of the fact that it would never allow Jerusalem to become an international city. Instead of advocating negotiations which had no chance of success, owing to Israel's intransigence, Israel should be called upon to respect United Nations decisions and particularly paragraph 11

of resolution 194 (III). In conclusion, he hoped that the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.80 would realize, upon mature reflection, that the views and aspirations of the Palestine refugees were just and reasonable in many respects.

11. After a procedural discussion concerning the right of reply and the right of representatives to reply to a reply, in which the CHAIRMAN, Mr. COMAY (Israel), Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq), Mr. BLAKE (United States of America) and Mrs. LIONAES (Norway) took part, the CHAIRMAN recalled the statement he had made at the 309th meeting and proposed that the exercise of the right of reply—and the right of reply to a reply—should be postponed until the end of the meeting at which representatives had requested it.

It was so decided.

12. Mr. FEDOSEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that although the Assembly had been considering the situation for many years, the fate of 1,200,000 people who had been forcibly torn from their homes and subjected to the most terrible hardships had not yet been settled. It was obvious that the solution lay in carrying out the Assembly's resolutions, particularly resolution 194 (III), which offered the refugees a choice between repatriation and compensation. Such a solution would be fully in accord with the interests of the refugees themselves. In his latest report (A/4861), the Director of the Agency emphasized once again that an overwhelming majority of the refugees still desired repatriation. The lack of progress towards a settlement of the dispute was primarily due to political factors and, in particular, to the stubborn refusal of the Government of Israel to comply with the General Assembly's resolution. Had it not been directly supported by a number of Western Powers, Israel would surely never have been able to oppose the United Nations as it had done. The unproductive work of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, which was composed of representatives of France, Turkey and the United States, could be explained in a similar manner. Everything indicated that the Commission, which had never come forward with a practical proposal of any kind, was bent on confining its attention to purely secondary matters and on carefully avoiding any effort to deal with the heart of the affair. It was deplorable that once again, for political reasons, any thought of improving the refugees' lot by establishing a body to watch over their property had been abandoned. His delegation felt that, if all Member States were determined to co-operate sincerely in seeking a genuine solution of the situation which had given rise to so much fruitless discussion in recent years, it could quickly be found by carrying out the numerous resolutions on repatriation and compensation adopted by the Assembly. The Soviet Union hoped that the present debate would contribute to an equitable settlement of the matter.

13. Mr. COMPAH (Mali) said that it was essential to maintain the prestige of the United Nations. The latter would be respected only if decisions of the General Assembly or the Security Council were faithfully carried out even when they ran counter to the selfish interests of various States or groups of States. Otherwise, the authority of the Organization would steadily decline and the United Nations would ultimately collapse in the face of some particularly crucial difficulty.

14. One million, two hundred thousand refugees living in inhuman conditions expected the United Nations to find a remedy to their distress. Unfortunately, many

delegations approached the matter in a spirit of routine and were unwilling to do anything more than add another resolution to all those which had already been adopted. Such an attitude could only confer impunity on those who were continuing a policy of bloody oppression, whether in Algeria, in Angola or in South Africa.

15. It was difficult to see how the Palestine refugees, who lived by begging although they owned property which would enable them to lead normal lives, could help learning, from childhood on, to hate those who had dispossessed them. To advise them to resign themselves to integration in the Arab countries in return for compensation was a defeatist solution which did not take the facts into account. Any human being found it distasteful to leave his native country and settle somewhere else even temporarily—even, in fact, though it might be only to attend meetings of the United Nations. Hence, the Arabs could not, in all good conscience, be asked to accept expatriation; the complexity of the situation, which was further aggravated by hidden influences, should not allow the only equitable solution to be forgotten, namely the settlement of the refugees on the lands of their ancestors. The creation of a new nation by installing it in place of one which already existed could not be permitted.

16. At the same time that repatriation was carried out, consideration should be given to the possibility of integrating and compensating, with the consent of the Governments of the neighbouring Arab States, those refugees who freely chose to settle in a new country.

17. Mr. ATTOLICO (Italy) deplored the plight of the 1,200,000 Palestine Arab refugees, which, despite the General Assembly's annual debates on the subject, remained virtually unchanged. UNRWA's task remained what it had been a dozen years earlier, i.e., essentially that of providing those unfortunate people with emergency aid so that they could survive the tragedy of exile. The Agency and its Director deserved a tribute for the zeal and competence with which they carried out their duties. The problem, however, remained as great as ever. A humanitarian had no need to recall the physical and, above all, the mental suffering of the Arab refugees. As to the political implications, the stability and peace of the area would be precarious so long as the situation remained unsettled. Finally, on the economic side of the question, a million persons were living in idleness and becoming increasingly incapable of once again taking their place in a modern society. In view of those facts, a political solution was no longer sufficient, for many of the refugees would remain maladjusted regardless of the country in which they lived. UNRWA had therefore been correct in placing emphasis on its vocational training programmes, and his delegation wished to commend Mr. Davis for his efforts in that direction. In any event, the position of the refugees remained desperate, and the Director of UNRWA described their state of mind perfectly in paragraph 9 of his report (A/4861).

18. The General Assembly was well aware that the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) had not been carried out, and it had therefore requested the Commission, resolutions 1456 (XIV) and 1604 (XV), to make efforts to secure the application of that paragraph. During the past year, the Commission had instructed a Special Representative, Mr. E. Johnson, to go to the Middle East to explore with the Governments of the host countries and the Israel Government practical means of seeking progress on the Palestine

Arab refugee problem. His delegation wished to pay a tribute to Mr. Johnson for the efforts he had made and to commend the Conciliation Commission for having chosen him. It should be pointed out, however, that the Special Representative's task, like that of the Conciliation Commission, was an extremely delicate one. In his report (A/4921/Add.1 and Corr.1), Mr. Johnson had described the complex nature of the present situation, with no political settlement in sight. Instead of becoming discouraged at the difficulties it faced, the Commission should redouble its efforts. If, in spite of its perseverance, it was unable to achieve any real progress, it could then indicate the reasons for that state of affairs, so that the real obstacles to a solution of the question could be determined or, at all events, the Assembly would have more information to guide it.

19. The Italian delegation was gratified by the Conciliation Commission's progress in carrying out the programme of identification and evaluation. Recognition. Recognition of their rights could not but restore some hope to the refugees. The Italian Government trusted that no effort would be spared in continuing to seek a solution of the Arab refugee question, which was a serious source of tensions in the eastern Mediterranean where it was not only important to maintain peace, but also to promote economic and social development.

20. Mr. COMAY (Israel) noted in reply to the remarks of the representative of Iraq that the Jews had gone to Palestine in 1947 because they had historic and cultural ties with that country, a fact which had moreover been recognized by the League of Nations Mandate. Following the Second World War, the Jews had asked that all of Palestine should become an independent Jewish State, while the Arabs wanted western Palestine to be an Arab State incorporating a Jewish minority. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine had rejected both claims and had advocated an intermediary solution creating a Jewish and an Arab State in Palestine.^{2/} The final decision of the United Nations had been in keeping with that recommendation. When the representative of Iraq argued that there was nothing to justify the existence of a Jewish State in Palestine, he was questioning the validity of that decision. Israel existed and the Iraqi representative's argument was purely academic. The sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.80, being more realistic, recognized the facts and recommended negotiations between the Governments concerned.

21. It was not true, as the representative of Iraq had said, that Israel was the first to flout General Assembly resolution 181 (II). Indeed, the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, dated 16 February 1948,^{3/} described the acts of violence committed by the Arabs at the time. On 23 April 1948, the representative of the Arab Higher Committee, Mr. Jamal Bey Husseini, admitted to the Security Council^{4/} that the Arabs had never concealed the fact that they started the fighting.

22. Lastly, contrary to the claims of the representatives of the Arab countries in the Committee, paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) did not confer rights on

^{2/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Supplement No. II, vol. I, chap. VII.

^{3/} Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, Special Supplement No. 2, document S/676.

^{4/} *Ibid.*, No. 62, 287th meeting.

the Arab refugees. He would present a detailed analysis of the paragraph when he spoke in the general debate.

23. Mr. DJERMAKOYE (Niger) said that the Iraqi representative had been ill-informed concerning the contacts made with spokesmen of the Arab refugees. The sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.80 had already heard the views now being expressed by the Iraqi representative. They had deliberately chosen to make their wording general in a desire to facilitate negotiations. He shared the view of the representative of the Ivory Coast that the problem of the Arab refugees could only be settled by an exchange of views between the two parties directly concerned, and he had not found it necessary to consult the representative of Iraq in order to come to that conclusion.

24. Mr. KIKHIA (Libya) said that he was present, as an interpreter, at the meeting between the Brazzaville group and the spokesmen for the Arab refugees. At that meeting, the chairman and members of the group, including the representative of the Niger, questioned the spokesmen, but did not express any intention to present a draft resolution. He could thus confirm the point raised by the representative of Iraq, namely, that the delegations from the Arab countries were not consulted by the authors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.80.

25. Mr. DIMECHKIE (Lebanon) recalled with reference to the remarks made by the representative of Upper Volta at the 316th meeting that Sir Winston Churchill himself had said that he deplored the fact that the Zionist movement had degenerated into an aggressive movement, and that the historian Arnold J. Toynbee, in his analysis of the question, had expressed a similar view. It was not the wish of the Arab States, as the representative of Upper Volta maintained, to reverse the tide of history, but rather to take into consideration historical and geographical factors. He recalled that Israel had been condemned on six different occasions by the Security Council whereas no Arab State had ever been so condemned. Before asserting the rights of the State of Israel, the representative of Upper Volta might do well to give careful study to the resolutions of the General Assembly. The opinions he had expressed were those which the Israel delegation had been maintaining for many years without ever convincing the Assembly. Finally, the contention that the presence of Zionist military forces was justified for security reasons was easily refuted by many passages from the report of the United Nations Mediator,^{5/} who cited acts of violence committed by the Zionists "without apparent military necessity". The United Nations Mediator had examined the situation on the

^{5/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Supplement No. 11, chap. V, para. 7.

spot, which was more than the representative of Upper Volta had been able to do.

26. Despite their difference of opinion, he would study the statements of the representative of Upper Volta with due care.

27. Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America) expressed doubt that the Government of the Soviet Union was as deeply concerned with the fate of the Arab refugees as its representative would have the Committee believe. Neither that Government, nor the Government of any country of the Soviet bloc had ever made the most meagre contribution to UNRWA. Humanitarian feelings should be shown by deeds and not by words.

28. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) regretted that most of the statements made in the debate were not more sober and objective.

29. Mr. GUIRMA (Upper Volta) considered that the fact that Sir Winston Churchill had been an illustrious statesman did not make him infallible. In its reply to the statement made by Mr. Jamal Bey Hussein in the Security Council on 23 April 1948 and quoted by the representative of Israel earlier in the debate, the United States delegation had pointed out that there could be no better proof of guilt than the confession of the culprits. That first violation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) had been the starting point of the Palestine problem. After such an unfortunate start, the parties had come to adopt a negative attitude which they should renounce in order to enter into negotiations.

30. Mr. FEDOSEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was not surprised by the attempt of the United States representative to divert the Committee's attention from the substance of the question, inasmuch as the United States Government had a large share of responsibility for the prevailing situation. The Arab refugees of Palestine, who had property in the territory of Israel, did not want to live on international charity. The purpose of the United States contributions, which the United States representative made much of, was to delay a settlement of the refugee question as long as possible.

31. Mr. DIMECHKIE (Lebanon) expressed dissatisfaction with the replies given by the representative of Upper Volta. The same arguments had been repeatedly adduced by the Israel delegation without ever impressing the Assembly.

32. Mr. GUIRMA (Upper Volta) said that common sense and truth should be repeated until they prevailed.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.