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**Chairman:** Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

## AGENDA ITEM 31

**Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations  
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the  
Near East (A/5136, A/5214; A/SPC/74) (continued)**

1. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the list of speakers for the general debate should be closed on Friday, 7 December.

2. Mr. RIFA'I (Jordan) asked whether, once the list of speakers was closed, delegations would be able to express their views on the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, which had not yet been distributed, and on any draft resolutions which might be put before the Committee.

3. The CHAIRMAN replied that, as was customary, delegations would have complete freedom to discuss draft resolutions after the closing of the list. The report of the Conciliation Commission was not yet ready, and it was unlikely that it could be discussed in the near future. He proposed that after the list was closed on 7 December, delegations should be given an opportunity of expressing their views on the report if it was available in time.

*It was so decided.*

4. Mr. COMAY (Israel) noted that although the debate on the Palestine refugees was still in the early stages, spokesmen for the Arab countries had already intervened fifteen times, not counting procedural interventions. In their hate-filled statements they had sought to vilify and besmirch Israel by the most varied and vicious accusations. The humanitarian aspects of the situation of the refugees and the need to ensure their welfare was completely subordinated to the Arab delegations' one over-riding urge: to exploit the item in order to launch a fierce propaganda offensive against the State of Israel on every front. Their central theme was that Israel, although a member of the United Nations for fourteen years, had no right to exist and should be destroyed, and their central demand was that the United Nations should co-operate in that destruction.

5. One of the most valuable purposes served by the Organization was to provide a forum for the free and frank discussion of any disputes that might arise be-

tween countries. A certain licence was to be expected in debates of that kind; but the present case was the only one in which the right to independence and the territorial integrity of a sovereign Member State were openly challenged, and in which overt threats were made to destroy its existence by force of arms. If such doctrines could be preached with impunity from the very rostrum of the United Nations, the Charter must be regarded as having become meaningless. In response to that flood of abuse, the Israel Government could not keep silent; it must defend itself as it defended its frontiers at home. Yet, Israel felt no enmity towards the Arab people, with whose legitimate aspirations it sympathized; it would go on believing in a future in which it would be able to live in harmony with them. The Israel delegation would confine its remarks to the refugee situation as a whole, reserving the right to deal at a later stage with some of its specific aspects, including the work of the Agency. In so doing, it would try to avoid all polemics. Many States represented in the Committee felt good will towards both the Arab nations and Israel; they wished to see the distressing dispute between them resolved peacefully, in the interests of all concerned and in particular of the refugees themselves, for they feared that it might again erupt into violence, thereby endangering international peace. Israel regarded the friendship and understanding of those States and their peoples as a previous asset; they knew the true face of Israel: a small people which had regained independence in the place of its birth, which was struggling to build a decent, democratic and progressive society, and which was capable of contributing something of value to the world. It was for those friends from every continent that the Israel Government wished to set the record straight.

6. It had been asserted that the refugee issue had been brought about by some sinister force called Zionism, about which a great deal of nonsense had been talked. Actually, Zionism was one of the most moving and constructive national movements in history. Beyond it lay a unique and unbroken connexion, extending over four thousand years, between the land of the Bible and the people of the Book. No Jew was a stranger to Israel. There was not a foot of its soil which was not hallowed by the bones of his ancestors, which did not speak of a history that had become part of the universal heritage of mankind. It was there that the Jewish people had enjoyed, lost, and regained their national independence, in a perpetual struggle against the great colonial empires of the time, for Zionism was perhaps, and that was not the least of its merits, the oldest of the liberation movements. In modern times, spurred on by nationalism and persecution, the Jewish people had dreamt of rebuilding their ancient homeland in Palestine through pioneering work in what had become a neglected and backward corner of the Ottoman Empire. The Zionist organization, founded in 1897, had sought to mobilize the help of Jewish people everywhere and to gain the understanding and support of all nations.

7. In 1917, the British Government had pledged its support for the Zionist ideal in the Balfour Declaration,<sup>1/</sup> which had been endorsed by Britain's allies and the United States and in due course incorporated into the Mandate for Palestine of the League of Nations.<sup>2/</sup> It had been alleged, and a string of quotations given in support, that in seeking international sympathy, Zionism had somehow become an offshoot of imperialism. That was an absurd suggestion. Was Arab nationalism to be called imperialist because on several occasions the United Kingdom had helped a number of Arab countries to become independent: is Jordan, for example, an imperialist State because it separated from Palestine at the instance of Winston Churchill? Attempts had also been made to demonstrate, by another string of quotations, that not all Jews were supporters of Zionism. That merely showed that Jews, like other people, did not all think alike. It was none the less true, and he was happy to stress the point, that most Jews felt historical, religious and emotional ties with Israel and did much to assist the progress of the country. There was no question of divided loyalty as far as they were concerned. Israel claimed the political allegiance only of its own citizens, whether Jewish or Arab. From the beginning of the Zionist movement, the Jews in Palestine had sought to live in peace with their neighbours, to share with them the benefits of their work and to demonstrate that Jews and Arabs could live together in equality and friendship. There had been a time when that vision had been shared. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, meetings had taken place between the Zionist leader, Mr. Chaim Weizmann, and the main spokesman of the Arab world, Emir Feisal, who had later become the first King of Iraq. On 3 January 1919, an agreement of friendship had been signed between them, laying down the lines of future co-operation between Jews and Arabs.

8. On 3 March 1919, in a letter to Mr. Felix Frankfurter, until recently one of the Justices of the United States Supreme Court, Emir Feisal had made his idea of Arab-Zionist relations still clearer. That letter should be framed and hung up on the walls of every home in the Near and Middle East; the spirit which it breathed needed to be revived. In that important letter, Emir Feisal had recalled that Jews and Arabs were linked by their race and had taken the first steps towards the attainment of their national ideals together. He had declared that the Arabs had the deepest sympathy with the Zionist movement and that they regarded the proposals which the Zionist organization had submitted to the Peace Conference as moderate and proper. He had added that the two movements, national and not imperialistic, were complementary, and that there was room in Syria for Jews and Arabs to live there together. Emir Feisal had concluded by expressing the hope that in future the Jews and the Arabs would be able again to take their place in the community of civilized peoples.

9. In Palestine itself, during the Mandate, a network of economic, social and personal relationships had been established between the Arab and Jewish inhabitants. Unfortunately, there had also been political tensions. While the more moderate Arabs had been ready to live at peace with their Jewish neighbours and to develop Palestine for the benefit of both sections of its popula-

tion, the more extreme Arab leaders had set out to destroy the Jewish National Home. They had organized pogroms and riots in 1921, 1929 and between 1936 and 1939, in which hundreds of unarmed Jewish civilians had perished. Despite those tensions, the Arab population had expanded rapidly and its standard of living had steadily improved as a result of Jewish activities in Palestine. The Arabs in neighbouring countries had flocked to Palestine, attracted by the employment opportunities there. The figures given in the report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)<sup>3/</sup> showed that the Arab population had more than doubled in the space of twenty-five years.

10. At the end of the Second World War, the situation in Palestine had rapidly deteriorated, particularly as a result of the measures taken by the Mandatory Power to prevent survivors of the Nazi massacres from joining their brethren in Palestine. In 1947, the Mandatory Power had brought the matter before the United Nations.<sup>4/</sup> The efforts then made to reconcile the claims of Jews and Arabs and to find a just compromise between the two had been genuine and most painstaking. At its first special session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 106 (S-1), had created UNSCOP, composed of eleven members, selected from among smaller nations which were not directly involved in the conflict. In September 1947, after serious and lengthy investigations, UNSCOP had submitted a detailed report to the Assembly.<sup>5/</sup> As a result, resolution 181 (II) that provided for the establishment of an Arab State and a Jewish State linked in an economic union, had been adopted at the Assembly's second regular session, after the most intensive, detailed and conscientious study which the United Nations had ever given to a political issue.

11. At that time, the Arab contention had been that Palestine formed part of the Arab homeland and should become another Arab State. As that claim was still being vehemently maintained, it should be noted that it had been rejected unanimously by UNSCOP,<sup>6/</sup> as had also the Jewish claim to the whole of Western Palestine. The Arab claim to Palestine subsequently put forward in a draft resolution supported by only six non-Arab delegations, had been crushingly defeated, even before the establishment of the State of Israel. Unfortunately the Arab spokesman had turned down every compromise proposal and settlement. If they had been a little less unyielding, the history of the region would have taken a very different turn. Resolution 181 (II), relating to the partition plan submitted by UNSCOP, had been adopted by a majority of well over two-thirds. It was certainly easy to criticize that plan, but nobody had found a better one. The Assembly had adopted it in the solemn hope that the two parties might build a future together in amity. That hope had been strengthened further by the support given by the two leading world Powers—the United States and the Soviet Union—to the partition plan. Ultimately, the over-riding consideration had been that a compromise solution was preferable to no solution at all. Although the partition proposal had not accorded with the wishes of the Jews either, they had accepted the compromise in order to gain independence and to be able to admit, at least to part of Palestine, those Jews who had survived the Nazi massacres and who were rotting in

<sup>1/</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Supplement No. 11*, vol. II, annex 19.

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*, annex 20.

<sup>3/</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, chap. II, paras. 11 and 12.

<sup>4/</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, annex I.

<sup>5/</sup> *Ibid.*, vols. I-V.

<sup>6/</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, chap. V, para. 3.

camps. In all sincerity, they had offered their friendship to their Arab neighbours and had guaranteed complete equality and freedom to the Arabs who were to remain within the Jewish State. That offer had been spurned and the partition resolution had been rejected. The Arab leaders had resolved to defy the United Nations, to occupy the country by force, to impose their own solution and to confront the world with a fait accompli.

12. Even before the adoption of resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947, Arab spokesmen had proclaimed their intention of destroying the Jewish State by all possible means. For that reason the Assembly had requested the Security Council to determine as a threat to peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged by the resolution. The day after the resolution had been adopted, the Palestine Arab Higher Committee had proclaimed a holy war against the Jews, and the Arab League had made public its programme for the occupation of Palestine by the armies of the League and the forcible prevention of the establishment of a Jewish State. By the end of that week concerted Arab attacks had claimed a large number of Jewish victims all over the country.

13. In a special report to the Security Council,<sup>7/</sup> on 16 February 1948, the United Nations Palestine Commission had stated that powerful Arab interests, both inside and outside Palestine, were seeking to impose a solution by force, contrary to the General Assembly resolution. Both sides had suffered in the fighting. The 100,000 Jews in Jerusalem had been cut off from the coast and a number of Jewish villages had been overrun or subjected to heavy attack. On 10 April 1948, in a report to the General Assembly,<sup>8/</sup> the United Nations Palestine Commission had indicated that armed Arab bands from neighbouring States had infiltrated into the territory of Palestine and had joined with local Arab forces in order to defeat the purposes of the partition resolution by acts of violence. When those attacks had been repulsed, panic had set in among the Arabs, who had taken flight. That flight had been encouraged by the Arab leadership. From the political point of view it had been intolerable for them to see that the local Arab population had been able to live peacefully in areas under Jewish control. They had therefore ordered an immediate mass evacuation, promising the Arabs a triumphant return within a few weeks. In some places, the Arabs had been able to flee with the help of transport provided by the British Army at their request. They had done so in spite of the appeals of the Jewish authorities, who had asked them to remain and had guaranteed their security. It was in those facts, which were confirmed by official documents that were to be found the causes of the Arab refugee question.

14. The Proclamation of Independence of the State of Israel, issued on 15 May 1948 upon the expiry of the Mandate, had contained an appeal to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel. They had been asked to return to the ways of peace and to play their part in the development of the State; they had been guaranteed full civil rights and due representation in all State organs. The Secretary-General of the Arab League had replied to that appeal by announcing to the Press that there

would be a war of extermination which would go down in history like the Crusades.

15. On the very morning of Israel's independence, Egyptian aircraft had already been dropping bombs on the civilian population of Tel-Aviv, while the armies of the surrounding Arab States had invaded Israel, as could be seen from the cablegram sent on the same day by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt to the President of the Security Council.<sup>9/</sup> The former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Trygve Lie, had said in his book, *In the Cause of Peace*,<sup>10/</sup> that the invasion of Palestine by the Arab States had been the first armed aggression which the world had seen since the end of the war. It was claimed that the Arab States had intervened so as to save their Palestinian brethren. How could that be the case if, several months before the partitioning of Palestine, the stage had already been set for the use of force? According to Professor B. Y. Boutros-Ghali of the University of Cairo, in his study "The Arab League, 1945-1955"<sup>11/</sup> the Political Committee of the Arab League meeting at Sofar in Lebanon had secretly decided in September 1947 to send troops into Palestine in case a partition plan should be agreed upon.

16. One week after the establishment of the State of Israel, the Security Council had passed a resolution<sup>12/</sup> calling for a cease-fire. When Egypt had replied in the negative,<sup>13/</sup> the Security Council had threatened to resort to sanctions.<sup>14/</sup> A month's truce was then arranged. At the end of that period, the United Nations Mediator had informed the Security Council that the Arabs were not prepared to accept an extension of the truce.<sup>15/</sup> In its resolution of 15 July 1948,<sup>16/</sup> the Security Council had then declared, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, that the situation constituted a threat to the peace within the meaning of Article 39 of the Charter, and had ordered the States concerned to cease fire, failing which it would take further action under Chapter VII of the Charter. The preamble to that resolution made it clear that the Arab States were the aggressors, that they had violated United Nations resolutions by force of arms and had been responsible for the exodus of the Arabs. In presenting their version of the events, the Arab spokesmen had attempted to re-write history and to lay the blame on others. The Jews had also suffered in the war between Israel and the Arabs. Towns and villages had been shelled and thousands of Jewish youths had fallen in battle. Nevertheless, the Israelis had been prepared and were still prepared to renew ties with their Arab neighbours on a fresh basis. They were not prepared, however, to accept distorted accounts of the past.

17. The problem had entered a new phase when in December 1948 the General Assembly in its resolution 194 (III) had called upon the States concerned to negotiate a final settlement of the conflict with the help of a United Nations Conciliation Commission. The negotia-

<sup>7/</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, No. 66*, pp. 2 and 3, document S/743.

<sup>10/</sup> New York, the Macmillan Company, 1954, p. 174.

<sup>11/</sup> *International Conciliation*, No. 498 (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 1954), p. 411.

<sup>12/</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, Supplement for May 1948*, document S/773.

<sup>13/</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 74, p. 46.

<sup>14/</sup> *Ibid.*, Supplement for May 1948, document S/801.

<sup>15/</sup> *Ibid.*, Supplement for July 1948, document S/876.

<sup>16/</sup> *Ibid.*, document S/902.

<sup>7/</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, Special Supplement No. 2*, document S/676.

<sup>8/</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Special Session, Supplement No. 1*.

tions carried out under the auspices of that Commission had been characterized by the refusal of the Arab delegations to accept the existence of Israel or to meet with the Israel delegation. The Commission's last serious effort to break the deadlock had been made at the conference which it had convened in Paris in 1951.<sup>17/</sup> At that time it had put forward a set of proposals as a basis for discussion. It had proposed inter alia that all the Governments concerned should affirm their intention to settle their differences by peaceful means. Israel had been willing to do so, but the Arab Governments had refused.

18. If he had recalled all those facts, it was because the mentality displayed by the Arabs in the past was still reflected in statements currently being made in the Committee. The Arab delegations nourished the vain hope that the reality of Israel could be eradicated and demanded of the refugees that they postpone the solution of their problem until Israel had been wiped out.

19. Every effort to help the refugees had been thwarted for political reasons. He recalled in that connexion the self-support projects advocated by the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East (Clapp Mission) in 1949,<sup>18/</sup> the Johnston Plan for the joint development of the Jordan Valley waters in 1955, and the 1959 refugee report<sup>19/</sup> of Mr. Hammarskjöld, the late Secretary-General. It was clear that the possibility of resettlement had been ruled out by the Arab States in favour of a return. The question was, would the Arabs return to Israel to become its loyal citizens? No Arab spokesman had ever made such a suggestion. On the contrary, President Abdel Nasser had stated in the previous year that if the Arabs returned to Israel, Israel would cease to exist. Even in the refugee schools a spirit of vengeance was being inculcated in the children, as had been noted by the former Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Evans.

20. Protesting against the Arab charges, he affirmed that his country was not an expansionist State. Israel and its Arab neighbours could sign a peace treaty which would allay the fears of the Arabs. A non-aggression pact could be concluded; disarmament arrangements with reciprocal inspection and control could be made, and the territorial integrity of the parties could be guaranteed by the United Nations or the great Powers. If the Arab States rejected those proposals, the reason was clearly not that Israel wanted to occupy Arab territory but that the Arab States wanted to occupy Israel.

21. It was with considerable feeling that he turned to a particularly revolting aspect of Arab propaganda, namely, the parallel between Israel and Nazi Germany drawn by certain speakers, particularly the representative of the United Arab Republic in his statement at the 361st meeting. The objectionable remarks which that representative had made about Israel might be taken simply as oratorical bombast, however regrettable such language was in that forum. When the United Arab Republic representative had said that the words "From the Euphrates to the Nile" were engraved on the façade of the Knesset, he had simply been displaying

the fertility of his imagination. When he had made personal attacks on Israel's leaders, the Chairman had rightly asked him to measure his words. Those were peculiarities of that representative's debating style which, however obnoxious, was of no particular concern to the Israel delegation. On the other hand, the Israel delegation could not be indulgent when the representative of the United Arab Republic compared Israel to Hitler Germany and when that theme was echoed in one form or another by other Arab speakers. It was odd that such an accusation should come from those who were themselves not above reproach by reason of their associations with nazism. At the sixteenth session the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mrs. Meir had recalled that the representative of Saudi Arabia had once been a close associate of the former Grand-Mufti of Jerusalem, the Chairman of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, and that the Grand-Mufti had spent the war years in Germany and had collaborated with the Nazis in their programme for the extermination of the Jews. There were photographs showing the Grand-Mufti in the company of Hitler and his colleagues. Mrs. Meir had noted on that occasion that it would be interesting to learn what the representative of Saudi Arabia might ever have said in denunciation of Grand-Mufti El-Husseini's collaboration with Hitler. Indeed, she had asked when the Saudi Arabian representative had begun to denounce Hitler and nazism—at the time of their victories or after their defeat. Broadcasting over Radio Berlin on 4 November 1943, the Grand-Mufti had called upon the Arabs to kill all the Jews, and on 3 November 1943 he praised the way in which the Germans had solved the Jewish problem. That same Grand-Mufti had been included in the list of suspects drawn up by the United Nations War Crimes Commission. In 1961 the former Grand-Mufti, who had opened a permanent office in New York, had published a statement seeking to explain away his Nazi associations, but it was to be supposed that those who had formerly been connected with him and who were participating in the current debate would prefer not to go into the matter. It was known that former SS officers held high posts in the Government of the United Arab Republic. One of them, Johannes von Leers, became Cairo's adviser on anti-Semitism. In that connexion he quoted in article from that morning's New York Herald Tribune concerning a former SS officer named Rauff who had been accused of murdering 90,000 Jews and who had fled to the Middle East, as had a number of other former Nazi leaders.

22. The Hitler régime had surpassed in horror all the persecutions of which the Jews had been the victims throughout the centuries. The final solution of the Jewish question had been set forth in detail by the survivors of the gas chambers during the recent trial of Adolph Eichmann. It should be remembered that the Jews had not been the only victims of the Nazis' racial doctrines. The Nazis had massacred about 12 million civilians in Europe, of whom 6 million had been Jews and the rest for the most part Slavs.

23. The Government of Israel had set itself the task of helping the survivors of the concentration camps to rebuild normal lives. It was those people whom the representative of the United Arab Republic and his friends had the indecency to smear as nazis and fascists.

24. In the debate in the Third Committee (1165th meeting) on manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance he had had occasion to note the resurgence of nazism. His delegation had

<sup>17/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 18.

<sup>18/</sup> *Ibid.*, Fourth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, Annex, vol. 1, document A/1106.

<sup>19/</sup> *Ibid.*, Fourteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 27, document A/4121.

accordingly not been surprised to hear a spokesman for the Arabs publicly identify himself before the Special Political Committee with a nazi group in Latin America, although he had retreated when the representatives of Argentina (359th meeting) and Chile (360th meeting) had rightly protested. That episode had serious implications. It had been known for some time that certain Arab representatives were in contact with neo-nazi and fascist groups in the United States, Latin America and other countries and that they were seeking to exploit anti-semitism as a political weapon. The Arabs were also of Semitic stock, of course, but the members of the Committee would understand in what sense he used that term. He hoped that the Saudi Arabian representative's endorsement of Tacuara would serve to focus attention on that phenomenon and provoke a reaction on the part of the public and the United Nations.

25. Much had been said about the feelings of the Arab refugees, and those feelings should be regarded with understanding and sympathy. However, the Israelis also had certain feelings which the UNRWA report (A/5214) did not take into account. The Jews retained the memory of the sufferings which they had experienced, particularly under the Nazi régime. They were resolved that there should never again be homeless Jews, and they would spare no effort to enable the million people who had settled in Israel to rebuild their lives. The pioneering spirit of the Jews should not be forgotten, nor should their love for their country, their desire to protect it against any danger, their respect for the human person and their desire for social justice and peace.

26. It could not be a question of peace at any price and certainly not peace at the price of the destruction of the State of Israel. There was a growing realization that the United Nations had no alternative but to invite the parties to negotiate a settlement by peaceful means. Representatives of the Arab States had said that such negotiations would be pointless unless Israel was prepared in advance to renounce its sovereignty and to amputate its territory and lay it open to destruction. In reality the main object of such negotiations would be to avoid war, to relax tension, to reduce wasteful arms expenditures, to reach a rational settlement of the refugee problem and to undertake a fruitful co-operation in many fields, such as that which had grown up between Israel and a number of Asian and African States. That was surely a more appealing prospect than the prolongation of past rancours and sterile debate. The real issue underlying the refugee problem was the issue of peace or war. It was to be hoped that the enlightened opinion of the United Nations would make it possible to reach a negotiated peace.

27. Mr. SABRI (United Arab Republic), speaking in the exercise of his right of reply, said that he did not intend to refute the groundless accusations made against his country. By the Israel representative's admission, Zionism was a movement for the national liberation of the Jews. That was proof that Zionist organizations existed outside Israel, and they must accordingly be regarded as foreign organizations.

28. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that he wished to take up immediately some of the most flagrant untruths which he had noticed in the statement of the representative of Israel, according to whom Zionism was nationalist and consequently a constructive movement. Although any nationalism worthy of the name must be able to lay claim to a nation, the Jews, far from having

a unique and privileged bond with Palestine, had lived there, in a Jewish State, for only about 400 years and had been preceded and followed by numerous other peoples. Zionism had not claimed an empty desert, but a country inhabited for more than thirteen centuries by a large majority of Arabs. Anyone who wished to assume rights over a country which did not belong to him could do it only at the expense of the legitimate inhabitants; Zionism had therefore been, from its origin, a force of aggression.

29. After a skilful propaganda campaign addressed to all sectors of international opinion, the Zionists had obtained from the United Kingdom Government the Balfour Declaration, on which they were now basing their case. That Declaration, however, had been illegal, since the United Kingdom Government had not had the right to cede a single inch of a Territory which had not belonged to it. The Declaration had, moreover, been contradictory, since it had sought to achieve two goals which had been mutually exclusive—the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine and the safeguarding of the rights of non-Jewish elements which had then made up the vast majority of the population.

30. The representative of Israel had also mentioned the so-called Feisal-Weizmann agreement. Even if the authenticity of that agreement was admitted, it must not be forgotten that Emir Feisal was not competent to conclude it, since he was in no way the authorized spokesman of the Arabs of Palestine. In any case, it had been stipulated that the agreement would lapse if the guarantees promised to the Arabs were not respected. Far from that condition having been fulfilled, the Mandate by which the Territory had been placed under British administration had not made the slightest mention of the Arabs, who had at that time comprised 93 per cent of the population, and whose wishes, under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations—the article dealing with mandates—should have been taken into consideration in the selection of the Mandatory. Although that same Article 22 stated that the well-being of the peoples of Territories under mandate was a sacred trust of civilization, the rights, the aspirations and the interests of the people of Palestine had been subordinated to the demands of the Jewish national home. Consequently, during the thirty years of that Mandate, the whole Palestinian population had been against handing the country over to the foreign invaders, but they had been unable to obtain a plebiscite, which the United Kingdom Government had cynically refused to hold while there was not a Jewish majority in the country.

31. It was false to say, as the representative of Israel claimed, that the Arabs of Palestine had benefited from the activity of the Jews in Palestine. Not only had the charter of the Jewish Agency for Palestine forbidden Jewish enterprises to employ Arabs, but as soon as land had been obtained from the Arabs by coercion, the Arab occupants had been expelled from it in favour of Jewish immigrants. Everything that the Arabs had ceded to the Jews had therefore been destined to be lost for ever.

32. Since that time, in fact, as the confidential letter addressed to Mr. Weizmann in 1932 by the director of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency bore witness, Zionist strategy had consisted of progressively taking possession of Palestine and of preventing any formation of an Arab State.

33. In 1947, when the question of Palestine had been brought before the United Nations, the pressure of the Western Powers had caused the successive rejection of a request that the right to self-determination should be given to the Arabs of Palestine, of a proposal to refer the question to the International Court of Justice<sup>20/</sup> and of the minority report, which had been submitted to UNSCOP and which had advocated the establishment of a federal State in which the interests of all parties would have been respected.<sup>21/</sup> Afterwards, the Zionists and their supporters, by forcing the hand of various States Members, had succeeded in having resolution 181 (II) of the partition of Palestine carried,

34. That decision had, moreover, been immediately violated, not by the Arabs as the representative of Israel claimed, but by the Israelis themselves. In support of that assertion, he cited an extract from the book *The Edge of the Sword* by Netanel Lorch<sup>22/</sup>—at present a senior official in the Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs—which according to him proved that, in accordance with a plan devised in 1947, the Haganah had gone into action well before the end of the British Mandate, and even before the arrival in Palestine of a single soldier from the Arab countries, with the double objective of consolidating its grip on the territories attributed to the Jewish State and of occupying as much territory as it could in the areas reserved for the Arab State. The Zionist troops had occupied vast regions in that way, including the towns of Jaffa and Acre and all of western Galilee.

35. The responsibility for the exodus of the refugees during that period must be ascribed to the Israelis. In that connexion, he quoted a text by Yigal Alon—commanding officer of the Palmach, the shock unit of the Haganah—who baldly stated that the expulsion of the Arabs from their homes had been part of Israel's plans, and who explained the methods used to induce the Arabs to flee. The same author stated that, without the Arab invasion, the Zionist expansion would have attained its goal, that was to say, the so-called natural frontiers of Israel. Those were the conditions in which, seeing the population of Palestine threatened with annihilation and the whole of Palestine in the process of occupation by the Zionists, the Arab States had found themselves

forced to intervene. It had been a question therefore, not of a military offensive, but of a rescue operation.

36. The representative of Israel pretended to be shocked by the parallel between Zionism and nazism, and resorted once more to the argument that it had been right to allow those who had escaped from the nazi holocaust to make a Jewish national home for themselves. He himself did not see, however, why the Arabs, and they alone, should pay the cost of that operation and serve as scapegoats for crimes which they had not committed. Far from being amongst the persecutors of the Jews, the Arabs, on the contrary, had in several periods in history granted them asylum and liberties which the rest of the world refused them. They deserved less than anyone to be sacrificed to the Zionist movement, the aggressive and racial tendencies of which dragged it inevitably down the path followed by Hitler. The Zionist State could not in fact exist except at the cost of the persecution and destruction of the Arabs of Palestine, but the latter would never agree to give up their homeland and their identity and allow themselves to be absorbed by other States in order to leave room for foreign Jews.

37. Recalling again the assassination of Count Bernadotte, he wondered whether the murderers had been punished or left to go free, and what had been the part of the Israel Government in that affair. He cited the report in which Mr. Ralph Bunche had concluded that the provisional Government of Israel must assume the full responsibility for the action of the assassins because of the failure to provide the Mediator and his party with armed protection.<sup>23/</sup>

38. In conclusion, he summarized the essential points of the problem. Israel had no grounds for claiming as a Jewish State a country with which the Jews in ancient times had had only partial links that, moreover, had been quickly broken. A Jewish State could not exist in Palestine except at the expense of the inalienable rights of the Arabs, the legitimate inhabitants of the territory. Israel had been the first to break the resolution on partition, and it was that aggression which had created the problem of the refugees.

39. He said that he would make a more detailed reply to the representative of Israel when he had been able to study the text of that representative's statement.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.

<sup>20/</sup> *Ibid.*, Second Session, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, annex 17.

<sup>21/</sup> *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 11, vol. I, chap. VII.

<sup>22/</sup> New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1961.

<sup>23/</sup> See Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, Supplement for October 1948, document S/1018, para. 10.