

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 209th
MEETING**

Monday, 28 November 1960,
at 11.05 a.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Carlet R. AUGUSTE (Haiti).

AGENDA ITEM 26

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/4478) (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. John H. Davis, Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, took a place at the Committee table.

1. Mr. OSMAN (Morocco) recalled that the Palestine problem had already led to a local war in 1948, that it had almost touched off a general conflagration in 1956 and that it constituted a source of endless trouble in a specially sensitive part of the world. The tragedy of the refugees, in particular, was an aftermath of colonialism that was now more intolerable than ever. The General Assembly, which in 1960 reflected a world very different from that of 1947, the year of the notorious partition of Palestine, was once more called upon to remedy one of the most monstrous errors of history. With the annual report (A/4478) of the Director of UNRWA before it, the Assembly should keep in mind the scope and gravity of the problem. The Palestine refugees should not be equated with other refugees, who constituted only a minute fraction of their peoples. Driven from their homes and defrauded of their property, the refugees of Palestine were a nation in exile torn from its homeland of a thousand years. That nation, which fourteen years before had been condemned to a life of wretchedness, steadfastly preserved the will to regain its existence and its dignity.

2. The Director's report showed a praiseworthy objectivity and at the very outset referred to the origin of the problem. Although the idea of creating a Jewish State by regrouping the Jews dispersed throughout the world was not a recent one, the determining element had been the exploitation of that idea by a colonialism in search of key positions. As early as the middle of the nineteenth century Lord Shaftesbury had advocated a plan for Jewish settlement in an economically backward region of the world. Palestine had seemed especially indicated, in view of the strategic importance of the region and the proximity of the Suez Canal. Zionist designs had happened to coincide with colonialist cupidity, and the history of the Palestine Mandate showed the col-

lusion between those two interests. The Palestinians had therefore had every reason to be alarmed, and the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which in point of fact had aimed at creating a Jewish State at the expense of the people of Palestine, had not been calculated to reassure them.

3. Resolution 181 (II) had consummated the partition of Palestine and sanctioned the creation of a Jewish State in a country where the Jews had still been in a minority despite the massive Jewish immigration permitted under the Mandate. In those circumstances the refugee problem was bound to arise. As the United Nations Mediator, Count Bernadotte, had testified, the creation of the Jewish State had been accompanied by acts of terrorism and veritable massacres intended to bring about the exodus of the Arab population. The injustices suffered by the Jews, during the Second World War in particular, had aroused universal indignation, but they could not excuse the iniquity inflicted on more than a million Palestinian refugees in the name of a fanatical, racist ideology. The thesis that the Jews were only regaining their fatherland after 3,000 years of exile was inadmissible. Palestine was not a *res nullius* promised to the first occupant, but the homeland of a people that had lived there from time immemorial. The occupation of that land by foreign elements against the will of its people was simply an act of force. To build a State on a basis of aggression and to expel and despoil the inhabitants was a denial of law and of justice which a society worthy of the name could not tolerate.

4. It was not merely a human problem; there were very specific rights to be safeguarded, and a definite injustice to be remedied. Nor was the problem a purely economic and financial one, even though money had to be found to meet the most elementary needs of 1,120,000 refugees, whose number was increasing by 30,000 each year. The problem was primarily political, and paragraph 11 of the Director's report rightly emphasized the importance of action by forces outside UNRWA. However, no settlement of the problem was as yet in sight. What with the population factor, the difficulty if not impossibility of finding work in the host countries or in neighbouring countries, and the insufficiency of vocational training, the Palestine refugees' future was not a bright one. International assistance, which was necessarily limited, was not able to end their distress. Yet, while the refugees could expect only seven cents per person per day, the annual income from the property of which they had been defrauded amounted to more than \$100 million. It was deplorable that nothing had yet been done to preserve and utilize that property for the benefit of its rightful owners. That, however, was the only solution which in the near future could make a large number of refugees economically independent and

^{1/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Supplement No. 11*, document A/648.

thus lighten the burden borne by the United Nations. The Moroccan delegation supported the idea of appointing a general administrator to care for the refugees' property and collect the income from it. The administrator's first task would be to demand repayment of the income illegally withheld and misappropriated during the past thirteen years. The competence shown by Mr. Davis, often under discouraging conditions, made him the obvious choice for the post.

5. The Moroccan delegation welcomed the programme to improve elementary and secondary education, accelerate vocational training and increase the number of scholarships. Broadly speaking, his delegation approved all those measures proposed in the report that were intended to safeguard the future of the refugees as a nation needing a nucleus of highly qualified persons in order to take up its life again with the best prospects. Any proper solution of the refugee problem had to be fitted to that perspective; that was why there could be no final settlement which did not take certain basic facts into account.

6. First of all, it was necessary to realize the unshakable determination of the refugees to return to their homeland. The principle of repatriation, with compensation for those choosing not to return to their homes, had been laid down in resolution 194 (III) and had since been regularly reaffirmed by the Assembly. As the Director of UNRWA had stated in his report (A/4478, para. 4), the refugees were embittered because that promise still remained unfulfilled. It was unthinkable that General Assembly resolutions should be treated as a dead letter and that the United Nations should continue to let itself be flouted by the obduracy of Israel. It was true that the resolution reaffirming the principle of repatriation entrusted the Conciliation Commission with the task of implementing the relevant recommendations, but it did not look as if the Commission could accomplish that task with its present membership. An expansion of its membership in the interests of adequate geographical and political representation would undoubtedly enhance its authority and effectiveness.

7. It was also necessary to discard the unrealistic idea of the refugees' being absorbed by neighbouring countries. In paragraph 40 of his report, the Director of UNRWA had warned against the facile assumption that it rested with the host Governments to solve the refugee problem. To deny the Palestinian refugees the right of peoples to self-determination could only exasperate them and drive them to the worst extremes. It was therefore incumbent upon the United Nations to settle the Palestine question without delay and thus ensure peace in the Middle East.

8. Mr. NASIR (Jordan) stated that the implementation of resolution 1456 (XIV), under which the Conciliation Commission was requested to make further efforts to secure the repatriation or compensation of the refugees, would have opened the way for a progressive solution of the problem under discussion, and even for a solution of the entire Palestine question. Unfortunately, that had not been done, and, as a result, a million innocent Arabs, expelled from their homes and country, continued to stagnate in camps and were prey to increasingly serious misery and degradation. Those refugees were the victims of a selfish imperialism because, through the arousal of a dangerous fanaticism, the Jews, who had already

been settled in other lands, had been induced to usurp the place of the Arabs in Palestine. There was a danger that that injustice would last until the conscience of the world was awakened to its moral duty, either by persuasion or by a sudden explosion. No one favoured the latter possibility, but it had always been the last resort of oppressed people wearied of their inability to make reason prevail.

9. At its fourteenth session, the General Assembly by its resolution 1456 (XIV) had extended the life of UNRWA for a three-year period, hoping that in the meantime something would have been done to settle the refugee problem. A year had now passed without anything at all having been accomplished. The Jordanian delegation was aware of the reasons for that inactivity. They were that Israel opposed the return of the refugees by resorting to a series of lies and fallacious arguments on the interpretation of the resolutions which had been adopted, and that the United Nations apparently was unwilling to compel Israel to allow the refugees to return. The Arabs of Palestine, however, had acquired the right to their homes and land thousands of years before the establishment of Israel, the League of Nations or the United Nations. Those rights remained valid regardless of the reasons that had impelled the refugees to abandon their property.

10. The Director of UNRWA clearly saw the seriousness of the situation but his proposals, despite their indisputable merit, could be no more than a weak palliative, whereas the lot of the refugees urgently called for a real solution. The Conciliation Commission had lost too much time in fruitless discussions and had actually contributed to making a solution of the problem more difficult. The Jordanian delegation considered that prompt and specific action must be taken as soon as the international community had recognized the mistakes which had been made, had considered their origin and had shown itself prepared to correct them. Those three stages could be traversed during the fifteenth session of the General Assembly. First, it must be admitted that the United Nations had made a mistake in adopting resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine. Next, it must express its willingness to correct that error, and such a step could be opposed only by those who were profiting from the error. The final stage would be to discuss the origin and nature of the problem as well as its extent and effects. He would like to embark on such a discussion for the benefit of the new Members of the United Nations.

11. From time immemorial, Palestine had been inhabited by the Arabs or their ancestors. At the end of the First World War, 92 per cent of the 700,000 inhabitants in Palestine had been Moslem or Christian Arabs, and 8 per cent had been Jews, many of whom had likewise been Arabs. Many Arabs had, in fact, been converted to Christianity or Judaism before the appearance of Islam. In 1917, the Allied Powers had, by means of the Balfour Declaration, promised the Jews of Europe and America that they would be given Palestine as a national home. Not only had the Arabs of Palestine and elsewhere not been consulted about that plan, but they had not even been informed of it at the close of the conflict despite the fact that they had been on the side of the Allies since 1916. Thus, the Balfour Declaration had been an act of treachery. At the end of the war, the League of Nations had placed Palestine under a British Mandate, with the

recommendation to the Mandatory Power to promote the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. The Arabs, however, had protested against that measure, which had been contrary to President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. In practice, that policy had meant allowing Jews from all over the world to settle in Palestine and to acquire land there. The Arabs had several times attempted to oppose that action by rising up in arms against the Mandatory Power. Jewish immigration into Palestine had nevertheless been continued, and several commissions of inquiry had reported that the constant disturbances had been due to that policy. By 1947, the Jewish population had risen from 8 to 32.5 per cent, and their land holdings from 2 to 5.6 per cent. In that year, one of the commissions of inquiry had recommended that Palestine be partitioned between its rightful owners and the invaders. The United Nations had approved that recommendation, but had allotted only 44 per cent of the area to its rightful owners, who still constituted more than two-thirds of the total population. He asked whether that unjust decision was legal, and whether it was in conformity with human rights and the Charter of the United Nations. He asked further whether the General Assembly could, by a legal instrument, partition a country against the will of the great majority of its inhabitants. The Mandatory Power itself had not been in favour of the partition, and there was likewise the question whether the Mandate had been in harmony with international law and whether it had been carried out in accordance with its own provisions, particularly with regard to the rights of the Arabs. Be that as it might, the Arabs of Palestine would never accept the status quo.

12. Not satisfied with partition, the Jews had wanted to get rid of the Arabs who had been living in the area assigned to the Jewish element. To accomplish that, they had launched a wave of terror and by savage massacres had compelled the Arabs to flee. They had then taken possession of the Arabs' homes and lands, thus pre-empting 77.4 per cent of the land. As for the motives of the Allied Powers, they had been very clear. During the First World War, they had made promises to the Jews in order to secure their participation in the war effort. Furthermore, they wished to dominate and exploit the region inhabited by the Arabs, and to that end had fragmented it into several States, each dominated by one or another of the Allied Powers. Lastly, the Allies had wanted to protect their communications with the Far East, as had been confirmed by the attack in 1956 on the Suez Canal; they had believed that a Jewish Palestine would always be useful for this plan.

13. To avoid acknowledging their selfish aims, the Allies had taken shelter behind Jewish claims. The latter had claimed Palestine on the pretext that 2,000 years ago they, together with other communities, had lived for a short while in certain parts and that, during an even shorter time there, they had established two very small rival Jewish States. The Jews had added that, according to the Bible, God had promised to give Palestine to the descendants of Abraham. Biblical scholars had nevertheless proved, by the Scriptures themselves, that that promise was no longer valid and that, furthermore, the Arabs, too, were descendants of Abraham. It must also be stated that aggression justified on religious grounds was tantamount to a religious war, a crusade of a new

kind in which the front line alone consisted of Jews, who enjoyed the mass support of western Christians.

14. The Jews further maintained that having been persecuted in various parts of the world, they needed a land where they could live in complete freedom and security. While it was, of course, regrettable that the Jews had been persecuted, that did not mean that anyone had the right to attempt to redress one injustice by inflicting another, and even greater, injustice. The persecution that certain nations had inflicted on the Jews did not justify aggression against the Palestinian Arabs, a peace-loving community that had always displayed generosity towards the victims of that persecution.

15. The Jews, in addition, regarded themselves as a nation and claimed Palestine as their homeland. While they were entitled to entertain those feelings, however exaggerated they might be, they did not have the right to convert them into a fanatic aggression, and they should also take into consideration the feelings of the Palestinians. Thus, the United Nations could not take sides without incurring the risk that those opposing sentiments would plunge the world into fire and blood. On the other hand, the concept of a "nation" was comparatively recent and could not be used in referring to the various Jewish tribes of the past. Hence, the Jews could not base their claim on the existence of an ancient Jewish State. Neither could they base it on race, for although it was true that they had originally been a Semitic tribe, some non-Semitic groups had likewise been converted to Judaism. Wherever they had lived, the Jews had formed a group apart, but that did not entitle them to be called a nationality in the modern meaning of the word. If that was the case, it might be asked what would be the nationality of a nation which today decided to embrace Judaism. The Jews might, on the other hand, be regarded as desiring to establish a new nation which Palestine was to receive. On that assumption, there was reason to ask whether the establishment of such a nation was desirable for the Jews, for the Arabs, and for the whole world if that could not be accomplished without shedding innocent blood and without causing much hatred and bitterness. In that respect, a distinction should be made between spiritual Zionism, which signified strict adherence of all men to the truth, and political Zionism, which was a dangerous, aggressive movement that, in order to establish a Jewish State in Palestine, had resorted to corruption, unlawful measures and intrigue, not to mention the massacre of innocent victims, the murder of Count Bernadotte and the attack on the Suez Canal in 1956.

16. Bearing that in mind, the Jordanian delegation wished to formulate a few preliminary proposals. It would obviously be unrealistic to think that an immediate final solution could be found for the refugee problem. In fact, such a solution was possible only as part of an over-all settlement of the Palestine problem itself, which was essentially a political problem. The first step to be taken would be to prevent the situation from growing worse, that is, to halt any further immigration into Israel until the problem was definitively settled. Secondly, those Jews in Israel who wished to leave the country should be free to do so, which was not the case at the present time. By impeding Jewish emigration, Israel wished to prevent the repatriation of the Arabs on the pretext that

there was not enough room for them. Thirdly, all the Arabs expelled from Israel after the armistice must be allowed to return there, their property must be restored, and they must be allowed to live in peace and freedom. The very fact that they had been expelled after the armistice clearly indicated Israel's attitude toward them; there was no foundation for Israel's claims that the Arabs had fled at the urging of their leaders. Fourth, the lands and property confiscated from the Arabs now living in Israel must be returned to them immediately; the Palestinian refugees would never recognize or accept the measures taken by Israel in that respect. Fifth, a rental should be paid for all Arab lands and property, whether private or public. Those sums should be placed in a special fund to be administered for the benefit of the refugees, pending settlement. In point of fact, out of the 20,800 square kilometres at present occupied by Israel, only 1,500 belonged to Jews, and all the rest to Arabs. Israel was using those lands free of charge. And while the international community collected approximately \$35 million yearly to assist the refugees, the income from Arab property was much greater than that sum; the situation was therefore absurd. Furthermore, money from those rentals would provide the additional \$10 million required for an alteration in the role of the Agency, whose relief programme would thus become a work programme. Lastly, a repatriation plan ought to be drawn up and implemented at once, starting with the refugees from the region that the partition plan had assigned to the Arabs. Israel had been working, with the aid of several great Powers, to make the return of the refugees as difficult as possible. If that attitude were not modified, the question could never be settled peacefully. But the Palestinian Arabs would never give up their rights; they would remain in exile until they regained their legitimate rights and secured their repatriation. The Jordanian delegation sincerely hoped that once those steps were taken, a sort of chain reaction would occur that would speed up the attainment of the final solution of the refugee problem and would facilitate the settlement of the entire Palestine question.

17. As to the matter of relief, thanks were due to the Governments, the voluntary agencies, the Christian churches, the relief organizations, and the private individuals who had contributed to alleviate the suffering of the refugees. Thanks must also be extended to those who had participated in the World Refugee Year, as well as to the UNRWA staff, who had continued to perform their complex tasks with both generosity and skill. There was perhaps nothing more painful than having to depend on relief for one's life. That was why the Jordanian Government was sparing no effort to supply the refugees with opportunities for work at the risk of creating unemployment among the rest of the population. In conclusion, he stressed that the Arab refugees earnestly hoped that the United Nations would realize its errors and restore justice. A step in the right direction would be a victory for the United Nations, a victory of right over wrong.

18. Mr. COMAY (Israel) fully endorsed the statement of the representative of the United States, who had said (201st meeting) that it was important to think first of the present and future welfare of the Palestine refugees themselves. He accordingly regretted the polemics in which the representatives of the Arab countries had indulged in connexion with the

so-called Palestine problem. The Israel delegation reserved the right to set the record straight at a later stage; at the present time, it would confine itself to the question before the Committee.

19. The Israel delegation wished to congratulate the Director of UNRWA and his staff for their great humanitarian work, and to thank the contributing countries for their generosity. It considered the vocational training programme, for instance, worthy of support. The Israel delegations' views on the more general aspects of the report would emerge from its clarification of Israel's position.

20. It might be useful, at the outset, to consider the real dimensions of the problem. In Israel's view, there never had been a million Palestinian refugees. The conclusions of a serious independent study recently published in London^{2/} were that the number of unsettled refugees was less than 550,000, that about 131,000 refugees had become self-supporting, and that integration into the economic life of the host countries was progressing. The United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East (Clapp Mission) published in 1949 a report^{3/} (A/1106) estimating that at least 160,000 non-refugees had managed to get onto the relief rolls of UNRWA. Since then, the figures had been even further falsified and the Agency had never succeeded in correcting them. In spite of the provisions of resolution 1456 (XIV), the situation had not improved. What was more, the Agency was not in a position to determine whether the refugees who continued to ask for assistance were not partially or wholly self-sufficient. It could be said that a degree of spontaneous absorption had taken place in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, where the number of refugees that had found work was estimated at 200,000. It was not a question of criticizing the Agency, but of indicating that the actual number of refugees was far less than the official figures. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that in the Arab countries it was the family which constituted the social and economic unit. The number of refugee families totalled 220,000 and, according to Israel's estimate, the actual number of families that had been displaced from what was at present Israel territory, and had not been absorbed elsewhere, would not greatly exceed 100,000. The fundamental question, therefore, was to find out whether slightly more than 100,000 Arab families could be absorbed in a region which contained about 45 million Arabs.

21. The process of absorption that was already going on pointed the way to a permanent, general solution. Such absorption was natural and inevitable for Arabs who were living amongst their own brethren, with no barrier of race, religion, language or culture between them and their environment. Moreover, such a solution would be in accordance with the global pattern of refugee problems in general. In the post-war years alone, political changes had provoked the displacement of around 40 million people who had been welcomed and absorbed by countries with which they had national, racial or religious affinities: resettlement alone, and not repatriation, constituted an answer in such situations. The Director of the Agency noted that it was not possible to create a sufficient number of

^{2/} Walter Pinner *How many Arab Refugees?* (London, MacGibbon Kee, 1959).

^{3/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, Annex, vol. I, annex B.*

jobs except at a very high level of investment. But all the countries to which refugees had gone had encountered similar problems. In reality, the Arab countries did not wish to solve the problem. If they had been willing to do what was necessary, the problem would be close to a solution. That comment had, however, to be somewhat qualified in respect of Jordan, which had granted full citizenship to all the former Palestinians within its borders and had drawn them actively into every aspect of its national life. Though UNRWA continued to assist a substantial part of the population of Jordan, they were no longer refugees in any normal sense of the term.

22. Undue stress had been laid on the state of mind of the refugees. In particular, a number of speakers had quoted paragraph 4 of the Director's report. No one understood refugees' feelings better than the Israelis. It was human for uprooted persons to long for a return to their country, but, if such a return was not the objective long-term solution of their problem, it was cruel to foster such a delusion. The important thing was, no matter what the refugees felt, that they should be willing to become self-supporting in their country of refuge, whenever they were given a chance to do so. As the Director's report showed, the determining factor for their absorption was economics, not a state of mind.

23. A careful reading of the report suggested that the Director saw the future of the refugees in the context of their economic integration in the region as a whole. The Director's approach seemed therefore to resemble that of the Secretary-General who, in paragraph 11 of his report to the fourteenth session (A/4121),^{4/} had said that the Palestinian refugees should be regarded not as a liability but, more justly, as an asset for the future, a reservoir of manpower which would assist in the creation of higher standards for the whole population of the area. In fact, that economic and regional approach to the refugee problem had been United Nations doctrine for eleven years. In 1949 the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had initiated a more long-range policy based on a regional economic approach, and the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East whose task had been, *inter alia*, to draw up plans that would facilitate the integration of the refugees into the economic life of the region as soon as possible, had recommended the initiation of public works and development projects. In resolution 302 (IV), creating UNRWA, the Assembly had instructed the latter to carry out the programmes recommended by the Clapp Mission. In paragraph 4 of resolution 393 (V) the Assembly had stated its opinion that, without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East, either by repatriation or by resettlement, was essential. The General Assembly had clearly regarded that formula as being consistent with paragraph 11. Under paragraph 5 of resolution 393 (V), a reintegration fund had been set up for the permanent absorption of refugees and their removal from relief. The works programmes and the economic rehabilitation projects had never been implemented, because the collaboration of the local Governments had been withheld. The Arab League, for example, had vetoed

the scheme for the co-ordinated use of the Jordan river waters negotiated by Mr. Eric Johnston, President Eisenhower's special envoy. As every disinterested observer knew, there was no other realistic outcome, short of a war that would destroy the State of Israel and resettle the refugees among the ruins—a solution, however, which the United Nations could obviously not tolerate.

24. In saying that the future of the Arab refugees lay in the Arab world, the delegation of Israel was saying nothing contrary to any United Nations resolution. Arab representatives quoted resolution 194 (III) as support for a solution by repatriation, but they tore a single paragraph out of its context and pretended that the reservations in that paragraph did not exist. As its short preamble implied, the objective of that resolution had been to secure the early liquidation of the whole Arab-Israel conflict. He recalled the provisions of the first paragraphs of the resolution and laid special emphasis on paragraphs 5 and 6, which were aimed at achieving a final settlement of all questions outstanding between the parties. The interdependence of the different elements, including the refugee problem, had been repeatedly emphasized by the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine itself, and in that context he referred to paragraphs 5 and 53 of Chapter I of the Commission's eighth progress report (A/1367/Rev.1)^{5/} and to paragraphs 19 to 21 of its tenth report (A/1985).^{6/} In the negotiations in Lausanne, Geneva and Paris in 1949 and 1950, the refugee problem had naturally been on the agenda. For Arab spokesmen to talk of repatriating people to Israel territory whether Israel agreed or not, whether the Arab States made peace with Israel or not, was just plain nonsense.

25. Paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) recognized no unqualified "right of return", and did not even use that phrase. The General Assembly had no competence to confer "rights" on any individuals to enter the territory of any sovereign State, and in any case its resolutions were only recommendations. Paragraph 11 used the words "should be permitted"—permitted, obviously, by the State concerned, namely Israel, in accordance with its laws and having regard to the situation as a whole. He stressed that the phrase "the refugees wishing to return" did not imply that the refugees had an absolute right, overruling that of Israel. He pointed out that in practice, in the heated emotional atmosphere mentioned in the UNRWA report, a refugee who put on record that he did not want to return would be branded as a traitor, as would a refugee who put on record that he was willing to return as a good Israeli. That was presumably why the Secretary-General, referring in his report for the fourteenth session (A/4121, paragraph 17) to the freedom of choice which spokesmen of refugees were invoking, had sensibly suggested deferring the psychological problem to the future. Not only did paragraph 11 not create any absolute rights; it made two express qualifications. First, only those refugees should be permitted to return who were willing to live at peace with their neighbours—those, in fact, who did not constitute a risk for Israel, and that would be possible only if their own attitude towards Israel was a peaceful one and if the surround-

^{4/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Supplement No. 1*.

^{5/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Session, Supplement No. 18*.

^{6/} *Ibid.*, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 18, section C.

ing circumstances were such that their return would not create security problems, either internal or external. A number of delegations had stressed the importance of that element of peace and loyalty in connexion with repatriation. The eighth progress report of the Conciliation Commission had also stated that the refugees should be fully informed of the conditions under which they would return and, in particular, of the obligations they might incur, as well as of the rights that would be guaranteed to them. The second qualification in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) flowed from the phrase "at the earliest practicable date", which had been the subject of long discussion and had been included in deference to the comments of the Israel representative to the effect that the return of the refugees would not be possible until peace had been restored.

26. The second sub-paragraph of paragraph 11 instructed the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation. The Commission could do that only within the framework of paragraph 6, namely by taking steps to assist the parties concerned to achieve a final settlement. All it could do was to lend its good offices in the context of negotiations between Israel and the Arab States; if it acted otherwise, it would be going beyond the powers which the General Assembly had given to it. Moreover, among the four things which the Commission had been instructed to facilitate, resettlement was presented as a possible alternative to repatriation. Although the Arab countries were now invoking resolution 194 (III) as if it contained a magic formula for resolving the refugee problem, he recalled that, at the time, they had voted against the whole of the resolution, without making any exception in favour of paragraph 11.

27. In any case, the question of repatriation or resettlement was not primarily a legal matter; on the contrary, it was a problem deeply rooted in the current realities of the Middle East. When they spoke of return to the homeland, the Arab delegations had no intention of letting the refugees enter Israel in order to become its loyal citizens. He quoted some recent Cairo and Baghdad radio broadcasts which showed clearly that the Arab countries were hoping to reopen hostilities against Israel. The latter could not ignore those declarations and throw open its borders to an influx of refugees who had been taught to link their return with the destruction of Israel. Israel deplored the fact that the Arab countries refused to recognize its existence and threatened to correct what they termed an "historical error". He appealed to the Governments which, in all good faith, were urging Israel to consider taking in more refugees, to realize the difficulty of the Israel Government's position. He recalled that the statement which the Committee had heard from an individual who professed to voice refugee sentiment had been dedicated to the single thesis that the State of Israel had no right to exist and should be put out of existence. If that attack had been directed against any other Member State that State would certainly be scarcely prepared to let such a person into its territory. Israel was not indifferent to the lot of the refugees, or unwilling to do what it possibly could to assist them; but its capacity so to act must be judged realistically in the light of the existing situation, the pressures

which were being put on Israel, and the dangers which surrounded it.

28. He denied that Israel had refused to take in any refugees or to pay out any compensation. He recalled that UNRWA, at one time, had had nearly 50,000 refugees in its care within the borders of Israel. They had been progressively absorbed. In 1952, under a special agreement, Israel had relieved the Agency of responsibility for 27,674 refugees, as was mentioned in note (f) to Table 1 of Annex to part I of the Director's report (A/4478). Other refugees to the number of 30,000 had returned to their homes in the early period, or had been reunited with their families; their status had been legalized, they had been integrated into the economic life of Israel and they had become its citizens. If the Arab countries had been willing to allow a proportionate integration on their own soil, the refugee problem would no longer exist. At present, one Israeli out of ten was an Arab, and, for the reasons given, Israel could not contemplate a new influx of Arabs who had been nurtured in hatred towards Israel for eleven years. However, in the context of a solution by integration in Arab lands, Israel did not exclude the possibility of a further extension of the family reunion scheme.

29. The Israel delegation was authorized to reaffirm the previous declarations of the Israel Government to the effect that, if the integration of the refugees in the Arab world were actually carried out, and if the international assistance offered in 1955 was still available, Israel would be prepared to pay compensation even before the achievement of a final peace settlement or the solution of other outstanding problems.

30. In fixing the level of compensation, it would be necessary to take into account Jewish property in areas such as the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem and the Jewish villages in the Jerusalem and Hebron districts, as well as the claims of half a million Israel citizens for the property which they had had to leave behind in various Arab countries and for which no Arab country had offered any compensation. The Conciliation Commission for Palestine was still making an inventory and evaluation of abandoned Arab lands, and the Israel authorities had been co-operating with it in that task. In connexion with that property, the task of the United Nations should be restricted to questions connected with the Israel compensation offer; no provisions of the United Nations Charter authorized the appointment of an outside custodian, and Israel would not accept one under any circumstances.

31. He pointed out that Israel was not making out of that property the vast profits which had been alleged. The property had been left derelict in 1948; the lands had been integrated into Israel's agrarian programme, and had involved huge capital investments. He stressed that Israel's voluntary undertaking to pay compensation was without parallel in the history of the post-war refugee problem in Europe and Asia. He warned the Committee that the implementation of the offer was bound to be affected by economic warfare waged against Israel by the countries whose residents would be potential claimants.

32. With regard to bank accounts, Israel had released foreign currency to the value of \$8 million. As stated in the eighteenth progress report of the

United Nations Conciliation Commission (A/4573), the accounts which were still frozen were soon to be released. The Israel Government had also handed over a large number of safe-deposit lockers and valuables which had been left behind by Arab refugees, as the periodic reports of the Conciliation Commission showed. Those unilateral steps, which aimed at making a constructive contribution towards solving the problem, had not been met by specific or constructive gestures from the Arab States.

33. The debate in the Committee and the general discussion in plenary meeting had shown that almost all the Member States thought that the parties should accept the existing realities and should try to settle their conflict by negotiation. Hence the Governments must be distressed to see that those who in 1947 had rejected the political compromise adopted by the United Nations, and who in 1948 had tried unsuccessfully to settle the issue by the sword, thereby creating the refugee problem, were in 1960 still dreaming and talking of revenge and destruction.

34. He quoted an extract from a progress report (A/648, chap. 2, para. 5) by the United Nations Mediator, Count Bernadotte, which, at a time when the State of Israel was only four months old, had indicated that the State was already solidly entrenched, that the Arabs had made a tragic mistake in employing force, and that the Arab dilemma lay in the fact that the Jewish State could be eliminated only by force, a method which had been proscribed by the United Nations. Twelve years had gone by, and Israel was even more solidly entrenched. The Arab countries were still trying to evade the dilemma, although the Armistice Agreements, the Security Council resolution confirming them, the General Assembly decisions and the United Nations Charter had shown them that the dilemma could be resolved only by the conclusion of a negotiated peace.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.