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Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

Tribute to the memory of His Majesty King Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman Al Faisal Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

1. The CHAIRMAN speaking on behalf of the Committee tendered to the Saudi Arabian delegation his sincere condolences and sympathy on the occasion of the death of His Majesty King Ibn Saud.

The Committee observed one minute's silence in memory of H. M. King Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman Al Faisal Al Saud.

2. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia) thanked the Chairman for the sympathy he had expressed on behalf of the Committee. The Government and people of Saudi Arabia would be touched and comforted by the kind expression of sympathy in their hour of profound sadness and sorrow as they mourned their beloved King and founder of the State.

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/2470, A/2470/Add.1, A/AC.72/L.12) (continued)

[Item 19]*

3. Mr. KHALIDY (Iraq) said that the situation of the Palestine refugees was the world's greatest tragedy. The peoples of the world were asking why apparently simple matters were still not solved and were complicated by unnecessary arguments. The public must be told the facts at the root of the problems with which the United Nations was dealing; the responsibility for each problem should be fixed. The Palestine refugee problem was very simple, but the statements of delegations with ulterior motives and, above all, the attitude of the responsible party which disavowed its responsibility and did everything in its power to escape the application of United Nations resolutions made it complicated and insoluble.

4. The Committee should ask the representative of Israel how it had happened that, when Israel had been created, in 1948, with the help of the United Nations and the good wishes of certain Powers, nearly one mil-

lion human beings had been suddenly uprooted from their homes and driven away to neighbouring countries? He would no doubt retort that the refugees had left of their own accord. But could that reply be considered satisfactory? The representative of Israel should mention the cannon which had spread terror and death in the Arab quarters of Jaffa and Haifa in 1948. Towns inhabited since ancient times by Arabs had suddenly become empty and the Zionists of Eastern Europe had moved in. He should describe the evidence of Zionist terrorism in Palestine in 1948, in the towns and in the countryside. The name Deir Yassin would forever be linked with Zionist crimes. In 1948, the Arabs of Palestine had discovered the true soul of Israel, the new State that had been born, according to its champions, out of the sufferings of the Jewish people. It had been born in fact out of the sufferings of another people, out of the dispossession and massacre of innocent people; it had been born in blood and terrorism that had blackened the history of the Zionist movement.

5. When a problem was of no direct concern, it was easy to appear objective and philosophical and reproach others for outbursts of passion. It was not so easy when one saw one's kith and kin murdered in cold blood and driven from their homes in thousands, and when one saw that those who claimed to be objective did not point an accusing finger towards the party which alone was responsible for it. The hapless Palestine refugees had been driven from their native land and deprived of everything they possessed. They were understandably bitter when, after five years of efforts, their problem remained unresolved.

6. The Arabs had no quarrel with the Jewish people; their only quarrel was with the Zionists and Israel. When Hitler had persecuted the Jews, the Arabs had had nothing but sympathy for them and had been horrified by the gas chambers. They had consistently condemned the nazi atrocities against the Jews, even when it had become clear to the Arab world that public opinion was becoming increasingly sympathetic to Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Arabs did not begrudge the Jewish people any legitimate help and succour they might obtain from the world; they did begrudge them a prize illegally won at the expense of another people.

7. In its early stages, Jewish immigration into Palestine had not been vehemently opposed by the Arabs. The Arabs had had no difficulty in living side by side with the Jews for centuries; the Jewish prophets and traditions were revered by the Moslems; when ghettos and pogroms had been common in Europe, the Jews had lived freely and happily in the Middle East. Nevertheless, after so many centuries of fraternization, help and brotherhood, the Zionist had murdered thousands of Arabs or had driven them out of Palestine. Time alone would show how much Israel had compromised its very existence by those crimes.

8. Responsibility for the problem of Palestine refugees rested upon Israel and upon the United Nations,

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

which had helped Israel to come into existence. The question was political, not economic; anyone who said that it was an economic question was endeavouring to overlook the facts. Any one who said that the Arab countries were in the least way responsible was utterly mistaken. It was Israel which had driven the refugees from their homes. It was the United Nations which had created Israel. The murders and terrorist acts were the work of the Haganah and the Irgun. If it had not been for Israel, the tragedy of the refugees would not have occurred. Those who claimed that the Arab Governments had any responsibility in the matter were attempting to absolve both Israel and the United Nations. Responsibility must also fall on outside elements which had continuously encouraged Israel in its terrorism, particularly the Zionist organizations in the United States, which had used every possible economic or political means to achieve their ends.

9. Referring to the statement made a few days earlier by the Archbishop of York regarding the plight of the Palestine refugees and the pressure which the Zionist organizations in the United States continued to exert on United States policy on the subject, he said that the Archbishop of York had rightly wondered how the problem of the Palestine refugees could be settled in the United Nations if those Zionist organizations persisted in distorting the facts. The Archbishop had spoken in the name of justice. The Zionist machinery in the United States had immediately gone into action: meetings had been called, resolutions adopted, telegrams of condemnation sent; in order to serve their propaganda purposes, the Zionist groups had even called upon non-zionists, in particular the Christian churches. The American people should ask its representatives why they did not make the loud protests on behalf of the Palestine refugees they usually made in the United Nations in the name of democracy and human rights.

10. There was another fundamental principle: Israel should be made to obey United Nations resolutions. The United Nations must do everything in its power towards that end. The United States Government, whose influence was decisive both inside and outside the United Nations, must as a Member of the United Nations persuade Israel to implement the General Assembly's decisions. The United States was helping Israel in more than one way; if there was any question in regard to which the United States could properly exert pressure on Israel, it was to solve the tragic problem of the Palestine refugees. The United States was morally bound to do that. In his statement at the 25th meeting, the United States representative had tried to look at both sides of the quarrel as mildly as possible; unfortunately, in a question of that nature, moderation was a sin against right and justice, peace and security.

11. The Iraqi delegation could not regard the activity of the Relief and Works Agency as wholly satisfactory. The Acting Director, to whom it paid tribute, was trying to do his best, but much still remained to be done to reorganize the Agency whose methods and staff were far from adequate. The costs of administration were very high and all the responsible posts went to internationally recruited staff. Some of those posts should be filled by Palestine Arabs who would work with conviction and understanding and would form a happy link between the Agency and the refugees.

12. In the past, assistance to the refugees in nutrition, housing, health services and education had been inadequate; the progress made was far from wholly satis-

factory. The present situation was a source of moral and physical evils; if it was not remedied, the tragic plight of the refugees which was one of the factors in the prevailing world insecurity would deteriorate.

13. The Iraqi delegation supported the joint draft resolution (A/AC.72/L.12) and would vote for it. It was essential to continue the Agency and to review the situation at the ninth session of the General Assembly.

14. Mr. CHHATARI (Pakistan) said that the Assembly was once again faced with the painful problem of Palestine refugees. His delegation had very carefully studied the annual report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/2470) and the special report of the Director and the Advisory Commission (A/2470/Add.1). In the latter the Acting Director and the Advisory Commission had confessed that in spite of all the efforts employed, the rehabilitation of all Arab refugees in the economic and political circumstances prevailing in the Middle East was for all practical purposes impossible. The only object which the United Nations agency hoped to achieve was that a limited number of the refugees would be able to support themselves by employment on the four projects on which agreement had been concluded. His delegation had never thought that such a plan could constitute a final solution. It was only a means of giving temporary relief to the refugees pending their repatriation and payment of compensation to them by the Israeli Government.

15. The problem of Palestine refugees was of importance to the whole world; it had stirred up deep discontent in the Middle East and, if not solved, might become a threat to peace in that area. The authors of the joint draft resolution did not appear, judging from the tone of their text, to have realized that fact. It was clear from the United States representative's statement that his Government did not attach much importance to the problem, or believe that the dispute between Israel and the Arab States might one day burst into a conflagration in which Moslems all over the world might be compelled to play a vital and possibly a decisive role.

16. To the United States' representative, the life and death struggle of the Palestine refugees and the people of their host countries was nothing more than a colourful drama staged in an Oriental setting. The Pakistan Government deplored the recent United States attitude to humanitarian problems generally and to problems of human rights and freedoms in particular. The standard-bearers of human rights and the fundamental freedoms had become the pall-bearers at the burial of the higher values of mankind. To whom did the United States representative address himself in outlining his Government's proposed Middle East policy? The partition of Palestine had been decided without the consent of its Arab neighbours. Middle East problems had been created by the policies adopted there by certain great Powers, which now wished to unload those problems on to the Arabs who were powerless to find any remedy for the situation which had arisen.

17. The United States representative had said that his Government was not prepared to bear indefinitely the heavy burden of aid to the Palestine refugees when Israel and the Arab States displayed so little initiative in helping to solve the problem themselves. Was it not adding insult to the injuries of the Arab States to include them in such reproaches? It was not they who had defied General Assembly resolutions, opposed the

economic union of Palestine or refused to repatriate refugees and pay them compensation. As Mr. Alfred Lilienthal had said, unless Israel could sever its close ties with political organizations outside its borders it deserved neither the recognition of the civilized world nor the co-operation of its Arab neighbours. So long as Zionist immigration into Palestine was at so high a rate, how could the Government of Israel be expected to agree to the repatriation of Palestine refugees, without which the problem could not be solved?

18. The Government of Israel had declared that it was prepared to co-operate in seeking a solution on two conditions—that all the resolutions of the General Assembly should be denounced, except, naturally, that creating the State of Israel, and that discussions should be based on the armistice agreements which Israel reserved the right to revoke or amend at its convenience, and to suit its pleasure and which placed under its provisional administration the territories which it had conquered by force in defiance of the General Assembly's decision.

19. The New Zealand representative, among others, had stressed the lack of co-operation between Israel and the Arab States and had even suggested (26th meeting) that until normal diplomatic relations were restored between them the refugee problem was not likely to be solved. Was it fair to ask the Arab States to co-operate with Israel on those terms? In any case, Israel was not being required to accept refugees from the Arab countries but to repatriate its own Arab nationals whom it had driven from their homes. The question had nothing to do with the restoration of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Arab States.

20. The accusation that the Arab countries and refugees refused to co-operate with the Relief and Works Agency seemed to ignore the fact that the Arab peoples had been the victims of power politics. They had been unjustly treated and denied fundamental human rights. As a prerequisite to any resettlement plan their human dignity must be restored.

21. It was often said that Israel would have difficulty in repatriating the refugees because it did not know their exact numbers. But the maximum number of refugees that might ask for repatriation was known to be about one million and unless the United Nations delayed the matter for years the numbers would not increase substantially. In any case, in dealing with the Jewish immigrants, Israel had adopted precisely the opposite policy and was accepting them all. Israel's refusal to repatriate the Palestine refugees was not due to the Arab countries' refusal to co-operate, but to the fact that Israel did not want the refugees.

22. The United States representative had said that his country was not prepared to bear indefinitely the burden of helping the refugees when Israel and the Arab States showed so little initiative in settling the matter. Pakistan as a country vitally interested in the stability of the Middle East, considered that the problem could not be solved by charity. The refugees were being maintained at the level of destitution. Their despair might give rise to events of untold violence. United Nations resolutions on the question had been watered down year after year. Perhaps, by 1955, some would start thinking that the repatriation of refugees was a matter within Israel's domestic jurisdiction and that the United Nations was not competent to deal with it. Others might suggest seeking the opinion of the International Court. By that time, the Jordan waters would have been diverted,

thereby rendering many more thousands of Arabs landless. Again it would be said that the Arabs had refused to co-operate in the solution of the problem.

23. What sort of life were the refugees leading under the relief promised? They were given \$2.50 a head per month, which provided them with half-rations and very inadequate shelter. The incidence of contagious diseases was very high. The relief they received was insufficient either to make them good citizens or to safeguard their human dignity, and the policy that was being followed in regard to them was not such as to give them confidence in any solemn declaration.

24. He called attention, in connexion with the co-operation of the Arab countries, to the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, Lebanon and Syria in the Committee itself, and to Pakistan's efforts in the Negotiating Committee for Extra-Budgetary Funds. All those countries, however, were under-developed and their resources very limited. It was Israel's duty to take a more active part in solving the problem. Israel which was kept alive by United States financial backing would undoubtedly understand what its obligations were if the United States fulfilled its obligations.

25. Pakistan was deeply interested in the humanitarian problem which was also of concern to Pakistan as a Moslem country. For want of any better text he would vote in favour of both parts of the joint draft resolution. Pakistan had for long been eager to serve on the Advisory Commission and had forwarded a request to the effect to the Secretary-General. It hoped it would be able to serve on the expanded Commission.

26. He thanked Mr. Blandford, former Director of the Agency, and Mr. Carver, Acting Director, for their services.

27. Mr. ANSARI (Afghanistan) said that the problem of Palestine refugees was extremely urgent and important, since it involved the destiny of some 900,000 human beings. It also had a direct bearing on the economic and political situation in the Middle East, and therefore on the maintenance of peace and security in that region.

28. The General Assembly had attempted to solve the problem by adopting resolution 302 (IV). The Relief and Works Agency, established by that resolution, had done good work for which he wished particularly to thank the Acting Director, Mr. Carver. He also paid tribute to the Advisory Commission and the specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which had co-operated in the work.

29. The annual report and the special report gave detailed information on the present position. They clearly showed the extent of the task that remained.

30. The signing of four programme agreements was a most important step towards a solution of the main problem, which consisted in making the refugees self-supporting and increasing productivity in the Middle East. As the Committee knew, the Agency not only had to help the refugees, but also to draw up programmes so as to provide them with employment. Under the agreements signed by the Agency and four Arab States, a total sum of \$111 million had been committed for the technical training of the refugees, their education and the development of commerce and industry in the host countries. The Yarmuk-Jordan Valley scheme

and the diversion of Nile water for irrigating 50,000 acres of land formed the most striking parts of the programme. However, at least five years would be required to complete the projects and even the completion of the projects would not completely solve the problem.

31. The conclusion of programme agreements was a sign of co-operation on the part of the Arab States. Despite their own internal difficulties, the latter were ready to help the United Nations to solve a problem that was of its own creation. The participation of Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the Advisory Commission was another welcome event. Nevertheless, the host countries could not rehabilitate all the refugees in their territories; that would be beyond their capacity of absorption.

32. The attitude of the refugees, and their desire to return at all costs to their homes were a further obstacle to the implementation of the repatriation programme. The refugees urged the United Nations to implement

its decisions concerning repatriation and compensation. The United States representative had taken note of that just and reasonable attitude when he had said that the interests of both the refugees and of Israel itself made it important for Israel to take the necessary steps to ensure their repatriation and compensation. Even partial reintegration of the refugees in the host countries was impossible if a number of them were not repatriated and if the refugees were not granted the compensation due to them.

33. The recent frontier incidents made the solution of the problem still more urgent. His country was deeply concerned about the state of affairs created by the refugee problem in the Middle East since it believed that peace and security were at stake. Owing to its own difficulties, his Government was unable to make any substantial contribution towards solving the problem, but would support the joint draft resolution before the Committee.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.