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**Chairman:** Mr. Yordan TCHOBANOV (Bulgaria).

AGENDA ITEM 25

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

1. Mr. EL KHOLI (United Arab Republic) said that although the Palestine refugee question had been discussed in the United Nations for the past fourteen years, and although the rights of the Arab people of Palestine had been and still were clear, no progress had been made towards carrying out the resolutions. Nevertheless, the party obstructing that aim continued to refer to its desire for peace, harmony and friendship. The Israel idea of peace was to displace the nation that had been for generations the guardian of the holy shrines of all the monotheistic religions, which had enjoyed happiness and opened its land to the distressed. When the Jews in Europe were persecuted during the Middle Ages they were admitted into Arab lands and given all rights. After the First World War the Ottoman Empire was broken up and Palestine came under the British Mandate: thus the Arabs of that region were separated by artificial boundaries. Zionism was the first and the Balfour Declaration<sup>1/</sup> the second stage of a colonialist plan against the Arabs; then Dr. Weizmann announced that the Zionists were in Palestine to protect the Suez Canal against Egypt. The third stage was the tripartite attack in 1956. All that was the result of thirty years of a planned international conspiracy of the two evils of the day, colonialism and Zionism.

2. In 1948 the United Nations was predominantly a Western Organization and many Asian and African peoples were still battling for their independence. Such conditions favoured the Zionist-colonialist forces that worked for and brought about the unique tragedy of Palestine. With the years times had changed and the freedom fighters in Angola and Algeria, for example, had many friends among those who had undergone similar experiences in the past. The battle for freedom made victims, and the hardships of those victims formed a large part of the Committee's agenda. The Committee, having examined the sufferings of the people of South Africa caused by the ruth-

less policies of the Government of South Africa, had to deal with the sufferings imposed by the ruthlessness of the Zionist-colonialist forces on the Arab people of Palestine. The Arabs and the South Africans, two peoples, geographically remote, were linked in suffering under the same evil, racial prejudice, which was a natural product of colonialism. Both hoped that the United Nations would be able to bring their sufferings to an end. In South Africa even the Government did not seek to deny its notion of racial supremacy. The racist character of Zionism, on the other hand, was not yet fully comprehended, largely owing to the deplorable fact that, by and large, the Western Press supported the international Zionist movement. Like every other fanatical movement, Zionism was hurting the very people whom it was designed to serve. Jewish communities all over the world suffered from Zionist pressure; not only were they called upon to contribute to the budget of Israel, the only country in the world financed by its taxpayers abroad, but they were under pressure to leave their countries and go to Israel. Jews who strayed outside Israel had to have a dual loyalty, to their own Government and to Israel, and in the case of a conflict, their loyalty to Israel was expected to prevail.

3. Just as Zionism could never have accomplished its aim without the support of the colonial Powers, so the final and inevitable victory of the peoples of Asia and Africa over the colonialists would weaken Zionism and ultimately bring about its disintegration. Zionism had first been given official recognition by Great Britain, the Mandatory Power of Palestine. European immigrants had been brought to Palestine by European and American organizations with the colonial Power's blessing. Weapons and other equipment were provided by foreign financial support. Even at present, Israel could not live for one day on its own resources. Only constant aid from abroad made possible the continuation of the Israel colonization of Palestine.

4. The dishonourable tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956 had been a glaring instance of Zionist-colonialist co-operation against the forces of freedom. The people of Egypt realized at the time that they were fighting not only their own battle but the battle of freedom everywhere. The defeat of Britain, France and Israel in 1956 had been an accelerating factor in the subsequent bankruptcy of colonialism which the world was witnessing today.

5. The representative of Israel had described the Zionist movement in terms of liberalism (309th meeting) and of support for national liberation movements. Israel's voting record in the United Nations on colonial questions clearly showed what side it was on. Now that it was no longer dangerous to pose as being against colonialism, that pattern might tend to change. A number of countries which still had colonies found it useful at one time or another to pose as

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

being against colonialism. The United Nations must not allow itself to be deceived about their real plans and policies. From the sixth session, when it had sided with the colonial Powers in regard to French violations of the Charter and of human rights in Morocco, to the fifteenth, when it had voted against the draft resolution demanding the withdrawal of all Belgian personnel from the Congo and had refused to vote in favour of a draft resolution recognizing the right of Tunisia to call for the withdrawal of French forces from Tunisia, Israel's voting record had been that of an ally of colonialism. Israel had also refused to side with freedom on hearings on South West Africa, self-determination for Non-Self-Governing Territories, negotiation to settle the question of West Irian, negotiation to settle the Algerian question, suspension of French nuclear tests in the Sahara, and on the question of breaking off diplomatic relations with South Africa.

6. Outside the United Nations, the Israel authorities were doing their best to sabotage peaceful and friendly relations between the Arab countries and the rest of the world. In 1954, the Israel Ministry of Defence had planned a series of bomb attacks upon official American buildings in Cairo and Alexandria. The bombings were to have been attributed to Egyptians and had been expected to sabotage what had been calculated to be a beginning of an era of friendship between the United States and Egypt. Israel agents, despatched to Egypt, had exploited a number of Egyptian Jews, who had fallen victims to the Zionist principle of dual loyalty. Fortunately, the Egyptian police had uncovered the plot and those responsible for it had been brought to trial. International public opinion had had to wait seven years for the real story of the so-called "Lavon Affair". He wondered how long it would take for international public opinion to learn the true story of the original conspiracy against the people of Palestine.

7. The reasons for which the Arab people of Palestine had left their homes and taken refuge in neighbouring Arab countries were exactly the same as those for which the Jews had left their homes and property and fled from Germany. That the Zionists had used plunder, terror and massacre to make the Arabs evacuate Palestine had been confirmed by the English historian, Arnold Toynbee, and by the United Nations Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, and that evacuation was what the Israel authorities wanted the world to accept. They argued that since the people of Palestine had left their homes, they were not entitled to them any more, and Israel, by right of conquest, was entitled to whatever they had left behind. The Israel authorities had even tried to invoke the right of conquest during the aggression against Egypt in 1956, when the Egyptian army had been forced to evacuate the Sinai Peninsula in order to face the mass attack of the British and French on Port Said. The Israel representative had revealed Zionism's expansionist character in his speech to the Committee at the 309th meeting when he had said, in connexion with the partition plan, that Israel had agreed to accept partition in order to gain independence "in at least part of Palestine". It would be interesting to know what Israel regarded as the other part.

8. It was universally conceded that the present condition of the people of Palestine, the refugees for whom the United Nations was responsible, was intolerable. The Director of UNRWA admitted as much in paragraph 9 of his admirable report (A/4861). Mr.

Davis, for whose ability, impartiality and humanitarianism the delegation of the United Arab Republic had the greatest admiration, noted at the end of that paragraph that, in view of their misery, it was not surprising that the refugees still strongly demanded the right of choice between repatriation and compensation held out to them by the United Nations under paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III)—a right which had never been implemented. The people of Palestine depended on the United Nations to find ways and means of effecting that choice. The problem was not a dispute between the Governments of the Arab States on the one hand and Israel on the other that could be solved by a get-together. The Zionists depicted the question in those terms and some people, unaware of the historical background, might regard that as a sensible idea and wonder why the Arab Governments were unable to accept it. What was at stake, however, was the inalienable right of the people of Palestine to return to their homes, as against the unlawful and violent denial of that right by the Israel authorities. If it was a dispute at all, it was between law and justice on the one hand and chaos and robbery on the other.

9. Israel was doing its utmost to influence the United Nations to give up its efforts to bring about the repatriation of the refugees. It was trying to present the United Nations with a "fait accompli", and to persuade the Organization that had once bowed to international pressure and installed the Zionist group in Palestine, to acquiesce also in the final displacement of the unhappy people of Palestine. It should be recalled, however, that the United Nations of today was an Organization in which resolution 1514 (XV) on the eradication of colonialism could be adopted with an overwhelming majority. Freedom had had few voices to defend it twelve years ago, but the voice of freedom had become far more effective.

10. The greatest responsibility of the United Nations was centred in Palestine. Unfortunately, for the past thirteen years, the General Assembly had been remarkably passive. It had merely reaffirmed the right of the people of Palestine to return to their homes, without taking the necessary steps to overcome the defiant attitude of the Israel authorities. The people of Palestine, supported by all those who cared for justice, must not be allowed to lose their faith in the Organization.

11. The record of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine was one of almost total failure. The main responsibility for that failure fell upon the Israel authorities, but it was clear that no serious attempt had been made by the Conciliation Commission to get the Israel authorities to comply with the Assembly's resolution 194 (III). Its great error had been to act upon the mistaken premise that the question of restoring their inherent rights to the people of Palestine was merely a dispute between the Arab States and Israel. It had assumed that if the Israelis and the Arabs were unable to agree on a solution, its goal could not be achieved. That assumption was altogether unfounded and not in conformity with the Conciliation Commission's own terms of reference. The Commission functioned in relation to the Arab refugees under resolution 194 (III), by which it had been established. That resolution offered the Arab refugees the choice between returning to their homes, with compensation for loss and damage to their property, or being compensated if they chose not to return. Obviously, therefore, the Conciliation

Commission's efforts were supposed to be addressed to the Israel authorities. Year after year, the Commission had reported no progress but it had never told the General Assembly why the people of Palestine had not been allowed to exercise their right of repatriation. It was true that the reasons were clear to anyone who followed the statements of the Israel delegation, but it nevertheless remained the duty of the Conciliation Commission to tell the General Assembly what efforts it had made to force Israel to comply with the repeated resolutions of the General Assembly.

12. Dissatisfaction with the Conciliation Commission's work had been expressed at a number of sessions, and at the fourteenth session, in resolution 1456 (XIV) the General Assembly had requested the Commission to "make further efforts to secure the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III)". In November 1960, almost a year after the adoption of that resolution, the Commission had reported to the Secretary-General<sup>2/</sup> that since the passage of the resolution it had been considering other ways of carrying out paragraph 11, but was unable to report any progress. The Commission had not, however, specified what other steps it had considered during the year or, most significantly, why it was unable to report progress. The General Assembly was entitled to know who was obstructing the application of its resolutions and it was natural that at its fifteenth session, it should have adopted resolution 1604 (XV), in operative paragraph 1 of which it noted with regret that the Conciliation Commission had not yet been able to report progress and again requested it to make efforts to secure the implementation of paragraph 11 and report on it to the sixteenth session of the General Assembly.

13. That resolution had thus confirmed the Conciliation Commission's mandate to see that the people of Palestine were enabled to exercise their right of choice between returning home and receiving compensation. Instead of addressing itself directly to the heart of the matter—namely, the Israeli defiance—the Commission had decided to send a special representative to explore with the host Governments and with Israel practical means of seeking progress on the refugee problem, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1604 (XV). His Government appreciated the qualities of Mr. J. E. Johnson, who had been selected as Special Representative, but it believed that the Commission had adopted such a course in order to be able to continue its negative attitude. The Special Representative's report (A/4921/Add.1 and Corr.1) seemed to have been written on the basis of the same erroneous premises as had been adopted by the Commission. In paragraph 49 of his report, the Special Representative noted that both sides had expressed a willingness to consider a step-by-step process that might lead to progress on the refugee issue. Since the Special Representative did not say whether the exiled people of Palestine were to be able to exercise their right to repatriation, his delegation could not understand what was meant by such progress. Indeed, in the light of Israel's adamant position on the matter, reaffirmed at the Committee's 309th meeting, the Special Representative's statement was dangerously misleading, since in fact no progress had been apparent and the international

community must not be led to relax its vigilance as long as Israel defied the law.

14. In paragraph 59, the Special Representative spoke of the accelerated economic growth of the whole area as being important for the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). He did not understand that view, although he could say that the people and the Government of the United Arab Republic were engaged in the great task of irrigating the desert, bringing about more profitable exploitation of the waters of the Nile, expanding the country's industrial capacity, promoting the exploitation of its mineral and hydrological resources, and developing the Suez Canal. His delegation's criticisms were directed not so much at the Special Representative's report as at the Conciliation Commission itself, which had been entrusted with the task of securing the application of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). The members of that Commission were France, Turkey and the United States; its evasive attitude was therefore not difficult to understand.

15. It was for the United Nations, which had been instrumental in creating the plight of the Palestinian people, to find the means to ensure that full effect was given to its resolution on the repatriation of the refugees. Firstly, it should see that the machinery set up for application of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) was suitable, impartial and effective; secondly, it should establish provisional machinery to ensure the welfare of the refugees and to safeguard their property rights. As far as the refugees' welfare was concerned, UNRWA was discharging its tasks admirably; his Government was co-operating with that Agency, as was mentioned in the Director's report (A/4861). With regard to the safeguarding of the property rights of the refugees, the General Assembly's resolutions had dealt with that important issue; for example resolution 394 (V) had directed the Conciliation Commission to continue consultations with the parties regarding measures for the protection of the rights and property of the refugees. The right of the refugees to the safeguarding of their property derived not only from the provisions of General Assembly resolutions but also from fundamental human rights and the principles of the Charter. Arnold Toynbee had recently supported the view that a major part of the land in the area held by Israel, and the property on that land, still belonged legally to the Arabs who were now living in misery as refugees. At the seventeenth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Palestinian Question, in 1947, Mr. Sharett, who later became Prime Minister of Israel had admitted that the Jews had by that time acquired less than 7 per cent of the land of Palestine.<sup>3/</sup> Yet the representative of Israel now asked the Committee to disregard the rights of the Arab Palestinians to their property and had argued, at the 309th meeting, that the United Nations had no competence with regard to property rights within the territory of a State and that the proposal for a custodian had no foundation in law or in established international practice. He would point out that the circumstances of the present case, including the special responsibility of the United Nations in the matter, were unique. In any case, the question whether the United Nations had had the right, in 1947, to divide a nation against the expressed wishes of the majority of its people was unanswerable.

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*, Fifteenth Session, Annexes, Vol. I, agenda item 26, document A/4573.

<sup>3/</sup> *Ibid.*, Second Session, *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Palestinian Question, 17th meeting.

16. The representative of Israel had spoken of peace, but Israel's numerous acts of aggression had been condemned on several occasions by the Security Council, as well as by the Mixed Armistice Commissions set up under the General Armistice Agreements of 1949. Mr. Ben-Gurion himself had claimed, after Israel's attack on Egypt in 1956, in collusion with other colonial powers, that the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Agreement was dead. Israel had similarly disregarded the Protocols of Lausanne of 1949, all of which it had signed. The only peace desired by Israel was one which served to perpetuate aggression, injustice and the violation of the United Nations Charter and its resolutions.

17. Mr. USHER (Ivory Coast) said that, from a desire to avoid questions which were the subject of bitter controversy, he might have been tempted not to participate in the present debate; however, he considered it necessary and desirable to explain his country's position and to endeavour, in all objectivity, to contribute to a solution of the matter. His delegation's aim was, firstly, to help to preserve the peaceful situation now existing and to suggest ways of improving that situation and of achieving a permanent settlement; secondly, to assist in improving the lot of the refugees by stressing the human aspects of the question and freeing it from political considerations.

18. The Jewish State of Israel had been created by General Assembly resolution 181 (II) adopted despite the fact that some of the citizens of Palestine had opposed partition; it called for the creation of an Arab State in which the Jewish minority would be safeguarded. His delegation had sought to understand why the United Nations, which on occasion took measures to prevent the division of a country and to impose a unitary régime, should have accepted the partition of Palestine. It had concluded that the terrible sufferings of the Jewish minority in States occupied by the Nazis during the Second World War had determined the United Nations, in 1947, to free the Jews from the control of any majority. The choice of Palestine as the home for the Jewish State was justified by ancient history. The creation of Israel had led to a war between the Jewish State and the Arab States between 1948 and 1949. That situation had brought about the exodus of several thousands of Arabs from Israel and the expulsion of an equal number of Jews from the Arab countries. His delegation felt a deep sympathy for the Palestine refugees and regretted the position all the more because such groups, living in exile and in miserable conditions, constituted a permanent danger to international peace. UNRWA was to be congratulated on its efforts to improve the welfare and ensure the education of the refugees; however, more than that was needed, and the Agency had rightly attempted, since 1951, to draw up plans for the resettlement of the refugees, but those plans had been frustrated owing to political considerations. Political notions should be cast aside and the Palestine situation regarded purely as a human affair. A study of past reports revealed that the areas set aside for the Arabs under resolution 181 (II) were now, as a result of the armistice lines, divided among Jordan, Egypt and Israel. If he had been in the position of the Arab delegation, he would have insisted on the restitution of the areas, annexed after the partition plan in order to set up an Arab State for the refugees.

19. His country believed in a liberal economy, and considered private property to be sacred; he was therefore glad that the General Assembly had concerned itself with the question of the property of the Arab refugees. He was also glad that the Conciliation Commission was in a position to estimate the total amount of the immovable property belonging to the Arabs in Israel, and that Israel did not refuse to compensate the owners. Furthermore, all refugee bank accounts blocked in Israel had now been released.

20. There was general agreement that the Palestine question must be solved in its entirety. His delegation supported the right of the refugees to repatriation or compensation, in accordance with operative paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), but believed that operative paragraph 5 of the same resolution, which called on the parties to seek a settlement of all remaining questions by negotiation, should also be implemented. At that point there were psychological obstacles; the Arabs, feeling frustrated by General Assembly resolution 181 (II) which had created the State of Israel, had retreated into an attitude of hatred and had vowed Israel's destruction. An attitude of mistrust on the part of Israel was consequently natural.

21. With regard to the proposal for a custodian to take charge of Arab property in Israel, there could be no doubt that the enjoyment of the property of others was morally unjustified, but that fact did not make the proposal legal. Moreover, legality in time of war differed from legality in time of peace, and the property had been confiscated as a result of the war between Israel and the Arabs. His delegation would be happy if Israel accepted the proposal for a custodian, but Israel had put forward convincing arguments against the proposal, and his delegation would have difficulty in supporting a resolution in that sense. It had been argued that international law took precedence over domestic law and that was true in the case of international agreements signed and ratified by the parties; his delegation would be glad to see such agreements established by negotiation, and would be ready to give its support to any agreement issuing from negotiations.

22. It needed to be remembered that Israel and the Arabs were in a state of war; an armistice was not a peace treaty, and the objections of Israel to the repatriation of the Arab refugees could be easily understood.

23. At the 311th meeting, the spokesman for the refugees had referred to two means of settlement: peace and justice or war. This delegation held that peace and justice constituted the only possible solution. For the international community, the law was laid down in the Charter and in the resolutions of the United Nations, and any realistic solution to the problem must base itself on the existence of the State of Israel, recommended by a Security Council resolution<sup>4/</sup> and confirmed by General Assembly resolution 181 (II). Under the Charter, Member States had pledged themselves to seek to settle their disputes by peaceful means, and if it was desired to solve the Palestine question and to save human beings from the humiliation of living on international charity, the parties must be persuaded to negotiate. The practi-

<sup>4/</sup> Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year, Supplement for March 1949, document S/1277.

cal arrangements for resettlement or compensation could in any case only be established by direct negotiations. In the meanwhile, the Assembly should encourage the Conciliation Commission and its Special Representative to pursue their efforts.

24. It had been rumoured that some States intended to declare themselves in a state of war with the countries of the Africano-Malagasy Union if those countries supported a resolution calling for negotiations. If such proved to be the case, it would only show the incompatibility of outlook between the former States and the countries of the Africano-Malagasy Union, whose principles of foreign policy were tolerance, equity, justice, non-condemnation, and the tireless endeavour to settle international conflicts by negotiation.

25. Mr. CHATTI (Tunisia) recalled that the question of Palestine had been one of the first questions which had come before the United Nations. Since then, the United Nations had adopted resolutions, appointed mediators and conciliators, repeatedly reaffirmed the rights of the Arabs and expressed regret at the fact that United Nations decisions had not been applied. The Organization had achieved no results of which it could be proud; one result of its actions was that 1,200,000 refugees were now living in camps like criminals and surviving on international charity. The Zionist propaganda had succeeded in spreading abroad the idea that the refugees were the victims of the intransigence of the Arabs who, by refusing to make peace and enter into negotiations with their neighbour Israel, were preventing the problem from being solved. In fact, however, Israel was not a neighbour of the Arab States, but was an aggressor which had stolen part of the land of the Arabs and desired to expel them from the rest of that land. Israel had its origin in an ideology based on race and creed and in the desire of the imperialists to establish a bridgehead in the Middle East and to create discord in the region. The Arabs had left Palestine on account of Zionist terrorism, of which a typical case was the Deir Yassin massacre—one of the most horrible that the world had ever known—and because they had been expelled by the Zionist invaders. The culminating point of the Arab exodus occurred after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II) on partition, which placed a grave responsibility on the United Nations. As a result, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were condemned to live in conditions of misery, the prey of hunger and disease.

26. From the outset the Mediator understood fully the situation of the refugees, their urgent material needs and their moral and material right to repatriation and the restoration of their property or compensation. In his report,<sup>5/</sup> the Mediator had stated that no settlement would be just or complete if it did not recognize the right of the refugees to return to their homes, particularly as the large influx of Jewish immigrants threatened eventually to replace them, and that it was incumbent upon the Government of Israel to make good the losses suffered by the Arabs of Palestine as a result of acts of plunder and the destruction of villages which had been carried out without any apparent military justification. The Mediator had been so much aware of the threat to the

refugees' right to repatriation and to the restoration of their property or to compensation that he had made that matter one of the seven basic premises upon which he had based his conclusions. It was not the Assembly's decision as set forth in the second part of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) that was to be criticized but rather the composition of the Conciliation Commission appointed to carry it out. One of its members, the United States, had with complete frankness supported the establishment and subsequently the consolidation of a Jewish State in Palestine. As for France, another member of the Commission, the history of its relations with the Arab world had been characterized by an unending series of hostile acts ever since the time of the Crusades, of which the aggression against Suez in 1956, the recent events at Bizerta and the war in Algeria were only a few examples. That hostile attitude had been aggravated at the time of the establishment of the Conciliation Commission by the pressure of the liberation movement sweeping North Africa and the aid which the Arabs of the East had been giving to their brothers of the Maghreb. Turkey, a country with which his own country had long had close ties of friendship, had thus in effect been in a minority and had been unable to prevent the other two members from imposing their will. After several years of experience which had left little doubt as to the deliberate intention of the two principal members to make the Commission's work a failure, the Assembly was being asked not to lose confidence in that body. If he spoke thus harshly of the Commission it was because its actions had been far more in conformity with the interests of the countries which it represented than with those of the United Nations, which it was supposed to represent.

27. The Commission had thus placed the United Nations in the position of a passive spectator at a drama to the origin of which it had itself largely contributed, a drama in which its decisions were being ignored and the principles of its Charter flouted. If the question was asked what the Commission had done in the past thirteen years to ensure the repatriation of the refugees and prevent Jewish immigrants from taking their place, as the Mediator had warned might be the case, the answer was to be found in the facts of the situation, namely that, thanks to the Commission's deliberate delaying and diversionary tactics, not a single refugee had been repatriated, Jewish immigration was continuing at an accelerated pace, the property of the refugees was still in the hands of the Israel Government and it was the countries represented on the Commission which were most adamantly opposed to the appointment of a custodian to safeguard that property. The Special Representative's mission had itself been a diversionary tactic to lull the United Nations once again into thinking that something was being done to solve the problem. It was difficult to see how the Assembly could take the Commission's work seriously when after so many years of submitting reports, holding meetings and making investigations it appointed a Special Representative to carry out what was nothing more than another exploratory mission.

28. The Commission had never criticized Israel for its categorical opposition to the application of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) and had never suggested any concrete steps, such as the application of sanctions, to compel it to respect the decisions of the United Nations. The Arab States respected the honesty of the Special Representative, but regretted

<sup>5/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Supplement No. 11, part one, chap. V.

that his prestige had been put at the service of such a move. The new Members of the United Nations were under pressure, both at Headquarters and in their own capitals, to accept Israel's thesis. His delegation had too much respect for them to subject them to such pressure on behalf of the Arab States, but it would like to ask them to consider carefully the realities of the situation before allowing themselves to be prevailed upon to support provisions in which words such as "negotiation" and "peace" were presented as offering a solution. Tunisia had always been one of the staunchest advocates of negotiation as the best method of settling conflicts, yet when press correspondents at the United Nations had asked President Bourguiba if that method would work in the case of the Arab-Israel conflict he had replied in the negative, for negotiation presupposed the existence of some basis for agreement which could serve as a starting-point for reciprocal concessions leading to a settlement. In the present instance such a basis was lacking, for one of the parties had taken everything away from the other, refused any concessions and then proclaimed itself ready to live in peace with the party which it had despoiled.

29. The Assembly had been told over and over again that Israel was a reality. The presence of more than a million refugees living in camps not far from what had been their homes, the existence of eleven Arab States which refused to accept the "fait accompli" with which they were confronted, the fact that since the establishment of Israel the Middle East had become an area of turmoil and instability constituting one of the most serious threats to international peace and security—those too were realities but they were veiled by the powerful propaganda apparatus which Israel controlled. It was said that the Arab States refused to let the refugee problem be settled, but Israel's refusal to permit the refugees to return to their homes, in accordance with the decision of the United Nations, was passed over in silence. It was proclaimed that certain great Powers were providing large sums of money each year to care for the refugees, but no publicity was given to the fact that those same Powers adamantly opposed the appointment of a custodian for the refugees' property, the value of which was more than enough to cover their needs. In view of those omissions he could only ask the Committee to answer the following questions: apart from the historical, geographical and political considerations which proved that Palestine was an Arab country, was it fair, from the moral and humanitarian standpoint, to try to compensate for the injustices of Hitler by visiting the same injustices on another people? Once such an injustice had been perpetrated, was it morally right to invoke "reality" as a reason for refusing the refugees the right of repatriation or preventing the appointment of a custodian to take care of their property? Was it the act of a peace-loving State to shut the door in the faces of those who owned the land while opening it wide to persons persuaded, sometimes under constraint, sometimes in return for money, to emigrate from all corners of the earth? Was it a sign of good will to link the humanitarian problem of the refugees, which concerned Israel and those whom Israel had driven from their homes, with the political issue of a peace settlement, which concerned Israel and the Arab States?

30. Many delegations thought that with the passage of time even Israel's most determined adversaries would accept its existence and that the passions which

its establishment had aroused would subside. That was a misconception which could lead the Middle East and the entire world to catastrophe. The suffering which had been inflicted on the Arabs was not the kind that could be healed by time. On the contrary, the longer the injustices done them persisted the greater would be the feeling of despair and the more likely would they be to assert their right by whatever means they could. History showed that no people, particularly if it had a glorious past and a heritage which it valued, would indefinitely resign itself to humiliation and dishonour. President Bourguiba had gone so far as to state that he thought the instability plaguing the Middle East, the disputes, revolutions and attempts at unification and the ease with which Communist influence was penetrating the area, could all be attributed to the Arabs' sense of frustration and injustice begotten by the establishment of Israel.

31. The Director of UNRWA, confining himself to the matter which came within his competence, had rightly stated in his report (A/4861) that in the interests of maintaining stability and progress in the Middle East it would be imperative to continue providing relief to the refugees after the Agency's mandate expired in 1963. His delegation approved that report without reservation and fully appreciated the efforts of the Director and his staff, working under difficult conditions and with limited means, to alleviate the condition of the refugees. Nevertheless, it felt that the Agency's mission should be regarded as a temporary one and that at the current session it should be examined in relation to the application of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). It had been stated repeatedly during the previous session that at the sixteenth session the whole situation should be considered. He hoped that those who had made that statement would join with his delegation in ensuring the realization of what they had advocated. The preliminary steps towards a final settlement which the Assembly should take at its current session, therefore, were the following: firstly, the appointment of a custodian or administrator for the property of the refugees; secondly, reconsideration of the principles underlying the existence of the Conciliation Commission, which might include discussion of the possibility of either maintaining or abolishing the Commission, enlarging it, or replacing its present members by others which were not committed to the cause of Israel; finally, consideration of measures to be applied against the Government of Israel if it persisted in its refusal to allow the decisions of the United Nations to be carried out. That minimum programme would not in itself solve the question, but it was imperative if an atmosphere of conciliation was to be created and the Arabs were to be able to expect fair treatment. He hoped that those who at the previous session had opposed the appointment of a custodian would now adopt a more reasonable and realistic attitude in conformity with the principles of right and justice rather than be guided merely by their own interest; they should realize that in unconditionally supporting Israel they were rendering the latter and themselves a disservice, since in encouraging Israel's intransigence they left its adversaries no choice but to adopt an intransigent attitude themselves.

32. Mr. MASSOUD-ANSARI (Iran) expressed the disappointment of his delegation at the failure to settle a question which grew worse with every passing year. The refugees' expectation that the United Nations



would take positive steps to end their sufferings had so far been in vain. Yet no effort should be spared to keep alive the confidence of the refugees in the Organization that sooner or later a solution would be found. It was in that spirit that his delegation viewed the step taken by the Conciliation Commission in appointing a Special Representative to study the problem and make suggestions with respect to methods of procedure that might lead to progress on the refugee question. Despite the criticism of that mission which had been heard in the Committee, his delegation felt that no new possibility of finding a solution should be neglected. For the Committee to allow itself to be discouraged by such criticism would be to do a disservice to the refugees themselves. Moreover, the appointment of the Special Representative was in conformity with the provisions of paragraph 12 of resolution 194 (III); Mr. Johnson's mission had been an exploratory one and he had not been able to reach any conclusions concerning the final solution, but his report reflected a cautious optimism. The Iranian delegation accordingly thought that the Conciliation Commission should bear in mind the criticism expressed and continue its efforts, by any means it considered appropriate, to ensure the application of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). In the meantime the United Nations should concern itself with the safeguarding of the property and interests of the refugees and the satisfaction of their most pressing needs in the way of food, shelter and medical care. He was glad to note from the report (A/4921) of the Conciliation Commission that steps had been taken to carry out the programme of identification and evaluation of the property belonging to the refugees, and that great progress had been made in connexion with

the release of refugees' bank accounts which had been blocked in Israel and the transfer of safe deposit and safe custody items. It hoped that those operations would soon be brought to a successful conclusion.

33. His delegation supported the measures taken by UNRWA as described in the Director's report. It wished above all to express its approval and support of the vocational training programme and was happy to note that that programme had, in fact, progressed more rapidly than had been anticipated. As both the Director of the Agency and the Special Representative of the Conciliation Commission had stated that they did not foresee an early and complete solution to the refugee question, it was important that the refugees should at least be given the training which would enable them to become self-supporting.

34. He shared the Director's hope that an equitable solution could be found in the interests of international peace and security and of the refugees themselves. His delegation would spare no effort to contribute to the realization of that goal and would continue to give its moral and material support to the Agency. It wished to express its appreciation to the Director and his staff for the remarkable work which they had done on behalf of the refugees and to the host countries for the help which they had given to the refugees themselves and to the Agency in the execution of its programme. As he had stated at the previous session, the efforts of the Director and the help provided by the host countries were the only rays of hope that enabled the refugees to look forward to a better future.

The meeting rose at 5:45 p.m.