

accusations against others without replying to the question always put to it, namely: what should be done about the situation of the Palestine refugees? It was not necessary for the Zionist representative to quote Arab leaders and ministers; he could find a reply in the frequently repeated statement by PLO that the solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees was the establishment of a democratic State of Palestine.

61. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that he had made inquiries about the pamphlet referred to by the representative of Kuwait and had been informed that there was no such official publication. The representative of Kuwait himself had stated that the pamphlet had been withdrawn by the Israeli authorities. In other words, if it had ever existed, it had been repudiated. He could, however, quote many official publications and direct orders from Arab military authorities containing instructions on what should be done to Israelis on the field of battle or Israeli prisoners of war—instructions, which had been complied with by the Arab armies and which had never been withdrawn. With regard to the statement by the representative of Iraq, he could reply using the words of a fellow Arab, the spokesman for the Government of Egypt, who had said that the Iraqis were known for their inaccuracies. That was certainly a very polite understatement.

62. Mr. AL-SAYEGH (Kuwait) said that it was extremely surprising that a booklet which did not exist had first appeared in an Israeli magazine called *Ha-olam Hazeh* on 15 March 1974, had then been reproduced in another Israeli magazine *Viewpoint* in July 1974, and had subsequently been quoted in *Hamishmar* in March 1975. A non-existent booklet had seldom manifested its existence in a more peripatetic manner. The Israeli Defence Ministry had withdrawn it from circulation on 6 May 1975 after it had been in circulation for a year. However, it had not been

because of any disagreement with its contents, but because the Chief Military Rabbi had stated that the pamphlet dealt with an abstract question of religious law rather than a relevant practical matter. That non-existent pamphlet had existed and continued to exist, although it had been withdrawn from circulation because it seemed to be a source of embarrassment for Israel.

63. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that he had never asserted that the booklet did not exist. He had merely said that it was not an official publication. When its existence had been brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities, it had been withdrawn. He had never heard of any criticism in Arab newspapers of orders issued to Arab armies not to take Israeli prisoners of war or of the withdrawal of such orders.

64. Mr. AL-SAYEGH (Kuwait) observed that it now developed that the non-existent booklet was not non-existent, but only unofficial. However, the fact that it had been published by the Central Command Headquarters, Israeli Army Chaplaincy, seemed to indicate that it was an official document.

65. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that as soon as the Israeli Army Headquarters had heard of the paper, it had been withdrawn.

66. Mr. AL-SAYEGH (Kuwait) said that the document had changed from non-existent to unofficial, from unofficial to official but unauthorized, and then had been withdrawn.

67. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that he had merely stated that the pamphlet had no existence as an official document.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

979th meeting

Tuesday, 18 November 1975, at 3.05 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Roberto MARTINEZ ORDOÑEZ (Honduras).

A/SPC/SR.979

AGENDA ITEM 54

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/10114, A/10115, A/10268, A/SPC/L.334, A/SPC/L.335):

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General (A/10013 and Corr.1);
- (b) Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/10334);
- (c) Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/10271);
- (d) Report of the Secretary-General (A/10253)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan), speaking on a point of order, said that some delegations had noted that the statement made by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA at the 974th meeting had not been reproduced in full, as was the usual practice. In view of the importance of that statement and of the statement at the same meeting by the Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, introducing the report of the Working Group (A/10334), he requested that, in accordance with the usual practice, both should be reproduced in full.

2. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that, at its 2353rd plenary meeting, the General Assembly had decided that it would continue to allow the Special Political Committee to obtain verbatim records of its debates, or of part of its debates. Accordingly, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided that the statements in question should be reproduced verbatim, as requested.

It was so decided.¹

3. Mr. SCARANTINO (Italy), speaking on behalf of the nine States of the European Economic Community (EEC), said that until there was an over-all solution to the situation in the Middle East, the activities of UNRWA would continue to be essential, not only to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees, but also to maintain a favourable climate which would enable a solution to be reached. From the outset, therefore, the nine countries of EEC had been among the main financial contributors to UNRWA. In 1975, their national contributions and that of EEC itself had amounted to \$27.9 million out of a total budget of more than \$120 million. Moreover, some EEC countries had announced that they would make supplementary contributions in response to the appeals of the Secretary-General and of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA. For the same reason, EEC had decided to contribute 5,000 tons of grain at an estimated value of \$900,000. Furthermore, the United Kingdom had announced a contribution of not less than £200,000, which could be increased up to 10 per cent of the total amount of the additional contributions made since 25 June and which could amount to a maximum of £1 million. The Government of the Netherlands had also announced two supplementary contributions amounting to a total of \$760,000.

4. The nine EEC countries were gratified that other countries had responded so favourably to the appeals of UNRWA. As the Commissioner-General had said, however, the financial situation of UNRWA continued to be serious, since it still had a deficit of \$7.2 million.

5. The nine EEC countries deeply regretted that the activities of the Agency had had to be reduced, even partially. Moreover, the problem would be even more serious in 1976 since the Commissioner-General already envisaged a deficit of \$55 million (A/10013 and Corr.1, para. 10). The nine countries were resolved to continue to support the Agency's activities and to maintain their financial contributions at the current level and, as far as possible, to increase them. They also supported the conclusions of the Working Group, contained in its report, to the effect that the current situation, whereby a small number of countries provided the major part of the Agency's budget, no longer met the requirements of the time. All Members of the United Nations should show their solidarity with the Palestine refugees in a practical way. The nine countries therefore appealed to all Members of the United Nations to show an awareness of their international responsibilities and to participate, within the limits of their capabilities, in the effort in support of UNRWA.

6. Mr. AKIMAN (Turkey) said that at the twenty-ninth session it had been said that UNRWA would probably face

its worst financial crisis in 1975. In full knowledge of that fact, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 3331 A (XXIX), by which the mandate of UNRWA had been extended for a further period, thereby demonstrating its conviction of the necessity of maintaining the Agency's services as long as the situation of the Palestine refugees in the Middle East persisted.

7. Events had subsequently shown that that financial crisis was unprecedented. UNRWA had started 1975 with a deficit of \$46 million. Currently, the Agency's future was still uncertain and, although he hoped that the 1975 deficit would not prevent the Agency from completing its work, experience did not allow it to be optimistic. The Commissioner-General had estimated a deficit of nearly \$55 million for 1976. There was reason to believe that part of that deficit would be covered by special contributions from some countries, as had occurred in 1975, but even then the outlook was not encouraging.

8. There was a general agreement regarding the need for UNRWA to continue its services, since, apart from the humanitarian aspect of the question—in other words, the future of over 1 million Palestinians—the international community was also aware of the political consequences which would result from the Agency's insolvency. In the face of such a situation, it was essential that the international community realize that it was not enough to ask the Agency to continue its work; in fact, it would be unfair to ask it to do the impossible. When the General Assembly expressed its conviction that UNRWA should continue its activities, it should also show it how to do so. His delegation hoped and, indeed, wished to see the next generation of Palestinians born not in refugee camps but in Palestine. But until that objective was achieved, it believed that it was the responsibility of each one of the Members of the United Nations to give every possible assistance to the Agency. He assured the Commissioner-General that he could count on Turkey's assistance.

9. Mr. DINKELSPIEL (Sweden) introduced draft resolution A/SPC/L.334 and announced that the delegations of Canada, Denmark, India and Zambia had joined the sponsors. After reading out the operative part of the draft resolution, he said that, as it was similar to those adopted in previous years, he hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

10. The report of the Commissioner-General (A/10013 and Corr.1) and that of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/10334) clearly showed that the work of the Agency was both necessary and difficult and that, given the scope of its activities, the costs were reasonable. At the same time, the unprecedented deficit which the Agency had faced in 1974 was most disturbing. Since then, the financial situation had in some respects deteriorated even further. In view of the circumstances, the Swedish Government had declared itself prepared to make a supplementary contribution of 3 million Swedish kronor for the current year, provided that other contributors also made a concerted effort to solve the Agency's current problems. In that connexion, he noted with satisfaction that some countries had declared that they were prepared to contribute, although not yet to an extent sufficient to cover the deficit expected for 1975.

¹ The full text of the statement was subsequently circulated as document A/SPC/PV.974.

11. As for 1976, the Commissioner-General had been obliged to report that some further increase in expenditure was unavoidable unless current trends were drastically reversed. Sweden therefore appealed to all members of the international community to do everything possible to provide the Agency with the necessary financial resources. Sweden, for its part, would continue to support UNRWA and, in that connexion, he pointed out that in the past 25 years Sweden had contributed some \$31.5 million to the Agency, a figure which was exceeded only by the contributions of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, EEC and Canada.

12. Mr. LANGSLET (Norway) fully shared the opinion of the Commissioner-General that the fact that 1.6 million Palestinians were still refugees was, no occasion for celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNRWA. Given the scope and magnitude of the Agency's services, he also shared the view of the Working Group that those services would remain indispensable until a just and lasting settlement of the problem of the Palestine refugees had been achieved and that any reduction in services would have serious consequences for the refugees, for the host countries, and for the prospects for peace in the area (*ibid.*, paras. 27 and 30).

13. Throughout its existence, UNRWA had managed to maintain its services without reductions as a result of voluntary contributions from a small group of donors who had financed the major part of the Agency's budget. In 1975, UNRWA was faced with a financial crisis of unprecedented proportions, which made both the short-term and the long-term situation extremely serious. With regard to the short-term problem, it was clear that it could be solved only if additional contributions were received immediately. In recent weeks, various countries had announced generous contributions; for instance, Qatar had pledged a contribution of \$1 million. For its part, the Government of Norway had decided to make an extraordinary contribution of \$100,000 for the current year, which would bring Norway's total contribution for 1975 to approximately \$1,850,000.

14. In his view, any discussion of the problem should be based on the premise that it was essential to maintain the Agency's services at their current minimal level. The great increase in expenditure was due primarily to currency instability and inflation and not to any expansion in programmes. Thus, it was extremely important that when deciding on their contributions for 1976, members keep in mind the fact that it was estimated that costs would increase by approximately 10 per cent. In other words, donor countries should increase their contributions at least in proportion to the increase in the UNRWA budget.

15. Lastly, he also shared the view expressed by the Commissioner-General that the financing of UNRWA should be put on a firmer basis. In that connexion, he pointed out that the Agency's financing was the joint responsibility of all the States Members of the United Nations, irrespective of their views on the political aspect of the Palestinian problem. He therefore appealed to all countries which had so far given token or inadequate contributions to the Agency to re-examine their position,

and he announced that in 1976 the Norwegian Government hoped to increase considerably its contributions to the Agency.

16. Mr. ZHIRI (Morocco) said that almost one year had elapsed since the General Assembly had adopted resolution 3331 D (XXIX), in which it had reaffirmed the right of the displaced inhabitants to return to their homes and had called once more upon Israel immediately to take steps for the return of those people and to desist from all measures that obstructed their return.

17. Twenty-six years after the establishment of the Agency, ways of eliminating its deficit were still being discussed. A whole generation of Palestinians had survived, thanks to UNRWA, and were still living in exile, while the aggressor was exploiting the riches of their homeland. Responsibility for that situation clearly lay with Zionism, which had driven the Palestinian people from their homeland and imported European Jews into Palestine, with the countries which were helping Israel and with the United Nations. But there was no point in continuing to condemn the guilty parties and in repeating the same concepts *ad infinitum*. The General Assembly had finally admitted its mistake and, at its twenty-ninth session, had adopted resolution 3236 (XXIX), in which it had recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In addition, a whole series of resolutions had been adopted over the years which, had they been implemented, would certainly have helped to alleviate the serious situation of the Palestine refugees. Although that situation had apparently deteriorated, he was confident that the cause of the Palestinians would eventually triumph, as all just causes triumphed. But faith in the future should not lead to neglect of the current sufferings of the Palestine refugees.

18. Morocco was concerned about the financial crisis facing UNRWA. That crisis should in no circumstances justify a reduction in the services provided by the Agency, because such a reduction would create very serious humanitarian and economic problems for the countries involved and for the entire region. The major Powers, which had supported the aggression, should increase their assistance to relieve the sufferings of the Palestine refugees and should assume responsibility for the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. UNRWA should continue to exist; although Morocco fully realized who was responsible for the tragedy which had lasted for more than 50 years, it had contributed and would continue to contribute to the extent of its ability to alleviate the situation of the refugees, as a gesture of solidarity with its Palestinian brothers, who had the right to live like other people.

19. Mr. ZENKYAVICHUS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that the General Assembly had recently adopted resolution 3376 (XXX) in which it had, *inter alia*, recognized that the problem of Palestine continued to endanger international peace and security and expressed grave concern that no progress had been achieved towards the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty, or towards the exercise by Palestinians of their right to return to their homes and property. The Soviet Union shared that concern.

20. With regard to the origin of the problem, it should not be forgotten that it was the refusal to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians which had made them into refugees, the victims of a cruel and unfair situation which had lasted for more than 25 years. In its latest resolutions, the General Assembly had recognized not only those inalienable rights but also the fact that the Palestinians should be one of the parties to any solution of the Middle East problem. Ever since the United Nations had stressed that the problem was basically a political one and that no partial solution, even at the humanitarian level, would help to solve the problem and to establish a just and lasting peace in the region. Such a peace was unattainable until the basic causes of the conflict were removed, until the Israeli troops were withdrawn from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and until the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including the right to have their own State, were recognized. Only if those problems were solved would it be possible to have a lasting peace in the Middle East and to ensure security and progress for all the States in the region, including Israel.

21. Since the Soviet Union considered that the only sensible way of solving the problem was through the combined efforts of all the parties concerned, it had proposed that the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East should be resumed under the co-chairmanship of the United States and the Soviet Union, with the participation of all the parties directly concerned: Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the Arab people of Palestine, represented by PLO, and Israel. A just political solution should be found on the basis of the relevant decisions of the United Nations and particularly of Security Council resolution 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX).

22. In response to those who wanted the problem of the financing of UNRWA to be solved in a way which would mean paying for acts of aggression and which, in the opinion of the Soviet Union, was unfair, he noted that since the very beginning of history the principle had existed that the consequences of aggression should be borne by the aggressor and by those who had supported the aggression. The idea that it was the victims of the aggression who should pay the costs was completely absurd, and the Soviet Union was therefore opposed to changing the system of voluntary contributions which had so far been followed. The Soviet Union would continue to help the Arab people in their struggle against aggression.

23. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that, in presenting his report, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA had devoted the greater part of his statement to describing the precarious financial situation in which the Agency found itself and had mentioned the possibility that it might have to cease operations for lack of funds. Yet, despite that chilling prognosis for all who should have the welfare of the refugees at heart, the statements made by the representatives of the Arab States had again been devoted not to finding ways of alleviating the situation of UNRWA but to engaging in vituperations against Israel and everybody else who, in their opinion, had been responsible for creating the problem. Their slogan was "those who created the problem must solve it". That slogan was appropriate, provided that the Arab Governments and leaders acknowledged that it was

they who had created the problem and had prevented it from being solved long ago. It was they who had perverted the very purpose for which UNRWA had been established and they whose participation in its financing had been minimal. Year after year, the Arab representatives spoke at the United Nations of the responsibility for the Palestine problem, but all their assertions flew in the face of the facts. It was the Arab leaders themselves who had encouraged the Palestinian Arabs to leave their homes in 1948, as was proved by the passages from Arab publications which he had quoted in the Committee the previous year (946th meeting) in response to a challenge from one of the Arab representatives. That was also confirmed by the memoirs of the Syrian Prime Minister who had been in office in 1948 and 1949.

24. The problem of the Palestine refugees had not yet been solved because of the intransigence and callousness of the Arabs who had exploited the problem of the Arab refugees in their political and terror campaigns against Israel. In the preceding 30 years, tens of millions of people in many parts of the world had been displaced as a result of the military, political and ethnic convulsions which had shaken the world and, with the sole exception of the Palestinian Arabs, all the refugees had been integrated with people with whom they had shared national, ethnic and religious affinities and who had offered them hospitality. But the Arab Governments had refused their compassion and hospitality to people whom they called their brothers. That was why, 27 years after 1948, the United Nations still had to consider a problem created by the Arabs and artificially perpetuated by them.

25. It was absurd that, after so long a time, over one and a half million people were officially registered as refugees with an international agency and that a large proportion of them were officially entitled to relief and other services. Every year the Committee was told of the difficulties of providing a meagre diet and additional services to those people, who—despite the smoke-screen created by Arab Governments—were in fact not in such a bad situation. He emphasized the fact that, according to the Commissioner-General's report (A/10013 and Corr.1), the term "Palestine refugee" did not apply only to the Palestinian Arabs but also comprised Jewish residents of those parts of Palestine not included in Israel, who had lost their homes and property as a result of Arab aggression in 1948. But the fate of those Jewish refugees had been completely different from that of the Arab refugees, because the very idea that people living in Israel could be considered as refugees for generations was abhorrent to Jewish thought. It had been forgotten that for a short time UNRWA had had nearly 50,000 Jewish and Arab refugees in its care within the borders of Israel and that, by virtue of an agreement concluded in 1952 between the Government of Israel and UNRWA, the Agency had been relieved of all responsibility for those people. That had occurred at a time when Israel had been facing another human problem, that of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries who, in numbers probably greater than those of the Palestinian Arab refugees, had been obliged to leave their places of residence in order to escape from discrimination and persecution. They had never received any compensation for the property which they had had to leave behind. But all of them had settled in Israel and had

been integrated and rehabilitated without the assistance of United Nations agencies, solely through the joint efforts of Israel and of Jewish communities in the Diaspora. It should also be remembered that 85 per cent of all the Palestinian Arab Refugees had never left the area where they had lived but had simply moved a few miles, within the same area, inhabited in many cases by the same families and clans. What had really happened had been an exchange of ethnic communities, albeit without the benefits of formal treaties. Those refugees who had come to Israel had quickly become an integral part of the country; those who had moved to Arab countries had, officially at least, acquired the status of perpetual refugees. The Arab host countries had disregarded the numerous appeals to them by the General Assembly to permit the integration of the refugees. They had also refused to take over the administration of the relief programme and to permit the verification of the list of registered refugees. In addition, it was well known that there had been a flourishing black market in ration cards of the unreported dead as well as of others who did not need the rations and sold them to merchants. The report of the Commissioner-General contained a warning about the accuracy of the statistics concerning the refugee population (A/10013 and Corr.1, annex I, table 1, foot-note *a*) and about difficulties of verifying the ration rolls (*ibid.*, paras. 53 and 57). It was the Arab Governments' insistence that relief should continue, instead of being replaced by constructive programmes of rehabilitation through the provision of suitable employment as had been suggested at the time, which was placing such a tremendous financial and logistic burden on the Agency.

26. But there was another aspect with grave international implications which he could not leave unmentioned. Paragraphs 4, 5 and 53 of the Commissioner-General's report, read in conjunction with paragraph 25 of the previous year's report,² confirmed the existence of an incredible situation in which the head of a United Nations agency maintained contact with the leader of an organization of terror gangs, PLO, which had taken over the running of the refugee camps in Lebanon. The terrorists were using the camps, the services for which were provided at the expense of the international community, as a base for their activities and for training purposes. As for the "Israeli raids" and "Israeli attacks" mentioned a number of times in the report, he repeated that it was the natural and unavoidable consequences of a situation created by the terror organizations and actively connived at by the Government of Lebanon and other Arab Governments that Israel was forced to take action in defence of its population. Such action was taken against the bases and training camps of the terror organizations, which were seeking to protect themselves by hiding among innocent people in the camps. His Government sincerely regretted the fact that innocent people were hurt as a result of action taken against those centres of terrorism. However, the responsibility for such unfortunate consequences fell on the successive Lebanese Governments which had permitted the situation to continue.

27. In contrast to the totally negative attitude of the Arab Governments towards the refugees who lived in their

respective countries, the Government of Israel had done everything it could to restore the refugees' dignity as human beings and to enable them to gain a decent living and provide for their families. The situation in the Gaza strip was a good example. The 19 years of Egyptian misrule had been characterized by political and economic restrictions and by unemployment. Since 1967, however, as a result of the policy of the Israeli Government based on the belief that everyone had the right to participate actively in the productive life of his environment, there had been full employment and the whole outlook of the area had changed. That had not been to the liking of the terror organizations, which had set in motion a murder campaign in order to prevent development and cause a return to the previous situation, in which a cowed refugee population would be easy prey to terrorist propaganda. In the four years between June 1967 and August 1971, 239 innocent local Arab residents and refugees had been murdered by the terrorists and more than 1,300 Arabs had been injured by them. The overcrowded camps with their narrow lanes provided the murderers with easy escape routes and hiding places. It had been necessary to construct access roads through the camps, and as a result of that action, taken in the summer of 1971, it had been possible to put an end to the terror campaign. Instead of being lauded for its action in saving the lives of Arab men, women and children, Israel had been abused and blamed for it, especially for having dared to pull down a number of shelters in the process of widening the roads in the camps. Israel had done everything possible to provide proper housing for the inhabitants of the area. After some of the arrangements made had not proved satisfactory to the refugees, the Israeli authorities had carried out a joint survey with representatives of UNRWA. Israel had been taking action on the basis of the findings of the survey with a view to providing decent housing. A substantial plan for the construction of family dwellings had been initiated, and considerable progress had been made in spite of the last war launched against Israel and its economic implications. A number of shacks had been demolished to make way for the construction of a market, a bus station, a water reservoir and an industrial area in the Rafah camp, and the 228 families which had been dislodged had availed themselves of the offer to purchase new accommodation, on an instalment basis if necessary. Mention was made in the Secretary-General's report (A/10253, para. 6) of "the punitive demolition of refugee shelters". Those shelters had been used for terror activities and the storage of arms and explosives, and action against them had therefore been justified both under local and under international law. Such action was permitted by article 53 of the fourth Geneva Convention,³ as could be seen from the Commentary on that Convention published by the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁴ The people involved in the criminal activities in the camps would have been shot out of hand in quite a few of the countries represented in the Committee. The Israeli authorities preferred not to resort to such measures, even at the risk of being censured for the demolition of a few shacks.

³ Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287).

⁴ Jean S. Pictet, ed., *The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949: Commentary, IV, Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (Geneva, International Committee of the Red Cross, 1958).

² Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13 and corrigendum.

28. The report of the Commissioner-General also mentioned various new facilities constructed in the camps and other improvements whose cost had in large part been borne by the Israeli authorities.

29. The positive trends which characterized the situation in the Gaza strip applied to the west bank as well. Unemployment had disappeared, and signs of economic progress were discernible throughout the area, where some 36 per cent of the registered refugees lived outside the camps and had been completely integrated into the life of the region. Those refugees had benefited from the economic development and work opportunities in Israel, lived among the local population and were involved in municipal and social affairs. The Israeli administration had spared no effort to improve the infrastructure of the camps in the west bank.

30. Progress was also being made in the important fields of education and health. In addition to the vocational training provided by UNRWA, the Israeli administration had set up vocational training centres and workshops which were used by the local youth, including, of course, the children of refugees. Women, including refugee women, were also enabled to learn a gainful occupation and help to provide for their families.

31. The education budget for the areas administered by Israel had so far totalled 400 million Israel pounds. One-hundred-per-cent enrolment had been achieved in the west bank, and the Gaza strip did not fall very far behind. For the sixth year in succession, Egyptian school-leaving examinations had been held, enabling many young people to continue their education in neighbouring Arab countries. It was of interest to note that many of those students returned to spend their vacations in Gaza and Sinai.

32. In the field of health, services were provided by the Israeli authorities in addition to those furnished by UNRWA. Local medical personnel were trained in Israel, where they were taught the most modern methods. As a result of those improvements, there had been a significant drop in infant mortality and in the incidence of contagious diseases.

33. Israel could state sincerely that it had done everything that could be expected of a country in its position, and it did not fear comparison with any other country which had ever found itself in a similar situation. Israel's contribution to the UNRWA budget for the current year was \$1,123,713, and its total contribution amounted to \$6,776,726. In addition, as could be seen from annex I, table 18, of the Commissioner-General's report, Israel had made direct contributions to the refugees amounting to \$10,564,440. It should also be mentioned that a substantial part of Israel's annual budget for the administered areas was of benefit to the refugees, who constituted a large proportion of the population there. Since only a small share of that budget was contributed by the local inhabitants, the bulk of it was borne by the Israeli taxpayer.

34. Even a cursory comparison of those figures with the contributions of the oil-rich Arab countries showed the reason for the perennial financial difficulties of UNRWA

and how at least the financial problems could be solved. His delegation had pointed out that the contribution of a small fraction of 1 per cent of the Arab countries' oil income could change the financial situation of UNRWA. However, the attitude of the Arab Governments towards that humanitarian question had not changed and, although there had been an increase in the contributions of one or two Arab countries, the over-all picture was dismal. It was obvious that politics still prevailed over humanitarianism and enmity over minimal decency, even where the welfare of their own people was concerned.

35. In spite of that enmity on the part of Arab Governments, Israel had permitted the return of some 50,000 refugees of the 1948-1949 hostilities. Furthermore, since 1967 a total of about 55,000 persons had been permitted to return to the west bank and Gaza.

36. As part of its efforts directed towards normalizing life in the region, Israel had instituted a policy of "open bridges" under which the Jordan bridges had remained open to a two-way traffic of people and goods. In June 1975, 754,000 persons had crossed from Jordan and 623,000 had left for Jordan and other Arab countries. That freedom of movement of people and goods had been beneficial in promoting family, cultural and economic ties. That policy did not seem to be to the liking of those who opposed any kind of contact and peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs, although they exploited it for the purpose of smuggling explosives into Israel and infiltrating terrorists. Yet, despite the risks involved in that policy, Israel felt that, since it had nothing to conceal, it was best to let people see for themselves what Israel was. Perhaps that was one way to counter the endemic blindness which affected certain delegates at the United Nations when it came to voting on resolutions concerning Israel. An example was the resolution against zionism adopted by the General Assembly on 10 November 1975 (resolution 3379 (XXX)). He hoped that those who had voted for that resolution would avail themselves of the open bridges to Israel and see what zionism really meant.

37. He wished to recall in that connexion the statement made in the General Assembly on 30 September 1975 (2368th plenary meeting) by Mr. Yigal Allon, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel.

38. Zionism was the modern expression of the ancient Jewish heritage and was the national liberation movement of a people exiled from its historic homeland and dispersed among the nations of the world. It was the revival of a language and a culture, the creation of a society which, however imperfect it might still be, tried to implement the highest ideals of democracy—political, social and cultural—for all the inhabitants of Israel, irrespective of religious belief, race or sex. Zionism was, in sum, the constant and unrelenting effort to realize the national and universal vision of the prophets of Israel.

39. It was to be hoped that, some day in the not too distant future, Arab leaders would come to understand that enmity and animosity towards Israel and towards zionism, its ideological basis, would not bring peace any nearer, if it was peace they wished to bring about in the region.

40. Israel had from its inception proclaimed its desire for a just and lasting peace with the Arab States. Once that peace was achieved, the refugee problem would also have been solved.

41. Ms. WHITE (United States of America) said that the financial crisis affecting UNRWA should be heeded by every nation represented in the Committee, since what was at issue was not only the problem of a worthy organization but also something much more important, and potentially much more tragic, namely, the lives of 1.5 million refugees who depended directly on UNRWA. Unless strenuous efforts were made, the lives of those refugees would be affected by the reduction of UNRWA services, particularly educational services. The international community could not allow that to happen. UNRWA schools were attended by more than a quarter of a million children and over 4,300 vocational students, 92 per cent of whom would be employed upon graduation. The schools provided employment for more than 8,000 refugee teachers and for thousands of graduates and thus contributed to improving the lives not only of the direct beneficiaries but also of their dependants. Education was among the most vital services provided by UNRWA and it had therefore decided, with the support of the refugees, to concentrate its assistance on its schools, even at the cost of greater austerity in its other services, and it had spent on education approximately the same amount that it had spent on relief.

42. The Agency had made it possible for thousands of refugees to learn skills which prepared them to lead constructive lives and the Members of the United Nations must not allow that possibility to be destroyed. In 1975, half of those Member States, including many countries which were well able to give, had contributed nothing to UNRWA and others had made only nominal contributions. The Commissioner-General had asked that the Agency's chronic financial weakness should be ended, which meant that its income must rise annually to keep pace with inflation and devaluation. In 1975 the United States had made two special contributions, in addition to its regular pledge, and the total of its contributions amounted to nearly 40 per cent of all government contributions. However, all States Members of the United Nations should assume their share of the responsibility which their votes in the General Assembly for UNRWA resolutions had created.

43. Her delegation wished to introduce the draft resolution appearing in document A/SPC/L.335 in recognition of the gravity of the situation described by the Commissioner-General and called upon all States Members of the United Nations to make the most generous efforts to meet the anticipated needs of UNRWA.

Mr. Tellmann (Norway), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

44. Mr. POROSHKOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the key problem with respect to the situation of UNRWA was the solution of the problem of the Palestine refugees, which should be accompanied by Israel's withdrawal from the occupied zones and the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The problem was a political one, in other words, the problem of a people denied self-determination, despoiled of its property and expelled from its land.

45. The problem persisted after a quarter of a century. Israel was continuing to disregard the resolutions of the United Nations and world public opinion and to resort to violence, terror and destruction.

46. The Israeli expansionists had even gone so far as to make the absurd affirmation that the Palestinian people did not exist. But they had not disappeared as a historic entity and were committed to a struggle for liberation from their oppressor. An important factor in that struggle was PLO, which had received international recognition, including that of the United Nations.

47. The Byelorussian people understood the sufferings of the Palestinian people, for they had experienced similar sufferings under nazism.

48. The position of the Byelorussian SSR and other socialist countries was well known: Israel should withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967 and guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to form a State. If that genuine political settlement was to be achieved, it was essential to reconvene the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties, including PLO. Israel had delayed the reconvening of that Conference and had now stated that it would refuse to participate if participation by PLO was allowed.

49. His delegation wished to express again its complete support for the legitimate struggle of the Arab people of Palestine for the restoration of their inalienable rights.

Mr. Martínez Ordóñez (Honduras) resumed the Chair.

50. The CHAIRMAN invited the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to address the Committee.

51. Mr. AQL (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished to refer in particular to two points raised by the representative of Israel. Firstly, Zionist propaganda tried to demonstrate that the Palestinians had abandoned their homes on instructions from the Arab leaders. One would think that that point had by now been clarified with the publication of the master plan of Israeli military operations and other material showing that the Palestinians had been expelled by force. However, even if the Arab leaders themselves had urged the Palestinians to abandon their lands, it should suffice to observe now that the international community, represented in the General Assembly, which included the Arab leaders, was currently demanding the return of those refugees to their lands.

52. Secondly, at the beginning of his statement, the representative of Israel had indicated that, according to the views of the Arab countries and those who supported them, responsibility for the financial difficulties of the Agency and, consequently, for the perpetuation of the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees rested with those who had created the problem of the refugees. Listening to the representative of Israel, one would have the impression that that responsibility lay with the Arab countries and particularly the so-called "Palestinian terrorists".

53. In 1917, zionism had begun to harbour the idea of having a national home; in 1947, with the aid of the United States of America, it had succeeded in taking over a large part of Palestine; and in 1967, it had brought the remainder of Palestine under its power. The Palestinians, having waited in vain for years, had finally decided to fight for their inalienable rights, recognized by the United Nations, and for that reason it was now being said that those responsible for the problem were the Arabs and the so-called "Palestinian terrorists". Obviously, it was disturbing to the representative of Israel to hear about the question of the Palestinian refugees because they were living proof of the crime perpetrated by Israel in 1948. That representative had had the audacity to say that Israel and the Zionist terrorist forces had not been guilty of the expulsion of the Palestinians, as though the process by which Israel had seized Palestine had been a peaceful one. For that reason, he found it necessary to state his position once again: as long as Israel refused to recognize the existence of 3 million Palestinians and as long as it did not respect the resolutions of the United Nations, tension in that part of the world would continue to increase. Finally, he reminded the representative of Israel that despite his oratory, less than a week earlier zionism had been condemned by the General Assembly as a form of racism and racial discrimination.

54. Mr. AL-SAYEGH (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it surprised him that the representative of Israel enjoyed repeating the same thing every year; he himself did not share that enjoyment.

55. In the first place, with reference to the Israeli representative's allegation that the Palestinian refugees had left behind all their property and abandoned their country simply because an Arab leader had told them to do so, human psychology itself showed how naive and absurd that affirmation was. The fact was that for more than 80 years zionism had been making it clear that in order to establish a Jewish State it was determined to expel all the non-Jewish inhabitants from the land in which it wished to establish that State. It should suffice to remember that ever since 1895, when Herzl had written his diary, zionism had had no other alternative: it had been a question of either giving up the Jewish State or expelling all non-Jews. When, in 1949, the first President of Israel had commented on the flight of the Palestinians, he had said that it was a miraculous simplification of Israel's task. However, even supposing that some Palestinians had abandoned their country because they had been ordered to do so, he asked whether the fact that someone fled during a struggle in order to save his life meant that he lost for ever his right to return to his country.

56. The representative of Israel had also said that the problem had not been solved because the Arab leaders had not solved it. But just as the Zionists had decided to ignore the existence of the Palestinians and their determination to return to their homes, the Israelis had underestimated the determination of the Palestinians to go back to their country. In his opinion, any Arab leader who tried to convince the Palestinians that they should settle somewhere else would have to fight against the Palestinians. The problem had not been solved because the Palestinians continued to be determined to return and because the

Israelis, faithful to their Zionist doctrine, were not allowing them to do so.

57. The representative of Israel had also said it was absurd that the Palestinians should continue to be refugees after 27 years, but it did not appear absurd to him to say that the Jews had been in the Diaspora, in other words, in exile, for 1,900 years. Reference had also been made to some Arab refugees in Israel whose problem had been solved, but it had not been said that they had not been permitted to settle in their own villages.

58. The representative of Israel had also spoken about the Arab Jews who had come from Arab countries as though it was a question of refugees who offset to some extent the importance of the Palestinian refugees. However, that was only one more aspect of the implementation of the Zionist ideology, which, while demanding the expulsion of the Palestinians, was also demanding that Jews should be imported from Europe and the Arab countries.

59. In taking measures to expel the Palestinians and take in Jews from abroad, Israel was applying two phases of one policy, namely the Zionist policy.

60. He would like to know what the representative of Israel had meant by saying that some Palestinians had only had to move a few miles away from the place where they had been living. The difference made by those few miles was the difference between living freely in one's own place of origin and being an exile without the right to self-determination; it was the difference between being in one's own country and being stateless, and it also meant the loss of property rights.

61. He would refer to the question of destruction of property when the Committee dealt with agenda item 52, concerning Israeli practices in the occupied territories. Meanwhile he asked the representative of Israel if he was willing to say that once peace had been finally restored, Israel would permit the return of the Palestinians.

62. Mr. DORON (Israel), exercising the right of reply, said that the representatives of the Soviet Union in the United Nations in 1948 and 1949 had been closer to the events when the Arab countries had launched their attack on Israel, and neither they nor the rest of the world had had any difficulty in determining who was the aggressor in the Middle East. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Andrei Gromyko, had said in the Security Council on 21 May 1948⁵ that the Soviet delegation could not but express surprise at the position adopted by the Arab States in the Palestine question, and particularly at the fact that those States had resorted to such action as sending troops and carrying out military operations aimed at the suppression of the national liberation movement in Palestine. It would be noted that at that time the movement in question had been the Israeli liberation movement. Mr. Gromyko had gone on to say that there had been no known case of invasion of the territory of another state by the armed forces of Israel, except in self-defence. Since then the policy of the Soviet Union had changed,

⁵ *Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, No. 71, 299th meeting.*

although the historical facts had not changed, and the Soviet representatives were trying to adapt to the new trend in their foreign policy and denying the statements made by representatives of the USSR at the time when the events had taken place. When the representative of the USSR now spoke of the alleged “expulsion” of Palestinian Arabs in 1948 he was contradicting the words of Mr. Malik, who had stated on 4 March 1949 in the Security Council⁶ that there was no reason why the State of Israel should be blamed for the existence of the problem of Arab refugees. The Soviet Union had known full well at that time that the blame for the problem lay not with Israel but with the Arab States which had attacked Israel.

63. Mr. Gromyko had also said in 1948 in the Security Council⁷ that world public opinion had condemned the action of certain Arab circles who had attacked the Jewish State and occupied the territory allotted to the Arab State in Palestine. He (Mr. Doron) also quoted from the Soviet publications *Pravda* and *Novoe Vremya* of 1948, which mentioned that Soviet public opinion condemned the aggression of the Arab States against the State of Israel.

64. Recalling that the representative of Kuwait had said that he did not enjoy the repetition of the same arguments year after year, he wished to point out that he had not been the first speaker on the item, either in the current year or in earlier years, and if he repeated the same arguments it was because he was obliged to do so. The representative of Kuwait had used the same arguments as on other occasions in defence of his position, but seemed to have acknowledged that others were to blame besides Israel, which was a sign of progress. As for the statement that it was absurd that anyone should abandon his home and property because some political leader made him do so, he quoted passages from articles published in the press of various Arab countries—in the Lebanese newspapers *Kol-Chai* and *Telegraph* and the Jordanian newspaper *Falastine*—which said that the fact that refugees existed was a direct result of the measures taken by the Arab States or their false promises. Similarly, in 1963, the newspaper *Akhbar-el-Yom* of Cairo had stated that on 15 May 1948 the Mufti of Jerusalem had appealed to the Arabs of Palestine to leave the country at the time when the fighting had stopped and the danger had already passed.

65. Mr. SIBAH (Syrian Arab Republic), exercising the right of reply, said he first wished to correct some of the information submitted because he had received fresh information from his Government concerning the assistance it was providing to Palestine refugees. Annex I, table 18, of the Commissioner-General's report (A/10013 and Corr.1) indicated that the Syrian Arab Republic had made direct contributions amounting to \$5,789,426. The Syrian Government had also contributed \$6,324,117 for medical, educational, housing, and security services, general costs, and so forth, so that its direct contribution totalled \$12,113,543.

66. The representative of Israel had said that the Palestine refugees had left their homeland voluntarily. The representative of Kuwait had already replied to that statement,

referring to the inalienable political rights of the Palestinian people. He himself wondered how anyone could imagine that a people would willingly leave their country unless they were impelled by terror. That was what had happened in the case of the Palestinian people, who had been terrorized by the Israeli forces and obliged to leave their land. That was a historical fact which should be universally recognized.

67. Israel had said that the statements made by Arab representatives had not contributed to a solution but had made the problem of the refugees more complex, since they were proposing solutions in a political context. He had listened carefully to the statements made by the representatives of other Arab countries and had noted that some, but not all, had mentioned the need to find a political solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees before considering the financial problem of the Agency.

68. With regard to responsibility for the refugee problem, it was hard to see how Israel could speak of it when it was principally to blame for that unprecedented tragedy.

69. The representative of Israel had referred to those who were fighting to defend their homeland and laying down their lives for it as “terrorists”. While the representative of Israel was welcome to use that term, he (Mr. Sibahi) would like to know whether he would also apply it to those who were robbing a people of their land and property and desecrating all they held sacred.

70. In the past, Zionism and its allies had succeeded in deceiving the international community, but now the situation had changed. The international community had radically altered its attitude to the problem, as could be seen from the various resolutions adopted on the subject.

71. Mr. HENDAWY (Egypt), exercising the right of reply, noted that the representative of Israel had stated that about 55,000 displaced persons had returned to the territories that had been occupied since 1967, although only 8,000 were mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (A/10253). It was significant that no substantial evidence had been provided in support of that statement. What mattered, however, was not figures but the continual falsehoods emanating from Israel in the Committee.

72. Israel had said that under Egyptian administration the situation in the Gaza strip had been dismal, but had now changed. The situation certainly had changed; Gaza was an occupied Arab territory in spite of the United Nations resolutions calling for the immediate withdrawal of Israel.

73. Referring to the punitive demolitions in the Gaza strip, he said that Israel had sought to provide justification by quoting some passages of the Geneva Conventions, overlooking the fact that there were United Nations resolutions demanding an immediate end to such acts of destruction.

74. He insisted that the only solution to the problem was for all the refugees to return to their homeland.

75. Mr. ZENKYAVICHUS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), exercising the right of reply, said that he

⁶ *Ibid.*, Fourth Year, No. 17, 414th meeting.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Third Year, No. 93, 331st meeting.

reserved the right of reply to the representative of Israel at the following meeting, but wished to state at that point that the Soviet Union's position, which was well known, was based on two fundamental premises: first, the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from all the territories occupied in 1967 and, secondly, respect for the rights of the Palestinians, including the right to create their own State. Without those two premises there would never be enduring peace in the Middle East and there would never be

favourable conditions for the development of any of the States in the region.

76. Through its actions Israel had become the aggressor and the Soviet Union would always support the victims of aggression. The representative of Israel had resorted to his usual demagogic tactics to distract attention from the true nature of the problem.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

980th meeting

Wednesday, 19 November 1975, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Roberto MARTINEZ ORDOÑEZ (Honduras).

A/SPC/SR.980

AGENDA ITEM 54

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/10114, A/10115, A/10268, A/SPC/L.334-336):

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General (A/10013 and Corr.1);
- (b) Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/10334);
- (c) Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/10271);
- (d) Report of the Secretary-General (A/10253)

GENERAL DEBATE (*concluded*)

1. Mr. OULD SIDI (Mauritania) said that the financial difficulties that were currently being experienced by UNRWA were the most serious in its history and that the Agency would continue to experience similar problems until assessed contributions were established for all States Members of the United Nations. Moreover, it should be emphasized that in a continually changing world, with galloping inflation, it would be difficult to foresee exactly the size of the budget necessary for the operation of the Agency. While his country would not oppose any solution which would help to extricate the Agency from its financial difficulties, it felt obliged to point out that there was only one solution to the problem, a solution which was the most radical but also the most just, namely the restoration to the Palestinian people of their sacred and indivisible rights. His delegation, which agreed with those who had said that the Agency was not an end in itself but merely a humanitarian organization, believed that its problems would be resolved when an over-all solution to the Palestine problem was found.

2. The Palestinian people had been expelled from their ancestral homeland, and the Zionist State, not content with having condemned the Palestinian people to live in an ignominious and desperate situation for so long, was to persecute them even beyond its own borders, murdering innocent persons and demolishing their shelters, many of which had been built by the United Nations. He drew

attention to paragraphs 6 and 24 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/10013 and Corr.1), dealing with the situation in Lebanon and the refugee camps, and said that the attacks referred to in those paragraphs were not the only ones perpetrated by Israel during the year and that the Palestine refugees had been subjected, almost daily, to other, even more violent attacks.

3. Any attempt to curtail the functions of UNRWA, not aimed at securing peace, would have serious repercussions on the life of the Palestinians. The massive destruction caused by Israeli bombings of refugee camps afforded clear proof that one of the aims of the Zionist State was to neutralize the humanitarian activities of the Agency. And the United Nations, which had established the Zionist State on Palestinian territory and which was therefore largely responsible for the great suffering inflicted on the Palestinians, must find a prompt solution to that grievous problem.

4. Referring to the problem of racism in Israel, he drew attention to an article published in *Jeune Afrique* in October concerning the life of an eminent Jew, Mr. Israel Shahak, President of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, who had been persecuted for having written a book entitled *Racism in Israel*,¹ in which he contended that the Zionists had, ever since the creation of the State, been involving Israeli society in a process of nazification. He himself had no intention of vilifying anyone but simply wished to point out the racist nature of the Zionist régime. The time had come to take action to liberate the Palestinian people from Zionist nazism.

5. He said that his country would make a contribution to the Agency in an amount to be announced at the meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA to be held on 26 November 1975 at the United Nations.

6. Mr. QURESHI (Pakistan) said that, in its 25 years of existence, UNRWA had symbolized both the commendable international co-operative effort to stave off hunger, disease

¹ Paris, Guy Authier, 1975.