

assistance provided by their Government and by Czechoslovak non-governmental institutions and organizations to the Arab people of Palestine along bilateral lines, not only to alleviate their plight but also in order that the struggle of peoples for justice be crowned with

exercise of the right by a number of delegations were in the presence of representatives on various occasions. In this respect, the Libyan delegation to the main committee must have been in violation of the Charter, since the Security Council. In addition, the million it had spent on sportsmen at the Games had been almost entirely made up of Arab political funds and deliberate

statement on all points of the due course. The statement was complete and

allegations made against Israel by those representatives. It was a pity that their Governments had learnt nothing over the years. It was their attitude, and that of other Arab Governments, which had caused and was causing continuous bloodshed in the Middle East. The foul murder committed near Zion Square in Jerusalem on the previous day by agents of PLO was a case in point. The official press service of PLO, operating, of course, from Beirut, had published a statement admitting responsibility for that dastardly crime, although it had presumed to call it a "heroic and daring operation". That murderous attack on

innocent people had been carried out on the anniversary of Yasser Arafat's appearance at the United Nations, apparently as some kind of "celebration" or "commemoration" of that shameful event. Spokesmen of PLO had been saying for the past year that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly sanctioned their murderous activities against Israel; no doubt the three new resolutions adopted on 10 November 1975 (General Assembly resolutions 3375 (XXX), 3376 (XXX) and 3379 (XXX)) would provide them with further encouragement.

65. Mr. SAHAD (Libyan Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement by the preceding speaker did not even deserve a reply. It was ludicrous to hear a Zionist spokesman speak of respect for the Charter. That was both arrogant and impertinent since all States Members of the United Nations knew who had violated the Charter and lacked respect for the United Nations. In 1974, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel had personally presided over a ceremony during which the United Nations flag had been burnt in front of his ministry. Those who spoke on behalf of Zionism in the General Assembly had also torn up texts of General Assembly resolutions.

66. The spokesman for Zionism was perfectly aware of the Libyan Arab Republic's attitude to the United Nations, and all members of the international community knew what principles his (Mr. Sahad's) country defended. It felt no shame for its support of liberation movements throughout the world, which it knew represented a just cause. Freedom was the greatest gift bestowed on mankind, and his country's support for all who fought for freedom stemmed from its faith that the forces of evil could not prevail. Only the allies of racists, and those who subjugated and colonized other peoples, condemned that position.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

978th meeting

Monday, 17 November 1975, at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Roberto MARTINEZ ORDOÑEZ (Honduras).

A/SPC/SR.978

AGENDA ITEM 54

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

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

- (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)

1. Mr. AHMED (Egypt) said that the problem under consideration, that of the fate of 1.5 million Palestinians who had been deprived of their property and basic rights and forced to leave their countries to live in refugee camps, was the most acute and bitter problem in world history. What was even more painful for the refugees was that the situation had continued for over 25 years. The international community must no longer temporize but must attack the core of the problem and find a solution urgently. His delegation had repeatedly said that until a just solution was found through the restoration of the fundamental rights of

the Palestinian people, there would not only be no peace in the Middle East but the whole of international peace and security would also be threatened.

2. The problem was becoming increasingly complex because of the financial difficulties of UNRWA, difficulties which would soon make it impossible to provide essential services even at a minimum level. Moreover, new waves of refugees were entering the camps and would require an expansion of services. All the documents on the question showed that any reduction in those services would have political as well as humanitarian consequences. The correlation between the problem of the refugees and the political situation in the Middle East was shown in paragraphs 4 and 30 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/10013 and Corr.1).

3. As the Commissioner-General had said, in paragraph 2 of his report, UNRWA had completed 25 years of service, but its twenty-fifth anniversary was, unlike other such anniversaries, no occasion for celebration. Eight years had passed since a new wave of refugees from Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights had entered the camps and had again seen the right to return denied them. Those refugees, like their predecessors, were still vainly awaiting Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories. The crux of the problem, therefore, was a just and equitable political solution. That had been recognized by the international community in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) and again in General Assembly resolutions 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX), in which the international community recognized the Palestinian people's right to return to their homes, to self-determination and to national independence.

4. Egypt's attitude had always been that law and morality must prevail and that those responsible for evil must pay for its consequences. In particular, the countries which had been responsible for the action which had originally brought about the situation had the major responsibility for seeing that it was rectified. Yet, year after year the United Nations adopted resolutions whose implementation it could not bring about.

5. His delegation fully appreciated the dedicated work of the Commissioner-General and his staff, despite the Agency's financial crisis and the current political climate, to provide the basic necessities to people who had been deprived of their rights and had seen their territory fall under military occupation.

6. Special attention should be drawn to the constructive role played by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which had greatly helped UNRWA in its work. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Commissioner-General's report showed the close links between the Agency and PLO, the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, which had been granted observer status by the General Assembly and was working towards peace in the Middle East. It was therefore logical that any matter concerning refugees should be dealt with in collaboration with PLO.

7. It was regrettable that the United Nations should allow the finances of UNRWA to be in a state of constant crisis. It was ironical that the Agency should be facing a deficit of \$7 million when Phantom jets were being given to certain

countries. He invited countries to compare the amounts they had given to Israel over the past 25 years with those they had contributed to enable UNRWA to keep alive 1.6 million Palestine refugees. The Commissioner-General and his staff must be able to plan on the basis of a stable budget, which would never be achieved with the present system of financing. While voluntary contributions were of inestimable help, they could not be expected to cover all UNRWA expenses, which should come out of the regular budget of the United Nations. It was illogical that a few States Members of the United Nations should bear the major share of UNRWA financing while others—or the same ones—were providing the military equipment to enable Israel to carry out fierce attacks on innocent women and children, causing extensive destruction in the camps and depriving children of essential education, as was shown by paragraphs 24, 123 and 124 of the Commissioner-General's report. The report also noted, in paragraph 27, that the Agency's financial situation was further complicated by devaluations of the Israel pound and by increased costs due to inflation.

8. The United Nations must take serious steps to put an end to Israel's attacks on the refugee camps and to ensure that Israel paid compensation for the damage caused. It should be remembered that the Arab countries in which the refugee camps were situated made large contributions towards their maintenance both in cash and in kind either directly to the refugees or to UNRWA. That was in addition to the voluntary and supplementary contributions made by other Arab countries. Therefore, the Arab countries were shouldering a major part of the burden caused by the refugees' inability to return home.

9. Despite the repeated calls upon Israel in resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly to permit the refugees and persons displaced after the 1967 hostilities to return to their homes, Israel continued to defy those resolutions, although, at the twenty-eighth session of the Assembly, the Israeli representative had informed the Committee on 9 November 1973 (881st meeting) that his Government had permitted the return of over 50,000 refugees and displaced persons. The Israeli Government had attempted to give that lie an official flavour by instructing its representative to state in reply to a note verbale from the Secretary-General, dated 29 January 1975, that the total number of displaced persons who had returned to their homes since 1967 currently stood at 55,000. However, in the beginning of the same paragraph of that reply, the text of which was reproduced in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report (A/10253), it was stated that the prevailing situation did not permit a large-scale return of those displaced persons. In paragraph 4 of the report, however, the Secretary-General mentioned that he had been informed by the Commissioner-General that, on the basis of the information available, the figure of 8,000, given in the latter's report for 1974¹ as the estimate of the number of displaced refugees who had returned to the occupied territories since June 1967, had increased by only a few hundred. Israel's attempts to obtain the sympathy of Member States and well-intentioned private individuals by assertions of the kind he had referred to would be vain if it

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13*, and corrigendum, para. 9.

continued to destroy shelters as reported in paragraphs 28, 69 and 175 of the Commissioner-General's report for the current year (A/10013 and Corr.1) and in the report of the Secretary-General (A/10253). Despite the protests of UNRWA, Israel continued its demolitions and had paid no compensation so far.

10. With regard to the refugees, Israel maintained a position peculiar to itself, which was in contradiction with the spirit of the Charter and impeded all efforts to help them. It was impossible to alleviate their plight by inventing new political concepts. The only solution was to permit them to return to their homes in full implementation of United Nations resolutions.

11. Any slackening of the progress towards finding a peaceful and just solution in the Middle East—a solution which inevitably involved the return of the Palestinian people, their recognition by the international community and a full withdrawal by Israel from occupied Arab territories—would only add to the human tragedy and create an explosive situation to the detriment of the region and of all mankind. He was certain that anyone who appreciated the history of Egyptian civilization would join with his country in the hope that the principles of justice and human values would prevail. If not, the international community would be held responsible by future generations.

12. Mr. BÁNYÁSZ (Hungary) said that, during the Committee's consideration of the item before it, two main points in the General Assembly's discussion on the question of Palestine should be borne in mind. The first was the basic principle, which had always been upheld by the socialist countries, that the question of Palestine was primarily a political issue. Furthermore, PLO should have the final say in any question related to the situation of the Palestinian Arabs.

13. The second was that the vast majority of Member States and world public opinion were utterly dissatisfied with the very slow progress made in the Middle East question and its key problem, the question of Palestine. Frequent stalemates made for increased tensions in the area and gave rise to justified concern by Member States, which could not be dismissed airily with lectures or threats.

14. However, until a final political settlement was reached, and probably for some time after, humanitarian action was needed in order that the hopes placed in the United Nations would not be disappointed. For various reasons, the work of UNRWA, which was an essential part of the groundwork for a just and peaceful pattern of relations in the Middle East, had been carried on during the preceding year under far more difficult conditions than previously. The problems of funding UNRWA programmes would be solved at once if those who were responsible for the plight of the refugees assumed material responsibility for them. That was both a legal and a moral duty. No country could rely for its security solely on an excessive military build-up or always rely on the help of a remote big Power; all must win their neighbours' goodwill and respect.

15. His country, in co-operation with the friendly Arab countries and PLO, had long given direct humanitarian aid

to the victims of aggression and would continue to do so. The time had come for all countries to seek a final solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees in accordance with the resolutions of the current session and to give the long-suffering inhabitants of the refugee camps not only bread but also the hope of a secure, peaceful future.

16. Mr. SIBAHI (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Commissioner-General, his aides and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, and thanked those States, organizations and individuals who had contributed to the Agency's costs.

17. It was noticeable that the reports of the various Commissioners-General since the establishment of the Agency had dealt with the Palestine issue from the point of view of the problems of shelter, clothing, food and education, rather than as a political problem caused by the colonialist, imperialist, expansionist invasion of Arab lands by racists and Zionists. The Committee was currently being asked to deal with a situation for which the racist, Zionist entity and its allies and supporters, notably the United States of America and certain Western States, were fully responsible. If the various Commissioners-General had gone to the root of the problem, it would have been possible to put an end to the suffering, poverty and deprivation of 3 million Palestinians. His delegation believed that no complete solution would be found to the problem unless it was presented in all its political and international dimensions and unless the United Nations used every means to ensure the implementation of its own resolutions and to bring about the immediate and complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories and the restoration to the Palestinian people of their homeland.

18. The financial deficit referred to in the report of the Commissioner-General was merely a technical one. Why did not Israel, the United States and those Western States which had supported the establishment of Israel cover the Agency's deficit? The alleged Israeli contribution to the costs of the Agency scarcely exceeded \$10.5 million, which was about 21 per cent of the total costs. The provision of voluntary contributions was only a partial and temporary solution, since such contributions could increase or decrease and were in fact inadequate to meet all the needs. The Agency's budget must be incorporated into the United Nations regular budget or made the subject of a special budget. Alternatively, the salaries of local employees could be paid by the United Nations like those of international employees. If the United Nations implemented any of the solutions referred to in the Commissioner-General's report, the Agency's financial difficulties could be easily dealt with.

19. It should be pointed out that any measure to reduce the level of services would aggravate the tense situation in the Middle East, as was confirmed in paragraph 7 of the special report of the Working Group (A/10268). The Israeli contribution to the expenses of the Agency was too small, particularly when considered in relation to the value of the Arab lands which had been usurped by Israel.

20. World public opinion had been dumbfounded by the vicious Israeli aggression on the Golan heights and the

destruction wrought by Israel before its withdrawal from Quneitra in 1974. Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of the Secretary-General's report (A/10253) clearly showed that Israel was pursuing a campaign of destruction of refugee camps in Gaza and Lebanon. The Committee should consider those facts in their true light, namely, as evidence of the criminal and aggressive intentions of Israel towards Golan and towards refugees and camps in other countries. The Agency's claims for compensation for destruction of its property by Israel had met with intransigence.

21. The United Nations should seriously consider implementing international economic, cultural and political sanctions against the Zionist, racist entity, and establishing a special time-table for the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to the solution of the Palestine question and the Middle East conflict in the event that Israel continued to disregard United Nations resolutions and defy the will of the international community.

22. Mr. AL-DEHIM (United Arab Emirates) welcomed the PLO representatives to the Committee.

23. The discussion of the question of Palestine in the General Assembly had focused the attention of the international community on the issue. The resolutions that had been adopted had confirmed the desire of Member States to observe the provisions of the Charter, had reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and political existence, and had demonstrated the racist and aggressive character of the Zionist presence in Palestine.

24. The report of the Commissioner-General (A/10013 and Corr.1) painted a tragic picture of the living conditions of the Palestinian people and showed that Israel, not content with expelling them from their homeland, launched air and naval attacks on the Palestine refugee camps and practised all forms of oppression against them.

25. The Commissioner-General's report showed that in 1976 the Agency's deficit would increase to \$55 million and that, even if the deficit for 1975 was totally eliminated, the Agency would still encounter severe financial difficulties early in 1976.

26. His delegation rejected the proposals to reduce the services of UNRWA. The level of relief currently provided by the Agency was already at its minimum level. Any reduction in those services would not only inflict increased suffering on the refugees but would also cause the political situation in the region to deteriorate. In that connexion, he drew the attention of the Committee to paragraph 30 of the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/10334). The maintenance of the relief programmes was a commitment under the mandate given to the Agency by the General Assembly. The only way in which that mandate could be terminated was to return the refugees to their homeland or compensate them fully if they decided to live elsewhere, as provided in General Assembly resolution 194 (III). As the report of the Commissioner-General showed, no progress had been made in the implementation of that resolution in more than 25 years.

27. The Agency currently found itself in a serious financial situation which posed a threat to its very existence and was due to inflation at the regional and international levels. In response to the Secretary-General's appeal, several States, including the United Arab Emirates, had pledged additional contributions which had reduced the deficit to a little more than \$8 million. In providing its modest contribution to the Agency, his Government had stipulated that it should be spent on education. That contribution had not been intended to cover the deficit of the Agency, since the responsibility for the Agency belonged to the United Nations and not to the Arab countries alone.

28. A final solution to the question would be to consider the Agency's budget as part of the United Nations regular budget, rather than to rely on voluntary contributions. The United Nations should fully cover the salaries of locally recruited employees, as was the case for international employees. Furthermore, the level and extent of relief should be such as to fulfil the basic requirements of the refugees.

29. The responsibility for the situation fell on the racist Zionist régime in Israel and on the States which provided it with military, political and economic support. The Palestine refugees must be provided with relief as long as Israel continued to disregard United Nations resolutions and until the international community forced it to renounce its intransigent attitude.

30. Mr. PETNICKI (Yugoslavia) congratulated the Commissioner-General and his staff on their work in providing essential services, particularly relief, health protection and education, to over 1.5 million Palestinians who had been expelled from their homeland and reduced to the status of refugees. UNRWA must be in a position to continue its useful humanitarian work as long as there was need for it. It was to be hoped that, thanks to additional voluntary contributions by Member States, it would be able to overcome its serious financial difficulties. In a situation where the basic question of the realization of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine had not been solved, a curtailment of the scope of the Agency's activities, to say nothing of a cessation of its operations, would inflict great hardships on the Palestinian people and would also negatively affect the efforts to solve the Middle East crisis.

31. As in the past, Yugoslavia would continue to support UNRWA and would announce its contribution at the forthcoming meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA. It had, however, never been in any doubt that the question of the Palestine refugees was primarily a political problem and must be solved as such. Yugoslavia firmly believed that a lasting solution to the Middle East question could be based only on the complete withdrawal of Israel from all the territories it had occupied after June 1967 and on its recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including the right to establish their own State.

32. Mr. ABDULLA (Oman) noted that 25 years had elapsed since the Agency had begun its work. No one had thought that it would go on for so long, and one might well wonder how much longer it would have to continue its

existence. In an era of radical political changes when many countries were attaining independence, it was quite unacceptable that the Palestine tragedy was continuing without any solution in sight. Material assistance to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people was commendable, but one must also reflect on the origin of the tragedy which had driven a whole people from its country. Those responsible for the situation of the refugees were the European Jews who had come to Palestine and had taken vengeance on the Palestinian people instead of on the Nazis who had oppressed them. The people of Oman knew what it was like to be forced to live in exile, and before the revolution of 1970 over a million of them had lived in Africa. They well understood the bitterness and pain of the people of Palestine.

33. His delegation believed that the Palestine tragedy was above all a political one; those countries which had assisted in the creation of Israel and accorded it international recognition must rectify their historical error.

34. Mr. GREGORIADES (Greece) said that the item under consideration was of concern to the people and Government of Greece for two reasons. First, the Palestinians belonged to the great Arab nation, with which Greece had ties of special friendship and whose progress towards independence and whose enhanced international stature it supported. Secondly, the item related to refugees, and any situation which involved the forcible uprooting of a people must elicit his country's wholehearted sympathy and concern. Greece was therefore participating in the search for a settlement based on justice and dignity.

35. It was both regrettable and disquieting that the General Assembly was considering the question of the Palestine refugees for the twenty-sixth year. It ought not to be considering the question of the operations of UNRWA, because the Palestinians should long since have gone home. Although it was essential to continue to provide them with assistance, the problem was in essence not that of humanitarian assistance; the point at issue was a political problem and related to the return of the refugees to their homes.

36. As if it was not bad enough that, in the current day and age, the Palestinians had become refugees, they were reproached for not having become "integrated" after so many years—as if time, instead of aggravating the situation, which was what in fact had happened, conferred on those who had forcibly expelled the Palestinians the right to have dispersed them.

37. Instead of the customary draft resolutions on the item now before the Committee, his delegation would have liked to have a draft resolution noting the return of the Palestinians to their homes and the winding-up of the Agency's operations.

38. His delegation wished to express its deep appreciation to the Commissioner-General and his colleagues for the manner in which they discharged their task. His country was shouldering a very heavy financial burden caused by another refugee tragedy, that of the 200,000 Cypriots who had fled to the southern part of their country. Consequently, its means were limited, but it agreed with all who recognized that, regardless of the country to which they

belonged, refugees who were the victims of a military invasion were the concern of the entire international community. In that spirit, Greece was responding to the appeal launched by UNRWA for additional contributions and, over and above its financial contribution, would make available additional food-stuffs for delivery to the Agency before the end of the year.

39. Mr. AL-ATIYYAH (Iraq) said that year after year the Committee met to consider the activities of UNRWA and the report of its Commissioner-General detailing the difficulties constantly besetting the Agency.

40. The creation of UNRWA had been a direct consequence of the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the Zionist State by a resolution adopted by the General Assembly (181 (II)). At the time of that decision, the Organization had been under the sway of the Western Powers, which represented only a small minority of the world's peoples. Instead of rectifying the error which had been made, the United Nations had then created UNRWA at the behest of the Western countries and the United States, which had perhaps been suffering from a guilty conscience. That action was tantamount to striking a man down and then administering first aid to him. The Western imperialists led by the United States had made the additional mistake of assuming that the refugees would eventually settle down and become integrated in the host countries. He emphasized that the Palestinian people were no different from the other Arab peoples who had attained their independence; they were determined to continue their struggle to preserve their national existence and realize the legitimate rights which had been recognized by the United Nations in numerous resolutions, including resolution 3236 (XXIX), which had laid to rest once and for all the idea that the question of Palestine was merely a refugee problem. The General Assembly at its thirtieth session had already adopted a resolution condemning Zionism and identifying it as a form of racial discrimination (resolution 3379 (XXX)), a decision which further confirmed the legitimacy of the rights of the Palestinian people.

41. Of late the imperialists had taken to saying that the Arabs should bear the financial burden of UNRWA operations. The Arab States had in fact borne a large part of that burden despite the fact that they had no responsibility whatsoever for the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland. Such humanitarian assistance as was already provided by the Arab States should not be used as a pretext by those who wished to shirk their responsibilities for the Palestine refugees. His delegation continued to believe that the Western countries should bear the lion's share of the Agency's operating costs. Any attempt to curtail the activities of the Agency would have adverse effects on the situation in Palestine. In the final analysis, however, a final solution to the Palestinian problem depended upon the ability of the United Nations to enforce its resolutions upholding the natural rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

42. Mr. DORON (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Egypt and others had stressed what they called the right of the refugees to return to their country. It was interesting to note, however, that they had remained silent regarding the implications for

Israel of such a return. Statements made by various Arab spokesmen over the years were quite revealing on that score. For example, the then Foreign Minister of Egypt had stated in October 1949 that in demanding the restoration of Palestine to the refugees the Arabs had intended that the Palestinians should return to their homeland as masters and not as slaves, and that it was the intention of the refugees to annihilate the State of Israel. A resolution adopted by a conference of refugees held in Syria in July 1957 had declared that any discussion aimed at finding a solution to the Palestinian problem which did not recognize the refugees' right to annihilate Israel should be regarded as a desecration of the Arab people and an act of treason. The late President Nasser of Egypt had said in a newspaper interview in September 1961 that if the Arabs returned to Israel, Israel would cease to exist. In April 1966, the then Prime Minister of Lebanon, addressing the national Parliament, had declared that the realization of the Arab hope for the return of the refugees to Palestine would mean the liquidation of Israel. It was clear, therefore, what Israel's Arab neighbours held in store for it when they clamoured for the return of the refugees. Statements of that kind had been made time and again by Arab leaders and were still being made today. It was obvious, therefore, that an over-all solution to the refugee problem would have to await a peaceful settlement of the Middle East question. Israel's efforts to that end were a matter of record, and, given the circumstances, his country had done everything that was possible or could be expected.

43. The representative of Egypt had questioned the accuracy of the figures provided by the Israeli authorities concerning the number of displaced persons who had returned. It should be pointed out that the discrepancy between the Israeli figure of 55,000 and the figures contained in the reports of the Commissioner-General and the Secretary-General was due to the fact that the latter had based their statistics on UNRWA records regarding requests by returning refugees for retransfer of rations to the areas to which they had returned. As was stated in paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report (A/10253), the Agency would therefore not be aware of the return of any refugees who did not make such a request.

44. The Egyptian representative had also stated that the work of UNRWA had been facilitated by PLO. That was a strange, even cynical remark, since PLO was using the refugee camps as training bases, ammunition dumps and convenient places to plan its acts of aggression. It was precisely because of that situation that Israel had carried out a number of defensive actions against the camps. If PLO would leave the camps and stop hiding behind the skirts of refugee women, Israel would have no reason to take such actions against the refugees in the camps. The true character of PLO was revealed by the fact that the Voice of Palestine, in a broadcast originating in Lebanon, had openly admitted that a group belonging to PLO had carried out the latest terrorist attack in Jerusalem in which six children in their teens had lost their lives.

45. Turning to the statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, he said that that country's attitude regarding the problem of the Middle East must be viewed in the light of its position on the mandated territory of Palestine. According to the Syrian Arab Republic the

whole of that territory belonged to it, and President Assad had stated as recently as 8 March 1974, on the eleventh anniversary of the Syrian revolution, that Palestine was not only a part of the Arab world but was the principal part of "southern Syria". The expansionist designs of the Syrian Arab Republic were not limited to "southern Syria" alone, however, but also extended to "western Syria", which comprised three sovereign States Members of the United Nations. The Syrian Arab Republic was not interested in solving the refugee problem but merely wished to use the refugees and their plight to further its designs for territorial expansion. It had never accorded full diplomatic recognition to Lebanon, since to do so would diminish the credibility of its claim to that part of "western Syria", and it might even intervene militarily in that country if changes there were not to its liking. It was, therefore, ludicrous to pay any heed to Syrian accusations regarding defensive military actions carried out by Israel against the refugee camps.

46. He noted that, according to paragraph 65 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/10013 and Corr.1), the casualties among registered refugees and damage to UNRWA facilities in Lebanon caused by disturbances in that country, in which the Syrian Arab Republic had had a hand, far outnumbered those caused by any defensive actions carried out by Israeli forces. Moreover, the statistics contained in that document did not cover more recent months during which an increase in death and destruction had been registered in that country.

47. As to the charge that Israel's contribution to UNRWA was negligible, he pointed out that it was in fact greater than the contribution of most Arab States. Furthermore, everyone knew who and what were the causes of the displacement of the Palestinians in the first place.

48. He drew the attention of the Committee to a statement made by the Syrian Minister of Defence to the National Assembly of that country in December 1973 in which he described the valour of a Syrian soldier who had killed 28 Jewish soldiers with a hatchet and who was rewarded for that deed by receiving the Medal of the Republic.

49. As to the statement made by the representative of Iraq, that representative had once again made a completely unconstructive statement full of venom and hatred. A country which had committed genocide against the Kurds and brutally treated its Jewish citizens and even its Arab population could not be taken seriously in any discussion of humanitarian problems.

50. Sir John RENNIE (Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), referring to the statistics regarding returned refugees, pointed out that both his report (A/10013 and Corr.1) and the report of the Secretary-General (A/10253) took account only of displaced persons who were registered with UNRWA. No doubt other refugees existed, but the Agency had no certain information regarding them. He had every reason to believe that the figures contained in his report were accurate.

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

52. Mr. AQL (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that one wondered, in view of Israel's own record of wild statements, how the Israeli representative had the audacity to quote Arab statesmen and officials as having made statements which jeopardized the existence of Israel. He would remind the Israeli representative that Theodor Herzl had said in his diaries as early as 1897, when Moslem and Christian Palestinians had constituted about 98 per cent of that country's population, that he was thinking of devising a plan whereby the population could be driven across the frontiers of Palestine. Chaim Weizmann had revealed in his memoirs that as early as 1917, when Moslem and Christian Palestinians had formed 90 per cent of the population, he had wanted Palestine to be as Jewish as England was English and France was French. Golda Meir, in an interview reported by *The Sunday Times*, had denied the existence of the Palestinians, and their existence continued to be denied by the present ruling military junta in Israel. Israel's record was replete with statements which denied the existence of the Palestinians and which revealed Israel's expansionist designs regarding not only Palestine but the whole Arab homeland.

53. With regard to the incident in Jerusalem which had been referred to by the Israeli representative, PLO was a national liberation movement which would continue to combat Israel militarily, politically, culturally and socially until the right to self-determination of the people of Palestine was restored. Bloodshed was deplorable anywhere and everywhere, but the Israeli representative would do well to remember that intransigence bred intransigence and violence bred violence. As long as Israel ignored United Nations resolutions concerning the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland, their liberation movement was left with no alternative but to continue to fight until it achieved its aim. The crux of the entire problem was the plight of the Palestinian refugees and their return to their homeland, and the Committee had heard from the Israeli representative only a series of statements designed to divert its attention from the substance of the problem. Despite the injustices inflicted upon them, the people of Palestine had their vision of the future and aspired to the establishment of a non-sectarian Palestinian State in which both Arabs and Jews could live together without racial and religious prejudice.

54. Mr. SIBAHI (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had not expected a meeting at which the Committee was discussing the reports before it in a constructive manner to degenerate to the level it had reached with the insolent remarks made by the representative of Israel.

55. In October 1973, military and civilian organizations alike in the Syrian Arab Republic had risen to liberate the occupied territories and purge them of the Israeli forces. In alleging that the Syrian Arab Republic had expansionist designs, the representative of Israel had failed to mention that it had a mutual defence agreement with Lebanon and all of the fraternal countries of the League of Arab States. Arabs in whatever country were one people and one only. He pointed out that Israel currently occupied an area five times as large as that given it by the 1947 resolution of the General Assembly (181 (II)) which had created the State of Israel. Moshe Dayan was reported to have said that even in

the event of peace there was no question of Israel leaving the Golan heights. Who then, he wished to know, had expansionist designs?

56. Many political changes had occurred in the world since the creation of Israel, and the United Nations had decided to rectify its initial error by finally recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The most recent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly further accentuated that tendency. It was obvious that Israel felt itself threatened by such developments.

57. Finally, it was strange that at every meeting at which the Arab States called for the implementation of United Nations resolutions the representative of Israel rose to make his impertinent remarks. He emphasized that the Palestinian problem and the broader question of the Middle East could be settled only on a just and equitable basis.

58. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that he would certainly prefer the Committee's discussion of the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to be conducted in a businesslike manner. However, if Arab spokesmen took the opportunity to purvey their slanders and distortions, his delegation had no choice but to reply. The aggression and intransigence of the Arab States was the cause of the current situation, and only when those States had had a change of heart would the situation be resolved.

59. Mr. AL-SAYEGH (Kuwait) said that he would like to draw the attention of the Committee to an article in the Israeli daily newspaper *Hamishmar* on 28 March 1975, which had drawn attention to a booklet published by the Central Command Headquarters, Israeli Army Chaplaincy. The author of one of the chapters of that official publication had been a military rabbi of the Israeli Central Command who had asserted that in war one was not obliged to distinguish between the enemy's soldiers and civilians, that one should not, according to religious law, trust a Gentile, and that one should be aware of the possibility that a peaceful civilian might aid the enemy. The military rabbi had stated that during a war, when the troops of Israel were charging the enemy, they were permitted and obliged, according to religious law, to kill even good civilians. The author of the article had commented that the worst anti-Semite could not slander Jewish religious law more effectively. After the appearance of the article in *Hamishmar*, the Israeli Chief of Staff had ordered the booklet to be withdrawn from circulation.

60. Mr. AL-ATIYYAH (Iraq) said that his Government believed that all national ethnic groups had the right to self-determination and autonomy, and it accordingly recognized the autonomy of the Kurds. They had their own autonomous region and an executive council which was responsible for dealing with all their problems. The Kurds were also represented in the Government. The north of Iraq had now been pacified after an insurrection by a small group which had not been representative of the Kurds as a whole. Foreign imperialist Powers had supported that insurrection, and the Zionist entity had even sent arms and agents into the north of Iraq to sow discord in that region. The national forces had brought peace, and it was a matter of pride to Iraq that all its people and ethnic groups enjoyed peace and stability. The Zionist entity levelled

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.