

879th meeting

Wednesday, 7 November 1973, at 10.50 a.m.

President: Mr. Károly SZARKA (Hungary).

A/SPC/SR.879

AGENDA ITEM 43

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/SPC/163):

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General (A/9013);
- (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/9231);
- (c) Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/9187);
- (d) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/9155, A/9156)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan) said that it was both unfair and inaccurate to consider the question of the rights and future of the Palestine refugees who had been dispossessed and dispersed by the ever-increasing violence and fanaticism of Israel solely from the angle of the relief and humanitarian services to be provided to all those who had been made homeless. Nevertheless, the international community was obligated to continue ensuring their survival, and there was no end in sight to the longest relief operation in history. When the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had been set up (resolution 302 (IV) of the General Assembly), it had been assumed that a temporary *ad hoc* relief operation would be carried out pending the implementation of the pertinent United Nations resolutions, in particular Assembly resolution 194 (III) which provided for the repatriation of the Palestine refugees, but it had been hardly conceivable that a whole people would be condemned to a life of permanent dispersal and reduced to living on international charity. Twenty-five years later, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA had been forced to acknowledge in his report (A/9013) that no progress had been made towards the solution of the basic problem of the Palestine refugees and he had to endeavour to meet the minimum needs for one year of 1.5 million human beings with about \$50 million.

2. Furthermore, with the continued Israeli military occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan, the Gaza Strip and part of the Golan Heights, the vast majority of the refugees and the people who had been displaced since 1967 were still unable to return home. It should be noted in that connexion that 400,000 displaced persons from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were currently living in east Jordan and that, since 1967, the Jordanian Government had been providing about 250,000 displaced persons with UNRWA-type aid (*ibid.*, paras. 51 and 56). That aid was distributed to the recipients with the co-operation of UNRWA.

3. Consequently, because of Israel's refusal to recognize or concede any political or human right to the refugees and displaced persons, United Nations efforts to find a solution to the problem had been systematically frustrated, since such a solution depended on the

establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

4. Referring to the question of the finances of UNRWA upon which the relief, health and education services depended, he stressed that the chronic deficit was due to the tendency in international circles to look upon the Agency's operations, and in fact the whole problem of the Palestine refugees, as a chronic and therefore essentially static phenomenon. No genuine effort was being made to solve that problem, or to ensure that in the meantime the basic legitimate needs of the refugees were met. Consequently, although the revenues of UNRWA had increased, inflation, the devaluation of the dollar and the increase in the number of refugees had once again raised the estimated deficit for 1973 to \$3.3 million, which would reduce working capital to about \$2.6 million (*ibid.*, para. 220). However, about \$7 million would be needed to cover the cost of goods in storage or en route to the area. And the situation would have been still worse but for the decision not to pay the subsidies owed to the host Governments (*ibid.*, paras. 8 and 210) for services provided to the refugees. He could only deplore that decision since, as the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA had recognized, the responsibility for relief, health and education services devolved upon the international community as a whole and must not be transferred to host countries such as Jordan, which were least able to take on additional burdens. The warnings given by the Commissioner-General in paragraphs 11, 13, 46 and 221 of his report were extremely alarming, since the whole programme of the Agency—and in particular the education programme, which was vital for the future of new generations of refugees—could be brought to a standstill. Nothing could be more disastrous than to deprive the young generations of the only avenue left open to them to rebuild their lives, pending the restoration of their rights. The Jordanian delegation could only endorse the pleas and warnings of the Commissioner-General and hope that the international community would gauge all the implications of the situation and assume its responsibilities.

5. His delegation was grateful to the Working Group for its unceasing efforts, as a result of which UNRWA's finances had received a substantial boost, and urged the Committee to extend the Working Group's mandate. The Working Group had come to the conclusion that, in the final analysis, it must be recognized and understood that the future of UNRWA was eventually a question of the political will of the Governments of Member States (*ibid.*, para. 6).

6. His delegation, like many others, was completely convinced that the financial impasse in which UNRWA found itself was the result of a political will which had chosen deliberately to minimize and underestimate the true magnitude of the problem. However, it had been seen that it was possible to make thousands of millions available for causes which were less humane or less

just, simply because they were dearer to the hearts of policy-makers; faced with the tragedy of the Palestine people, which was the consequence of an ill-advised political decision reached a quarter of a century earlier, the international community had a duty to provide what was needed to sustain the Agency. Jordan felt entitled to say so, since it had practised what it preached by receiving the majority of the refugees, who were also citizens of Jordan, together with the majority of the displaced persons, and had thus shouldered a considerable share of the burden.

7. In respect of relief services, the figures quoted in the Commissioner-General's report clearly showed the magnitude of the problem and gave the lie, once and for all, to the Israeli allegations that the existence of a large number of refugees was a myth kept alive by self-seeking Arab politicians. Out of a total of 1,540,694 refugees, only slightly more than half were receiving United Nations assistance (*ibid.*, para. 50) because of the ceiling imposed on the number of ration recipients. It was legitimate to ask why that arbitrary ceiling had been imposed, particularly since those who had been excluded by it were children between the ages of 1 and 15. The number of children aged one year and over who were entitled to rations, but did not receive them on a regular basis, continued to grow. Once again, the decision to deny those children assistance had been a political one inasmuch as it had been forced upon the Agency by carefully circumscribed funding. It should be remembered, in that connexion, that the calorific content of the basic food ration was about 1,500 calories per day in summer and 1,600 in winter, in spite of the fact that the vast majority of the refugees lived in hilly regions and in unprotected dwellings.

8. His delegation noted with satisfaction that, as far as health services were concerned, good results had been achieved as a result of the close and generous co-operation between the Agency's health services and those of the host Governments. However, he deplored the promulgation by Israel—as reported in paragraph 92 of the Commissioner-General's report—in respect of fees for health services, which was clearly intended to force refugees into participating in the Israeli health insurance scheme, thus making that scheme an instrument of the Israeli occupation authorities. It should be recalled that, for two decades, the Jordanian Government had offered those services free to all refugees in Jordan and that, in east Jordan, refugees continued to receive all the free health care they needed, even though the Agency had discontinued its financial participation in those extra services. The Israeli ordinance was a clear violation of the fourth Geneva Convention¹ and of the mandate conferred on the Agency by the General Assembly (*ibid.*, foot-note 7). His delegation was confident that the General Assembly would endorse unreservedly the Agency's refusal to accept such tampering with its special juridical status and its functions. In addition, in the Gaza Strip, the occupation authorities had destroyed a substantial part of the Agency's sanitary facilities and had taken over other facilities from the municipality, which was currently run by an Israeli military official. The question was one of basic principle: should the United Nations allow one of its important organs in the area to be

squeezed out by a military occupation which was endeavouring to achieve political objectives at the expense of humanitarian services?

9. Co-ordination in education matters between UNRWA and the host Governments had also been quite satisfactory. It was regrettable, however, that the horizontal expansion of the numbers attending school had not been matched by a vertical expansion of the teaching offered up to university level. As at previous sessions, his delegation advocated the elaboration of a more ambitious programme of higher education for the refugees, to be financed by a special fund. It hoped that the problem of school textbooks would be given urgent attention and would not cause any delay which might detract from the effectiveness of the school year.

10. He stressed that the Arabs of Palestine had not created their own problem, but that it had been imposed upon them. Israel's brutality and violence had grown steadily over the years, but the Palestine refugees must be allowed to exercise their inalienable right to return to their homes and homeland; in the meantime, the United Nations must continue its programmes, which were vital for their survival and well-being.

11. Mr. WESTON (United Kingdom) said it was inconceivable, as had been re-emphasized in a declaration on the Middle East just issued by the nine member countries of EEC, that a just and lasting settlement could be achieved in the Middle East unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinians were taken into account. Nevertheless, pending an equitable settlement of the refugee problem, the work of UNRWA in assuring security, health and education for the refugees remained one of the central factors of such a settlement. His delegation hoped that the recent hostilities would lead all concerned to address themselves more urgently to all aspects of the Middle East problem and particularly to the human and social aspects. The best way for any State to express its desire to resolve the conflict, not merely in words but by deeds, was to support the work of UNRWA and, in particular, to contribute generously. The United Kingdom was a member of the Working Group, and his delegation fully endorsed the opinion expressed by that Group that the maintenance of UNRWA was the direct responsibility of all Member States. The situation in which more than 90 per cent of the Agency's budget was contributed by only six Member States should not be allowed to continue.

12. The reports by the Commissioner-General and the Working Group showed clearly that UNRWA was in a desperate situation. Since the beginning of 1973, when the Working Group had still had reason to hope that the Agency might balance its budget for the year, the situation had gone from bad to worse owing to the devaluation of the dollar, inflation and increased prices of flour. The deficit for 1974 had been estimated at \$10 million and, if it could not be eliminated, UNRWA would soon have no alternative but to cut back its services.

13. Any such cuts would necessarily have to be in the Agency's educational programme, which absorbed nearly 48 per cent of the budget and provided education for about 250,000 children. A saving of \$7.5 million, which would not be enough to eliminate the estimated deficit, would necessitate abolishing the final three years of general education for all students. The tragedy in human terms of such a step could not be over-emphasized; the decision would have serious political

¹ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287).

consequences and ominous implications for peace and security, particularly at a time when the prospects for a settlement seemed to be improving.

14. Contributions must therefore be increased. His country intended to make a further contribution, the exact amount of which would be announced at the pledging conference. He appealed to all members to support the Agency and its work; the importance thereof had never been more evident.

15. Mr. CASTALDO (Italy) said that the refugee problem, which was becoming more difficult as the war was intensified, was one of the root causes of the crisis in the Middle East. His Government had pointed out on many occasions that, as long as the refugees could not exercise their rights, their situation would be an obstacle on the road to peace. It had therefore appealed to the parties to make efforts to reconcile their interests and to find a political solution to the crisis that would take account of the question of the Palestinians. Recent tragic events had added greater urgency to the appeal. The political settlement must be brought about by full implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III). It was true that the political problem was not under consideration by the Committee, but it must be borne constantly in mind when discussing the assistance being provided to the refugees by the United Nations: UNRWA's programmes, essential as they were for the survival and well-being of the refugees, were only one aspect of the problem being faced. While contributing to the assistance given to the refugees, the international community had the right to appeal earnestly to the parties to do their utmost to bring about peace.

16. His delegation wished to thank the Commissioner-General for his very clear and complete report on the operations of UNRWA. As at the twenty-seventh session, his delegation had focused its attention on three main points: the co-operation of the host countries with UNRWA, the education programmes, and the financing of the Agency.

17. With regard to the first point, he referred to paragraphs 14 to 27, 187 to 189, and 197 to 204 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/9013), and said that the Agency had had to overcome a number of difficulties due to the violent events which had affected the refugee camps. But, although co-operation between the host countries and the Agency seemed to have improved somewhat, there were still difficulties, and the policies of the host countries continued to affect the Agency's operation. His delegation had noted that, according to the pertinent report of the Secretary-General (A/9155, para. 7), in Gaza 706 families were still inadequately housed and, according to the report by the Commissioner-General (A/9013, para. 27), 266 families were still in urgent need.

18. His delegation was deeply concerned about the threat that the Agency's financial difficulties posed to the work it had done, not without success, in education.

19. The efforts of the Working Group had produced a steady improvement in the Agency's budget at the end of 1972 and the beginning of 1973. But in the current financial year the devaluation of the dollar and inflation of food prices had again produced a large deficit in that budget. The situation seemed likely to deteriorate in 1974 and the Commissioner-General had warned (877th

meeting) of the risk that the Agency might disintegrate before the end of its mandate. Italy, which was doing everything possible to assist the Agency both directly and through EEC, appealed to the United Nations to redouble its efforts to meet the Agency's needs. As indicated in its report (A/9231, para. 14) the Working Group had drawn the attention of various regional groups to the situation and Italy thought that all such groups should participate in the financial support of UNRWA. The willingness to seek peace shown by the major Powers during the recent Middle East crisis, their willingness to contribute to the peace-keeping mission of the United Nations in the region and the trend towards the application of the principle of geographical representation in the sharing of that burden should encourage the Working Group to approach Governments which had not contributed to the Agency in the past.

20. Mr. EVANS (United States of America) said that his Government was second to none in its desire to find just and lasting answers to the Middle East problems. It realized that UNRWA's efforts were only a palliative, designed to satisfy the basic needs of the Palestinians.

21. For six weeks the United Nations had heard platitudes about the world's wrongs and words of encouragement to the downtrodden; it had witnessed collective breast-beating and mutual recriminations in connexion with one of its major tasks—the protection of human rights. Speaking as a television reporter who had been profoundly moved by the soul-stirring plight of the Palestinians and with the pragmatism of an ordinary citizen, he observed that the dispossessed and the homeless could not eat words and that 250,000 school-children could not study the noble thoughts expressed in the United Nations.

22. The tragic plight of the Palestinians was the result of United Nations action and the Organization had undertaken to care for them until long-range answers were found. That was not charity; that was a debt owed by the family of nations to the Palestinians. How could one speak about preservation of human rights and fail to give a helping hand to those homeless and wretched refugees? It was sad to have to record that certain great Powers, for all their compassionate words, gave nothing and that affluent countries made only token contributions. There was an American expression which said: "Put your money where your mouth is". In spite of being the target of many accusations, the United States of America had in fact contributed to UNRWA some \$500 million since 1950, or over 64 per cent of the total contributed by Governments. Those contributions had been and would continue to be made freely, in the name of humanity and in the hope that other Governments could be persuaded to join in one of the United Nations nobler efforts.

23. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) paid a tribute to the Commissioner-General for the dedication he had displayed in carrying out his task. The report he had submitted was detailed; it showed how the funds had been allocated and described the problems confronting UNRWA.

24. Although the problems with which the Committee was concerned were primarily humanitarian, they could also be regarded as highly political inasmuch as all human rights—whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural—were interdependent. He would point out to the representative of the United States of

America, who had raised the question of human rights, that he himself had helped to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Covenants pertaining to the rights he had enumerated and to formulate the concept of self-determination. For the benefit of the United States representative he would shed some light on the Palestine problem, thereby injecting something other than platitudes into the debate. However, first of all, he would select certain points for comment. The United States representative, to his credit, was moved by the plight of the Palestinians. He had observed, too, that some States had made only token contributions to UNRWA, whereas they were in a position to make substantial contributions. He had also said that the United States was being blamed for all that went wrong in the world. In addition, he had called for a pragmatic approach. However, giving in to the stronger party was a pragmatic approach, and pragmatism was out of place when an injustice had been committed.

25. The question must be asked whether the UNRWA budget—\$62.7 million, of which \$23.2 million was contributed by the United States—sufficed to solve the humanitarian problems that arose. That budget had remained at a fairly constant level over the years, when allowance had been made for inflation and the dollar devaluation. The funds allocated in the budget to the refugees represented approximately 6 United States cents per person per day.

26. Understanding of the problems involved should begin with a study of their background and origin. The man who must bear primary responsibility for the plight of the refugees was Lord Balfour, because he had wanted the Zionists to bring the United States into the First World War. After the Second World War, the British had attempted to solve the Palestine problem. Unable to do so, they had handed the task over to the United Nations, which had been under the sway of the United States and President Truman. Arab representatives had observed before the event that the partition of Palestine would create problems.

27. It was no good saying that what was done was done, because the problem would remain for as long as there were Palestinians. The right of all peoples to self-determination was the corner-stone of human rights and figured in Article 1 of each of the International Covenants he had referred to (see General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex). It had been enunciated by President Wilson and also appeared in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Because President Wilson had favoured the principle of self-determination, he had been sorry to see the victors of the First World War establish their mandates, a disguised form of colonialism, over the countries of the Fertile Crescent. There was an Arab proverb to the effect that any structure was bad if it was built on a bad foundation. That was why the United States paid \$23.2 million to UNRWA every year.

28. The representative of the United States of America spoke of human rights, but he forgot the right of self-determination. In 1919 the Arab Palestinians had constituted 93 per cent of the population of Palestine, and in 1945 the Jews who had migrated to Palestine from countries in which they had been persecuted had been less than one third of the population. President Truman had called for the partition of Palestine without

any concern for the right of self-determination, which was a right of the community. To those who had objected that the partition of Palestine would create difficulties, Truman had replied that there were many Jewish voters and asked the objectors how many Arab voters they thought there were. Thus, the partition of Palestine had been justifiable neither on pragmatic nor on humanitarian grounds. It had been merely a selfish and opportunistic policy devised by a man who knew nothing about the Middle East. Truman had desired the partition of Palestine for selfish reasons, just as the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, had agreed for selfish reasons to Zionist immigration into Palestine in order to create along the route to India a country friendly to the interests of the United Kingdom. The British Empire had disappeared, like the Arab Empire long before it, and the United States might go the same way if it did not respect the principles of Jeffersonian democracy, if, like the leaders of the Arab Empire, it let the idea of power go to its head.

29. The problem could be solved only by restoring to the Palestinians their right of self-determination. But that could not be done by implementing Security Council resolution 242 (1967), since, owing to the wishes of Mr. Goldberg, the representative of the United States of America at the time, and Lord Caradon, the representative of the United Kingdom, the different interpretations of that resolution were as numerous as the problems it was liable to produce. In fact, Palestine should never have been partitioned. By partitioning it, the United States and the Soviet Union had violated the Palestinian peoples' right of self-determination. The United States had intervened in Viet-Nam with 450,000 men, but it could not solve the Palestinian problem because it was under the thumb of the Zionists, who had infiltrated the Senate and the agencies of government. Whereas in Viet-Nam the United States had intervened directly, in Palestine it was fighting the war through an intermediary, a method it had borrowed from the Soviet Union. In the Middle East the Jews acted as policemen for the United States and were therefore given access to the most advanced weapons. Thus, although the United States no doubt did not mean to do so, it was making the Jews the victims of its policy.

30. The representative of the United States spoke of 23 million dollars—devalued dollars—paid by the United States to UNRWA and thought that such a payment was proof of generosity. The Arabs did not want any money from the United States, they wanted the United States not to meddle in the affairs of the Arab countries. The representative of the United States asserted that in 23 years the United States had paid about \$500 million for the Palestinian refugees. But the President of the United States of America had promised \$2,000 million at one stroke to the Zionist usurpers, a foreign body in Palestine which had caused the festering sore in the Middle East. In a single day the United States had given four times as much to Israel as it had given to the Palestinians in 23 years. Perhaps the United States was afraid of being displaced by the USSR in the Middle East. But the Arabs would fight against the USSR as they were fighting against the United States, for they did not want anyone to interfere in their affairs. Unfortunately, the Middle East was the chess-board on which the United States and the USSR were playing their game, with the existence and destiny of the Arabs as pawns.

31. He wondered whether States could continue to be asked to contribute to UNRWA in order to maintain the Palestinian refugees at the rate of 6 or 8 cents a day per person. Man did not live by bread alone, and what mattered to the Arabs was not their level of living. The pursuit of happiness, not the search for wealth, was the purpose of existence. In the United States, governors bought their offices, and candidates for Congress employed campaign finance directors. The Arabs did not want that system of government, just as they did not want the American way of life.

32. Until recently the Arabs had regarded the United States as a friendly country. Before it had become drunk with power, it had been a model of international good behaviour. He wondered whether the American people would end up by saying to those who governed them that the situation was intolerable. The members of the Government spoke of human rights, but they distorted the facts. He hoped that his voice would reach those Americans who had a conscience. Power politics could lead nations only to war. With regard to information media in the United States, how could they remain faithful to the principle of freedom of information when they were in the hands of Zionists? The question of the Palestine refugees was essentially a political one. To regard it from the humanitarian point of view was praiseworthy, but was becoming platitudinous, a stereotyped performance that was repeated every year. The United States should cease sending arms to Israel. Of the 16 or 17 million Jews in the world, only those were Zionists who had succumbed to brainwashing or had been persecuted. Palestine was a holy land for three monotheistic religions. The Zionists, whether millionaires or not, were nationals of both Israel and the United States and were goading the latter in order to perpetuate injustice. What had the Arabs done to the United States that it should continue to follow the mistaken Truman policy? If it persisted in its power politics, it would before long fall into decline, like ancient and recent empires.

33. Mr. DORON (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Jordan had turned the world upside down when he had associated fanaticism with Israel and good-neighbourly and friendly feelings with the Arab States. The Israel delegation had already refuted all those lies, but it wished to throw light on two specific points. First, the Israeli authorities were not seeking to obstruct UNRWA's action on the West Bank of the Jordan but rather to supplement it. Secondly, no sinister motive must be read into the decision taken by the Israeli authorities to make those who could afford it pay what was in any case a very modest fee for the treatment they received. For example, there was a fee of 55 cents for dental treatment and 60 cents for vaccination. Those who were unable to pay, persons suffering from contagious diseases, and children received free treatment. That measure had been adopted merely to put a stop to certain abuses. Anyway, as in the case of sanitary facilities, which the representative of Jordan had also mentioned, the question was a purely technical one and had nothing to do with the substance of the problem.

34. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he hoped that the sensitiveness displayed by the representative of the United States of America in connexion with the refugee problem would lead to a better understanding of the problem as a

whole. It was a truism to say that Palestine refugees deserved to live. Had not Christ said that man cannot live by bread alone? It was not enough that the United Nations and the United States, which was the richest Member of the Organization and held a considerable share of the responsibility for the existing situation, should ensure the survival of the Palestine refugees. That should be the beginning of the efforts of the United States, not the end.

35. The United Nations had proclaimed the right of Palestine refugees to return to their homes and decide their own future. By helping them to return, the United Nations would at the same time solve the problems of UNRWA which would become superfluous. By merely limiting the rights of the refugees to survival, an injustice was being done them which was as great as the one that it was claimed was being remedied.

36. While the Kuwait delegation appreciated the United States' generosity to the refugees, it could not be oblivious to what it had been doing besides. The United States representative had mentioned that his Government had given more than \$500 million to UNRWA over a period of 23 years. However, it had taken the President of the United States less than one hour to promise to Israel military aid amounting to \$2,000 million to help it keep the territories it had occupied and, against the wishes of the United Nations, prevent the Palestinians from returning home. In conclusion, he called on the United States to use its influence and its money in the cause of justice and to ensure thereby that Palestine refugees could enjoy their rights.

37. Mr. EVANS (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representatives who had insulted his country had presumably failed to understand the Chairman's request to members of the Committee to confine their remarks to the humanitarian problem before the Committee. The duty of feeding the hungry took priority over the political problem, the importance of which the United States delegation was in any case not trying to underestimate.

38. He condemned the attitude of the representative of Saudi Arabia, who, while the fate of thousands of children depended on the solution of UNRWA's problems, made no constructive suggestions, adopted a wholly negative attitude, made insulting accusations against the United States, in spite of the fact that during the 30 years he had resided in it he had not disdained its hospitality and generosity, and he had accused Mr. Truman, forgetting that he had been one of the founders of the United Nations and the promoter of the Marshall Plan. If the United States, like all other countries, had made mistakes, it had done so in all honesty and its democratic method of Government had lost nothing thereby.

39. The CHAIRMAN reminded members of the Committee that he had asked them to confine their remarks to the item under discussion.

40. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Israeli representative had evaded the questions asked of him on the measures taken by his country to deal with the sanitary facilities and the administration of the Gaza Strip, thereby endeavouring to minimize the importance of the matter despite the fact that the Commissioner-General had expressed his own reservations on the subject.

41. He had wanted to show how Israel not only obstructed UNRWA in its activities, but by adopting measures that were seemingly technical, endeavoured to modify the status of refugees in the occupied territories, and by so doing to absorb them.

42. He could not allow the Israeli representative to reject so lightly the accusations made against his country. It was the violence and the fanaticism of the Israelis which had made refugees out of the Palestinians and which had prevented them from exercising the right to return guaranteed to them by the United Nations and by their birth. That was where the substance of the problem lay and it was there that a radical change would have to be made.

43. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) regretted that the United States representative had shown annoyance and had made discourteous remarks about him. It was not always pleasant to hear the truth. Far from resenting what he had said, he could only feel sorry for him. The accusations he had made were not aimed at the United States of America as a country but at one of its Presidents, Mr. Truman, who in deciding on the partition of Palestine, had been the original cause of the refugee problem.

44. He wished to state also that he was not living on the bounty of the United States, whose Government he had refused to serve during the Second World War because his own country was not at war, just as he had more recently refused to accept Zionist money offered to him by the directors of the American television network. It was not the bounty of the United States that should be stressed, but rather the bounty of Asia and Africa since that was where the United States, while protesting against the rise in the price of petroleum, continued to draw its wealth.

45. If it was a fault to be born in one country, to be raised in another and to live in a third, how many American citizens would that not apply to?

46. All that he asked the United States, that had formerly been so eager to intervene in Viet-Nam, was to come to grips with the cause of the problem instead of pursuing a great Power policy which had caused the sufferings of the Arab people. He had represented several Arab countries in the course of his life and was conscious that by doing so he had served the pan-Arab cause. Like the United States which owed its greatness to the ethnic diversity of its population the Arab world was a culture which transcended boundaries.

47. The representative of the United States had mentioned the Marshall Plan as an example of the generosity of his country, but that Plan had been only a means of combating communism.

48. As an Arab poet had said, the lion was not smiling because it bared its fangs. The fine sentiments professed by the representative of the United States on the subject of refugees should deceive no one.

49. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait) thanked the Chairman for having reminded the members of the Committee that they should confine themselves to the item on the agenda and not, as the representative of the United States seemed to have understood, confine themselves to the humanitarian aspects of the item. His delegation was anxious to hear what the United States had to say on the substance of the problem.

50. The CHAIRMAN recalling his proposal to close the list of speakers the following day at 5 p.m., said that in the absence of any objection he would take it that that proposal was acceptable to all members of the Committee.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

880th meeting

Thursday, 8 November 1973, at 3.20 p.m.

President: Mr. Károly SZARKA (Hungary).

A/SPC/SR.880

AGENDA ITEM 43

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/SPC/163, A/SPC/L.273):

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General (A/9013);
- (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/9231);
- (c) Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/9187);
- (d) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/9155, A/9156)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to draft resolution A/SPC/L.273, pertaining to the humanitarian aspects of the Palestine refugee problem.

2. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) stressed the human and material cost of the Zionist policy of blotting out even the name of Palestine from the map and dispersing and humiliating the whole Palestinian people, half of whom it had obliged to live as refugees dependent on international charity. Yet only a fraction of the income from the usurped Palestinian lands and property would cover the total budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Most of the other half of the Palestinian people lived in their own country under conditions which took no account of human rights or human dignity. That situation had led the General Assembly, by its resolution 2443 (XXIII), to establish the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories and had culminated in the adoption, at the twenty-ninth session of the Commis-