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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 65: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/37/13, A/37/479)
- (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/37/591)
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- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/37/425 and Corr.1, A/37/426, A/37/427, A/37/488 and Corr.1, A/37/599)

1. Mr. KHAN (India) said that the laudable activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were only a temporary palliative. The Palestinian problem was basically political and not merely humanitarian and it would not be possible to put an end to the miseries of the Palestinian people until the root cause was tackled and a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict found through the implementation of the numerous General Assembly resolutions on that question, in particular, resolution 194 (III). Lasting peace could be achieved only by the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State.

2. However, his delegation was currently concerned by the humanitarian aspect of the Palestine refugee problem and the grave financial difficulties faced by UNRWA. The Commissioner-General had stated, in his introductory remarks, that the Agency's work of three decades had been undone in the three months of the Israel invasion of Lebanon and that the future of UNRWA's services to the Palestine refugees in Lebanon was not clear. Israel's incessant barbaric acts perpetrated against the Palestinian people and culminating in the naked aggression against Lebanon in June 1982 and the brutal siege of Beirut had shocked the international community, especially since Israel had aided and abetted the brutal massacre of helpless women, children and the aged in the camps of Sabra and Shatila.

3. In his statement to the Committee, the representative of Israel had drawn an unwarranted comparison between the exodus of Palestinian refugees and the movement of population between India and Pakistan during partition. He had not, however, mentioned that the masses of people moved from both countries to a land and country of their choice.

4. Israel's actions had seriously disrupted the humanitarian services provided by UNRWA through massive destruction of shelters, hospitals, clinics and schools. The Agency had already identified 7,000 refugees who had lost their shelters and would have to spend the winter in tents. His delegation shared other speakers' concern about the arrest and detention of UNRWA staff by the Israeli army in south Lebanon

(Mr. Khan, India)

and Israel and urged Israel to release the detainees and exercise the utmost restraint, in order to enable the Agency to carry out its programmes effectively.

5. Israel's continuous intransigence and aggressions had compounded the financial crisis faced by the Agency, and which the international community would have to bear the consequences. While the Commissioner-General must be complimented on reducing the deficit for 1982 to \$43.5 million by reducing staff, deferring of programmes and even phasing out the ration programme, it was gratifying to learn that the education programme was continuing and that about half of the Agency's schools had reopened. The projected deficit for 1983 was \$60.5 million, in addition to the \$21.9 million required for emergency programmes in Lebanon. Unless additional funds were made available to both the regular and the emergency programmes, the Agency would have to phase out essential programmes or declare itself bankrupt.

6. UNRWA was a stabilizing influence in the Middle East, and the maintenance of its programmes was essential for humanitarian and political reasons. Unfortunately, a small number of countries continued to shoulder the major portion of the financing of UNRWA. His delegation joined in the appeals of the Commissioner-General and the Working Group to those Governments that had not yet contributed to start contributing, to those Governments that had made relatively small contributions to contribute more generously and to those Governments in a position to do so to increase their contributions. The Indian Government had contributed regularly to the Agency from its inception and had increased its contribution in the form of cash and supplies and the provision of scholarships and training facilities for the displaced Palestinian people.

7. The people of Palestine were being deprived of fundamental human rights, even their very right to exist. Their sufferings as a result of Israel's activities over 30 years had only strengthened their determination to return to their homeland. Until then, peace, security and stability in the region would remain elusive. It was, therefore, not only the moral obligation of the international community to rescue UNRWA from its present financial difficulties but also its political responsibility to encourage efforts to attain peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian people had recovered their rights, their homeland and their State.

8. Mr. SHERIFIS (Cyprus) said that the tragic events of the past summer, set in motion by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, confirmed that the reports of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA could not be considered in isolation from the causes of the problem which had led to the establishment of the Agency 33 years earlier. While supporting the imperative need for the provision of medicines, food and shelter to the Palestinian refugees, his delegation emphasized their right to return and to have their own State. Until that happened, there would be no peace in the Middle East. In line with its consistent position on the Middle East, the Cypriot Government would continue to strive, together with the other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, within the context of the United Nations, to contribute to a just and lasting solution to the problem. It had recently hosted

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(Mr. Sherifis, Cyprus)

the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries on the Question of Palestine and had participated in the ministerial committee of nine non-aligned Foreign Ministers formed at that meeting, which had had a number of constructive contacts.

9. The Government and people of Cyprus felt close to the Palestinians not only out of humanitarian concern but also because they knew from experience the plight of a refugee who yearned to return to his homeland, since 40 per cent of its population were displaced persons.

10. However, pending the ultimate political solution, UNRWA must be supported by all so that it might continue to perform its humanitarian task. His delegation welcomed the co-ordination of all international organizations rendering assistance to the Palestine refugees and hoped that their concerted effort would be maintained and furthered.

11. In conclusion, he reiterated his Government's position on the question of Palestine, which was based on five principles: firstly, the question of Palestine lay at the heart of the Middle East problem; secondly, that any just and viable comprehensive settlement of that problem must recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and national sovereignty and the right of the refugees to return to their homes; thirdly, that it recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, so that its active role on a basis of equality was indispensable in all efforts to find a solution to the Middle East problem; fourthly, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area must be recognized and respected; fifthly, there should be total respect for the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. The Israeli authorities must withdraw speedily and unconditionally from all Arab territories occupied since June 1967.

12. Mr. AL-AQROUBI (United Arab Emirates) said that the fact that the United Nations discussed the subject of the Palestinian refugees year after year was a reaffirmation of its responsibility towards them. That responsibility stemmed from the circumstances which had accompanied their exodus and from the commitment of the United Nations to ensure their return to their homes and property. If it had not been for the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II), neither the Palestine issue nor the difficulties, suffering and problems to which it had given rise would have come into being. The States supporting Zionism at that time, under the leadership of the United States of America, had exerted all possible pressure on other States in order to make them vote in favour of that unjust resolution. They had not been deterred by any violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations or of the principles of international law which recognized the permanent and basic right of all peoples, including the Palestinian Arab people, to exercise their right to self-determination. When the domination of those States over the United Nations had come to an end when increasing numbers of third world States joined the Organization, it had become the duty of the General Assembly to correct its error and expiate the wrong it had done by restoring rights

(Mr. Al-Aqroubi, United Arab Emirates)

to those from whom they had been taken. Accordingly, the General Assembly had adopted resolutions calling for the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland to regain possession of their homes and property and to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to establish a sovereign State on the soil of Palestine.

13. The right of the Palestinian refugees to return was one supported by history, by the facts, by justice and by law. From the historical point of view, Palestine had not been a land without a people as the Zionists had claimed. From time immemorial, Palestine had been inhabited by numerous tribes which had come together in a single melting-pot, giving rise to the Palestinian Arab people. Thus, the presence of the Palestinian Arab people in the land of Palestine had been continuous and uninterrupted, unlike the Israelite tribes, which had been in Palestine for only 450 of the more than 5,000 years that they had been known to history and which had been preceded and superseded by a continuous Arab presence there.

14. From the factual point of view, at the time the British Mandate for Palestine had been granted, Muslim and Christian Arabs had accounted for 93 per cent of the population and Jews for only 7 per cent; 97.5 per cent of the land had been in Arab hands and only 2.5 per cent in Jewish hands. In spite of Jewish immigration encouraged by the British Government, at the time of the partition resolution in 1947 Jews had accounted for only 33 per cent of the population and only 8 per cent of the land had been owned by Jews.

15. With regard to justice, there was no right or law by which foreign Zionist immigrants could live on the land of others and enjoy property of which the legitimate owners had been deprived.

16. From the legal point of view, article 13, paragraph 2, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulated that everyone had the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country, and that right also applied to Palestinian refugees. The right of the Palestinians to return had been reiterated every year since 1948, when the General Assembly had adopted its resolution 194 (III), paragraph 11 of which stipulated the right of all refugees to return to Palestine. That right had been reaffirmed in an absolute manner by the General Assembly by its resolution 3236 (XXIX) on the question of Palestine. Their return, moreover, would not be to a vacuum but to the homes and property which had been left behind. The right to make use of that property and not to be deprived of it by the Israeli authorities was one asserted by justice and law. Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulated that every one had the right to own property alone as well as in association with others, and that no one should be arbitrarily deprived of his property. The sanctity and inviolability of the right of the refugees to their property were enshrined in General Assembly resolution 181 (II). Part I, Section C, Chapter 2, paragraph 8, of the Plan of Partition with Economic Union incorporated in that resolution stated that no expropriation of land owned by an Arab in the Jewish State would be allowed except

(Mr. Al-Aqroubi, United Arab Emirates)

for public purposes and that in all cases of expropriation full compensation as fixed by the Supreme Court would be paid previous to dispossession. The General Assembly had considered that paragraph a precondition for the declaration of the independence of Israel and, together with others, as part of the fundamental law. Part I, Section C, of the Plan of Partition stated that the provisional Government of each proposed State should make a declaration and that the stipulations contained in the declaration would be recognized as fundamental laws of the State and no law, regulation or official action should conflict or interfere with those stipulations, nor should any law, regulation or official action prevail over them.

17. Israel had falsely claimed, as had been reflected in the statement made by the representative of Israel to the Committee a few days previously, that the Palestinian refugees had left their homes and property by their own free will or at the instigation of the Arab leadership. That assertion was a slander, a lie and a falsification of history. Sir John Bagot Glubb had pointed out that those who left a place of their own free will did not do so carrying nothing but the clothes on their backs or with such haste that family members became separated and lost. He had concluded that the truth of the matter was that the majority of them had left in terror fleeing from the massacres. In an article in the Spectator of 12 May 1961, Erskine Childers had stated that he had been surprised on examining official Israeli statements on the Arab exodus, to find no evidence of the orders to leave which Israel had claimed were well documented.

18. It had been claimed that Arab radio stations had broadcast orders to leave, but no mention had been made of the dates, the names of the stations or the text of the orders. In 1958, as a guest of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Childers had requested to see the evidence, but none had been forthcoming. He had then decided to inquire into the matter, which had not been difficult to do since the BBC had recorded all Arabic broadcasts made in 1948. He had been able to examine those recordings, together with similar American recordings in the British Museum. No order, appeal or suggestion to leave Palestine had been broadcast from any Arab radio station inside or outside Palestine in 1948. There had, on the contrary, been orders and appeals to civilians to remain in Palestine broadcast by Arab radio stations. Even Jewish stations broadcasting in Arabic had made references to the Arab appeals to remain, and similar statements had been published in the Hebrew press. In The Jewish Newsletter of 9 February 1959, one of the early settlers in Israel, writing in reply to the false assertions made by an American rabbi concerning the Palestinian exodus, had stated that those who had witnessed the flight of the Palestinians could inform him how the Jews had impelled the Arabs to leave their cities and villages; some had been expelled by armed force and some by trickery and false promises.

19. Israel had not been content with what it had done to the refugees in 1948 but had gone on, in the course of its aggression of 1967, to expel for a second time a large number of those who had been living in the camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel had not even then been content but had repeated its crimes once more in south Lebanon and had prevented large numbers of civilian refugees who had been forced to leave their camps from returning, to say nothing of its violation of

(Mr. Al-Aqroubi, United Arab Emirates)

the human and legal rights of those who had remained through mass slaughter, arrest, detention, torture and the destruction of houses.

20. The responsibility of the United Nations towards the refugees included the provision of the necessary funds and resources for UNRWA to perform its duty towards them and to avoid any curtailment of the services offered to them as a result of the Agency's deficit. In the view of his delegation, the best way of doing that would be to amalgamate the budget of the Agency with the regular United Nations budget. It was strange that the States most opposed to that measure were those Western States, under the leadership of the United States of America, which bore the major responsibility for Israel's refusal to implement the resolutions calling for the return of the refugees and the handing over of the revenues derived from their properties. If such revenues, which many times exceeded in value the trifling contributions made to UNRWA, could be collected and handed over, there would be no need for the Agency to go on begging year after year and exposing itself to the threats of some of the contributing States. In that connection, his delegation strongly disapproved of the decision of the United States Government to reduce its contribution by \$15 million, the reasons for which it found unacceptable.

21. While his delegation was grateful for the detailed information contained in the Commissioner-General's reports on the situation of the refugees (A/37/13, A/37/479), it supported the observations made by a number of fraternal delegations concerning it, including the call for the relocation of the headquarters of the Agency to Beirut. His delegation had, however, one basic observation to make on the report and that was the fact that, unlike previous reports submitted by previous Commissioners-General, it was devoid of any reference to the requirements and desires of the refugees with regard to their return to their homeland. The refugees were not sheep and responsibility towards them could not be defined in terms of feeding them and preventing the spread of disease among them. They were men like other men and their horizons transcended food and medicine to include their national desires and aspirations and their established rights to return, to reclaim their homes and property and to realize their national aspirations. It would therefore be fitting for the Commissioner-General not to restrict his concern to food and medicine alone but to gain some understanding of the feelings of the refugees and to transmit them to the international community.

22. Mr. BENCHEKROUN (Morocco) said that, at first reading, the reports of the Commissioner-General might appear a dull list of facts and figures. However, the recent tragic events in Lebanon needed no elaboration. The Israeli representative's response to the criticism of the vast majority of the Committee had been the provocative statement that the Arab attitude to the refugee problem was an anachronism. The anachronism was the Israeli attitude to the Palestinians, whom it continued to see as refugees, who did not have the same aspirations and rights as the Israelis. After the events in Lebanon and the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, it might have been hoped that the Israeli representative would be less arrogant and perhaps make specific proposals on ways of repairing the damage and even of achieving a peace which did justice to both sides. Instead of that, he had compared the Palestinians who had been driven from their country by armed force and

(Mr. Benchekroun, Morocco)

hatred with the Jews from Arab countries whom zionism had enticed into a trap. It might well be that the so-called "oriental" Jews had become the majority in Israel but the representative of that country had omitted to say that the political, economic and cultural power still lay in the hands of the Ashkenazi minority. The Moroccans could hardly be accused of persecuting their Jewish compatriots when King Mohamed V, unlike many other Heads of State, had refused to carry out the Nazi instructions to persecute them.

23. The Israeli representative had accused the Arab leaders of living in the past. Yet they had proved, at their recent Summit Conference at Fez, that they understood some of the wishes of their adversary, whereas Israel wished to resuscitate a small kingdom of 2,000 years earlier at the expense of the legitimate rights of the indigenous inhabitants of the region.

24. The waves of protest in Israel itself against the Government's crimes in Lebanon proved that the Israelis were beginning to realize the catastrophe towards which their current leaders were pushing them and the image which those leaders had created for them by their intervention in Lebanon. He also wished to congratulate some Israeli and Western mass media on the courage and sense of duty shown at the beginning of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, without which the world might long have remained in ignorance. Those demonstrations and journalists' reports were an undeniable condemnation of the atrocities committed by the Israeli leaders. An Israeli journalist who had taken refuge in Israel from Argentine torture had recently written in the New Yorker that the Israelis should learn that the Palestinian identity could not be destroyed without harm to the the destroyer. Many other Jewish writers had denounced the criminal acts of the Israeli leaders.

25. The only excuse that international public opinion might have have for not denouncing Hitler's persecution of Jews earlier was perhaps its ignorance of the facts. That was not the case with regard to Israeli crimes against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, about which the Israeli leaders even boasted. Those extremist Zionists created the basis for anti-zionism.

26. The Arabs have not always fought zionism. At the end of the First World War, some had even sought to ally with it, because it was seen as a liberation movement for Jews and a victory of the spirit over ignorance and racism. To make of that ideology an instrument of coercion and domination of another people was to renounce any claim to the respect and acceptance of non-Jews. It was also to condemn the Israelis to isolation. When the force of arms no longer dominated and the unquestioning friend had become tired of paying and being blamed for their actions, the Israelis would have only one possible friend, their traditional, natural neighbours, the Arabs and the Palestinians.

27. Mr. SERAJZADEH (Iran) said that, more than 30 years after the establishment of UNRWA, no solution had been found to the Palestinian question. No one believed that the services provided by UNRWA could meet the needs of the Palestinian people or restore their usurped rights. The refugee problem was not merely one of food,

(Mr. Serajzadeh, Iran)

shelter or medical aid but concerned the bombardment and massacre of defenceless men, women and children. While the massacres of innocent Palestinians in remote villages such as Deir Yassin had remained undisclosed for some time, the criminal Zionists had now, supported by the United States and in close co-operation with the Phalangist and Haddad militias, committed a mass slaughter of defenceless men, women and children in the Sabra and Shatila camps in full view of the whole world.

28. Lebanon had been invaded; Palestinian refugee camps had been bombed; entire towns in south Lebanon had been destroyed; Beirut had been surrounded and mercilessly bombarded; women, children, babies, the elderly, the hospitalized, doctors and nurses had been killed, and the world had stood by and watched. The Palestinian forces had been compelled to leave Beirut, leaving Lebanese and Palestinian Moslems defenceless; the Summit Conference at Fez had been held in an atmosphere of submission to zionism; Zionist puppets in Lebanon had brutally massacred thousands of innocent Muslims in cold blood, and the world had stood by and watched. The nature of the Zionist final solution to the Palestinian issue had become clear; further massacres, more aggression and more expansion.

29. The people of Iran, as Muslims, naturally followed those tragic events in Lebanon with great concern. Although they had not expected any serious, positive reaction from the world at large, they had expected their Muslim brothers in Islamic and Arab countries not to remain indifferent. Although they were shocked by the recent genocide in Lebanon, they were not particularly suprised. The call had repeatedly been issued by Iran that the only solution to the Palestinian issue was the formation of a united Islamic front to fight against the aggressors and to liberate Palestine. It had repeatedly warned against the conspiracies of Camp David and had called upon Arab leaders not to endorse an American peace plan at Fez. Recent events in Lebanon had proved that Iran had been right all along in its stance against zionism. The solution to the Palestinian refugee problem did not lie in providing food and shelter or countries of second asylum where refugees were treated as second-class citizens. It was rather the political cause of the Palestinian problem, namely the continued, shameful existence of the spurious State of Israel, which had to be eradicated. His delegation did not underestimate the value of the services provided by UNRWA to the Palestinian refugees but it hoped that those services would not be used to cover up the negligence of the United Nations system towards the Palestinian cause.

30. Mr. HUSSAINI (Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization) read out a letter from a woman orthopaedic surgeon working at the Gaza Hospital in the Sabra-Shatila camp in Beirut which had appeared in the New Statesman of 29 October 1982. The writer had appealed for help for those who had survived the massacre, most of whom were women and young children. There were problems with housing, electricity and water, yet thousands had returned to live in the camp because they had nowhere else to go. There was a problem of livelihood, the breadwinners of many families having gone. Many women were soliciting in the streets, which was, in the local culture, the worst form of humiliation. While peace and prosperity were returning to Beirut, 250,000 people were living in utter misery. The writer, as a person coming originally from the third world, had seen

(Mr. Hussaini, Observer, PLO)

much poverty and suffering, but the situation in the camp was the worst she had ever witnessed. The people needed help and support and recognition of their status as human beings.

31. The Israeli murderers and war criminals were the last who should speak of helping the Palestinian refugees. They had destroyed Palestinian refugee camps and committed mass murder and genocide against unarmed Palestinians and had then seen fit to state before the Committee that they helped Palestinian refugees. The leaders of the Zionist entity, the war criminals and terrorists Begin and Sharon, claimed that they did not know and that they were not informed, the same excuses that had been heard at the Nuremberg trials. The Zionist murderers claimed that they also gave aid to the refugees as if that would absolve them of the murder of thousands of innocent Palestinians. The Palestinian people did not want their aid but wanted them out of their land, out of the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

32. Israeli policy in the occupied territories aimed at taking over Palestinian land, water resources, towns and villages. It sought to destroy or demoralize the Palestinian people by destroying their institutions. Prolonged curfews had been imposed on Palestinian refugee camps, houses had been destroyed there, and, in one case, even books had been burned.

33. In Palestinian universities and schools, military personnel had entered classes, beaten students and used tear-gas. Many senior university teachers and administrators had recently been expelled, 20 from Al-Najah University, 39 from Bir Zeit University and 15 from Bethlehem University. In Haaretz of 10 November 1982 an Arab member of the Israeli Knesset had accused the civil administration in the West Bank of aiming at the destruction of academic institutions by deporting instructors and students. On 20 October 1982 Haaretz had reported that Law No. 854 gave the Israeli military governor the authority to appoint and dismiss professors and students. One American and one British teacher at Bir Zeit had also been detained.

34. Those were just a few examples from Israeli sources of what was happening in the occupied territories and south Lebanon. He appealed to all mankind to help the Palestinian people until such time as they could return to Palestine to live with the Jews in peace and freedom.

35. Mr. BERTRAND (Joint Inspection Unit) informed the Committee that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had amended its programme of work for 1982 in order to comply with the request made in General Assembly resolution 36/462 that it should carry out a comprehensive review of the Agency's organization, budget and operations. So far, the Inspectors had studied many documents and files and had held consultation with the Commissioner-General and the UNRWA staff at Vienna, analysed information on the education and health programmes obtained from UNESCO and WHO and had studied in detail the Agency's personnel management procedures and policies. After the recent tragic events in Lebanon, the Inspectors had not wished to give UNRWA's staff, especially those in the field, an additional workload but had obtained useful information from UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

(Mr. Bertrand)

36. The Inspectors had not yet sufficient data to form a definitive judgement but felt that, in general, UNRWA's operations and cost-effectiveness were satisfactory. It was, naturally, always possible to improve the productivity of such a complex organization as the Agency and JIU would make pertinent recommendations in its report.
37. However, the sub-programme on education, to which over 60 per cent of UNRWA's resources were allocated, appeared efficient. With the help of UNESCO, the Inspectors had compared the statistical indicators with those of countries with a development level similar to that of the region covered by UNRWA and had found them similar to or higher than those of comparable countries.
38. With regard to personnel management, the Inspectors had been pleased to learn that the Agency was undertaking an in-depth review of its policy and procedures.
39. The Inspectors had not yet finished studying the Agency's programming and budgeting techniques but were sure that the persistent uncertainty of contributions made it very difficult for UNRWA to plan its activities.
40. The Inspectors were also studying means of making co-operation between the Agency and the other humanitarian bodies in the United Nations system more effective.
41. Although it was too early to state definite views on the Agency's organization, budget and operation, the preliminary work showed that, even if some improvement could be made, the general situation was satisfactory.
42. Mr. AL-ZAHAWI (Iraq) said that the statement made by the Zionist representative at the 26th meeting of the Committee, on 10 November 1982, had set a new record with regard to the number of falsehoods and fabrications usually found in Zionist statements. The Zionist representative had attempted not only to recast history in the mould of Zionist propaganda, but also to rewrite official documents and resolutions of the United Nations. The preposterous Israeli allegation that it was the Arab leaders who insisted that the Palestinians should remain refugees directly contradicted the evidence contained in numerous United Nations documents such as the report of the Technical Committee on Refugees, which had been established by the Conciliation Commission, and numerous statements made by Directors of UNRWA over the years. Those documents attested to the fact that it was the refugees' determination to insist on their right to repatriation or compensation and Israel's adamant refusal to allow the refugees to exercise their inalienable right to return that had kept the refugees in camps for so long. Mr. Henry Labouisse in his report as Director of UNRWA in 1954 (A/2717) had pointed out that the refugees must be given the choice between repatriation or compensation in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The Arab States had accepted that proposal, but Israel had rejected it outright as an infringement of its sovereignty and integrity.

(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

43. In referring to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 393 (V) in an attempt to blame the Arab countries for the refugee problem, the Israeli representative had in fact underscored Israel's responsibility for the failure to solve that problem. The Director of UNRWA indicated Israel's responsibility in his 1955 report (A/2978), paragraph 65 (a) of which stated that "Unless an opportunity is given to the refugees to choose between repatriation and compensation pursuant to paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, it will not prove feasible to carry out fully the intent of paragraph 4 of resolution 393 (V) and related resolutions concerning the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East". In a number of reports by the Directors of UNRWA over the years it had been repeatedly pointed out that the refugees had requested in particular the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and that the Government of Israel had taken no affirmative action in the matter of repatriation and compensation, thus impeding UNRWA's efforts to carry out its assigned task.

44. In his report to the fourteenth session of the General Assembly (A/4121) Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld had referred to General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and stated that: "The stand thus taken by the General Assembly would involve integration of refugees into the productive life of Israel as well as of the Arab countries in accordance with the choice of the refugees themselves." He had further commented: "No reintegration would be satisfactory, or even possible, were it to be brought about by forcing people into their new positions against their will. It must be freely accepted, if it is to yield lasting results in the form of economic and political stability".

45. In his last report to the General Assembly as United Nations Mediator for Palestine (A/648), Count Folke Bernadotte had stated that no settlement could be just and complete if recognition was not accorded to the right of the Arab refugees to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flowed into Palestine, thus threatening the permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who had been rooted in the land for centuries. He had further commented that the unconditional right of the refugees to make a free choice between repatriation and compensation should be fully respected and that the responsibility of the Provisional Government of Israel to restore private property to its Arab owners and to indemnify those owners for property wantonly destroyed was clear.

46. The refugee problem had persisted for 35 years because Israel had continued its aggressive policy of expulsion, pursuit and dispersal of the Palestinian people. The references which the representative of Israel had made to relevant United Nations resolutions was merely another ploy in his attempt to turn the truth upside down and blame the Arab countries for the plight of the refugees. The Zionists had obstructed the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) from the very beginning. The relentless Zionist policy of Jewish immigration to Palestine in order to expropriate the land and expel the Muslim and Christian Palestinians who had constituted the overwhelming majority of the population and had owned 97 per cent of the land was at the root of the Palestinian problem.

(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

17. The assertion of the Israeli representative that the first serious disturbances had broken out in Palestine following the United Nations resolution in 1947 to partition Palestine was simply not true. Palestinian resistance against Jewish settlers went back to the nineteenth century. The first skirmish had taken place in the Jewish agricultural colony of Petah Tigva in March 1886 when the new settlers had ordered the Palestinian peasants to stop using the pastures for grazing. Even a Jewish philosopher who had visited Palestine in 1891 had observed that the Jewish settlers treated the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, depriving them of their rights and offending them without cause. The Arabs had been forced to defend their rights and, as it had turned out, their very survival.
18. When the Palestinian resistance had turned violent in the spring of 1921 and the fighting had spread throughout the city of Jaffa, the British Government had appointed the Haycraft Commission to investigate the "disturbances". That Commission had found that the source of the bloodshed had been Palestinian anger at increased Zionist immigration and the Zionist goal of a national home in Palestine. The tide of Jewish immigration had risen dramatically from 9,000 in 1932 to 61,000 in 1935. The Palestinians had understood that at that rate they would be a minority in their own country within 10 years. By 1936, 21,000 Palestinian families had been driven off the land and the Zionists had begun to enforce their racist policy of hiring Jewish labour only.
19. The Palestinian rebellion against Zionist colonization and British repression of Palestinian resistance had reached such proportions that the British Government had been obliged to issue the White Paper of 1939, which promised a ceiling on Jewish immigration and some restrictions on Zionist land purchases with the vague statement that Palestine would become independent in 10 years.
20. The Zionists had considered the White Paper a betrayal by the United Kingdom, their imperial sponsor for more than 20 years. In the meantime, the Zionist underground army, the Haganah, had launched organized raids against the Palestinian community as part of the Zionist policy to drive the Palestinian people out of the territories which they wanted to appropriate for themselves. In 1942 the World Zionist Organization had adopted the so-called Biltmore Programme calling for the immediate establishment in Palestine of a Jewish commonwealth, the rejection of the White Paper of 1939, unrestricted Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, and the formation and recognition of a Jewish military force under its own flag.
21. On 3 May 1943, General Patrick Hurley, the personal representative of President Roosevelt in the Middle East, had reported to the President that the Zionist organization in Palestine had indicated its commitment to an enlarged programme for a sovereign Jewish State which would embrace Palestine and probably eventually Transjordan, the eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq, and Jewish leadership for the whole Middle East in the fields of economic development and control.
22. The Israeli representative had repeated the baseless Zionist allegation concerning the so-called responsibility of Arab leaders for the flight of the

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(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

refugees. That non-sense had been revealed as a total fabrication in 1961 when the Irish writer Erskine Childers had undertaken a thorough investigation of that allegation and had published his findings in an article entitled Other Exodus in The Spectator of London on 12 May 1961. After examining all official statements about the Arab exodus, he had been struck by the fact that the Israeli Government had never produced primary evidence of evacuation orders issued by the Arabs. He then had sought to test the undocumented charge that the Arab evacuation orders had been broadcast by Arab radio. Neither the records of the BBC, which had monitored all Middle Eastern radio broadcasts throughout 1948, nor the records of a monitoring unit of the United States had shown any order, appeal or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine by any Arab radio station inside or outside Palestine in 1948. On the contrary, the records revealed repeated Arab appeals, even outright orders, to the civilian population of Palestine to remain where they were.

53. Dr. John Davis, who had been the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for five years, had explained why the Palestinians had left. In his book The Evasive Peace he had written "The extent to which the refugees were savagely driven out by the Israelis as part of a deliberate master plan has been insufficiently recognized". Dr. Davis had then explained how the Zionist concept of a Jewish State was based on the removal of the indigenous Arab population from its homeland and described how that objective had been achieved by means ranging from expert psychological warfare to ruthless expulsion by force.

54. It was obvious from his memoirs Rebirth and Destiny of Israel that David Ben-Gurion had been as anxious to make Palestine clear of Arabs as Hitler had been to make the Reich clear of Jews. Nevertheless, the Israeli representative had informed the Committee that the same Mr. Ben-Gurion had sent Golda Meir to Haifa to plead with the Arabs not to leave. That highly diverting bit of information was a ludicrous fabrication. Ben-Gurion's official biographer, Michael Bar-Zohar in his book Ben-Gurion, had related that in July 1948, Ben-Gurion, describing the Zionist policy towards the refugees, had stated: "We shall do everything possible to ensure that they never return".

55. As for his emissary, Golda Meir, in an interview published in The Sunday Times of London on 15 June 1969, had flatly denied the very existence of the Palestinian people. The Zionist representative would have the Committee believe that that rabid racist, who had lost sleep wondering how many Arab babies had been born during the night, had been sent to plead with the Arabs of Haifa to stay. It was more likely that she had volunteered to supervise and hasten the expulsion of the Palestinians.

56. Contrary to the statement made by the Israeli representative, very few appeals had been made by Jewish leaders or Zionist authorities responsible for Jewish affairs to persuade Arabs to remain. Instead of responding to the unanimous international appeal to allow the refugees to return, the Zionists had expelled more and more Palestinians and denied them the right to return even in principle.

(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

57. In his book Rebirth and Destiny of Israel Ben-Gurion boasted of Zionist successes in expelling the Arab residents of towns and villages in 1948 while the British Mandatory had still been in Israel. On 23 April 1948 The Times of London had reported that on 22 April of that year the Zionists had attacked Haifa after midnight and occupied the streets and public buildings, causing many Arab residents to flee. One hundred Arabs had been killed and 200 wounded. Nevertheless, the Israeli representative had maintained that the sudden departure of the Arabs from Haifa had startled the Jewish population and had sarcastically spoken of Arab leaders requesting the transfer of 60,000 Haifa Arabs to neighbouring Arab countries.
58. In his book The Revolt: Story of the Irgun, Menachem Begin described how the panic brought about by the Deir Yasin massacre perpetrated by the Irgun terrorists on 9 April 1948 had caused a mass flight of Arab refugees which had soon developed into a maddened, uncontrollable stampede. Begin pointed out: "Of about 800,000 Arabs who lived in the present territory of the State of Israel, only some 165,000 are still there. The political and economic significance of this development can hardly be over-estimated".
59. In its issue of 3 November 1979, The Spectator of London had referred to the public admission in the memoirs of Yitzhak Rabin that, at least in one key area, a formal decision had been taken by Ben-Gurion himself to drive 50,000 Arabs out of their homes and into the area controlled by the Arab Legion.
60. That explained why there had been over 300,000 Palestinian refugees in adjacent Arab countries even before the British forces had left and before a single soldier from any Arab State had set foot on Palestinian soil. Meanwhile the Zionists had occupied territories reserved for the "Arab State" and the "International Zone of Jerusalem". Armies from the Arab States had entered Palestine at the urgent request of the Palestinians to rescue the remaining Palestinians and to defend what remained of the "Arab State" of Palestine. They had not invaded Israel as the Zionist representative had repeatedly alleged. When the Zionists spoke of the Arab armies invading Israel, it was obvious that what they considered as Israel was the whole of Palestine, and not just the Jewish State recognized by General Assembly resolution 181 (II).
61. The representative of Israel had alleged that the end of the fighting had seen the end of the Palestinian Arab exodus. That was simply not true, because the fighting had not been the major cause of the exodus. The cause had been and continued to be the Zionist policy of expulsion through terror, intimidation and economic strangulation. The forcible displacement of Muslim and Christian Palestinians had not ended with the termination of hostilities: it had continued even after the signing of the armistice agreement between Israel and neighbouring Arab States.
62. Thus, on 18 September 1950, General William Riley, UNTSO Chief of Staff in Palestine, had reported to the Security Council that on 2 September 1950 the

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(Mr. Al-Zahawi, Iraq)

Israeli military forces had rounded up some 4,000 Bedouin who had been living in the Negev and in and around the demilitarized zone of El Auja and driven them out of Israeli-controlled territory across the Egyptian international boundary into Egyptian territory. An investigation of that incident by the Chairman of the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission had revealed that the five Bedouin tribes concerned had lived in the Beersheba area under the British Mandate but had moved to a El Auja two years previously because of Israeli pressure; that, from 20 August 1950 onwards, the Israelis had conducted military operations to clear the area of Bedouin that, after driving them across the border, the Israelis had burnt the Bedouin's tents, crops and possessions; and that 13 Bedouin had been killed by the Israelis during those operations.

63. General Riley had also reported that, since March 1950 approximately 1,000 Arabs had been expelled by the Israelis across the demarcation lines into the Gaza Strip. Between 21 July and 11 September, 758 Arabs had been reported expelled from the vicinity of El Majdal across the demarcation lines into Egyptian territory. Investigations conducted by the Chairman of the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission on 4 September had revealed that the Arabs had not wanted to leave Gaza but had been required to sign a statement agreeing to leave and never return to Israel and abandoning all rights to the property they left behind.

64. Similar events had taken place in 1951 near the Syrian-Israeli border. In reports to the Security Council on 4 May 1951 and again on 16 August 1951, General Riley had stated that the villages of Baggara, Ghaunama and Es Samra and houses on Khoury Farm had been completely destroyed by the Israelis following the evacuation or flight of their Arab inhabitants, who had also lost their livestock and crops. Arab families had also been moved from the villages of Hamma and Ein Gev.

65. On 18 May 1951, in response to the Israelis' actions, the Security Council had adopted resolution 93 (1951) in which, inter alia, it decided that Arab civilians removed from the demilitarized zone by the Government of Israel should be permitted to return forthwith to their homes and that no action involving the transport of persons across international frontiers, across armistice lines or within the demilitarized zone should be undertaken without the prior decision of the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission. Thus, not only the General Assembly but also the Security Council had called on Israel to allow the Arabs to return. Israel, however, with United States collusion had violated all such resolutions.

66. Mrs. OULD DADDAH (Mauritania) noted from the report of the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit that UNRWA was operating most efficiently. She therefore reiterated her delegation's congratulations to the Commissioner-General on his excellent work and hoped that the international community would respond generously to his appeals for contributions.

67. Mr. LEVIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the representative of Iraq had alleged that there had been no Arab invasion of

(Mr. Levin, Israel)

Palestine. On 15 May 1948, however, the Government of Egypt had sent a telegram to the Secretary-General stating that, now that the British Mandate was ended, the Egyptian security forces were entering Palestine to restore order. On 16 May, the King of Transjordan had sent a telegram to the Secretary-General stating that his army had been compelled to enter Palestine in order to protect unarmed Palestinians from massacres similar to that which had occurred at Deir Yassin. The Security Council had responded by adopting a decision at its 295th meeting which asked the Arab Governments concerned on what grounds they had believed their forces entitled to enter Palestine and areas in which the Jewish population was in the majority.

68. Both the representative of the United Arab Emirates and the representative of Iraq had denied that Arab radio propaganda had been the cause of the Palestinian Arab exodus from Palestine. He recommended that they should read John Zimmerman's excellent work on radio propaganda in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The representative of Iraq had cited the Erskine Childers report as stating that the BBC had monitored all broadcasts in the area in 1948, but a senior BBC official had later asserted that no one could have possibly monitored all such broadcasts. Besides, Haganah radio had publicized the fact that the Arab exodus was due to Arab coercion and part of the Arab countries' intention of waging a war of extermination against the Jews in Palestine.

69. Contrary to the assertions of the representative of the United Arab Emirates, the Commander of the Arab Legion had stated, in May 1948, that Arab civilians had panicked and fled even before the hostilities reached them. The Near East Arabic Broadcasting Service, for its part, had stated in 1948 that the Arab Higher Committee had encouraged the Arab exodus. Again, in a newspaper interview in 1948, the Greek Archbishop of Galilee had said that the Arabs had fled in the belief that they would return to their homes soon, once the Jews had been crushed by the Arab armies. In another interview, the Secretary of the Palestine Higher Executive had said that the Arab exodus had been the result of the Arab policy of rejecting partition. Finally, the former Commander of the paramilitary Palestine Youth Organization had stated that the Palestinian Arabs had been easily led astray by their "gangster leadership" and herded into exile in the mistaken belief that they would return shortly, once the Arabs had defeated the Jews.

70. The representative of Iraq had questioned the veracity of his own statement that Golda Meir had been sent to Haifa to plead with the Arabs to stay. He wished to refer that representative to the book Golda, which clearly recounted how Golda Meir had gone to Haifa on Ben-Gurion's instructions and had found the city plastered with posters in which the Jewish population appealed to the Arab population to stay.

71. Mr. HAMMAD (United Arab Emirates), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out, in response to the Israeli representative's repeated claim that the Palestinian exodus had been caused by propaganda broadcasts by Arab leaders, that the Arab armies which had helped the Palestinians had come from Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The other Arab States had not yet become independent. In 1948, Transjordan had had no radio station, no broadcasts

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(Mr. Hammad, United Arab Emirates)

had been received in Palestine from Iraq, Saudi Arabia or Yemen, and it had been difficult to receive broadcasts from Egypt. That left broadcasts from Damascus and Beirut, which the BBC had, he was sure, been able to monitor in their entirety. The Israeli claim that the BBC could not have done so was unbelievable. It should also be remembered that, in 1948, very few people in Palestine had had radios, especially those living in rural areas.

72. Regardless of the foregoing and regardless of the real reasons for the Palestinian exodus, however, the main issue now was whether the Palestinians had the legal right to return to their homes. In accordance with article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, no one could be denied the right to return to his home just because he had left it. The international community had stated its views on the Palestinians' right to return or to receive appropriate compensation in a number of resolutions, such as General Assembly resolution 194 (III). In so doing, it had reflected the unanimous view of international public opinion on the subject. Only Israel claimed that the Palestinians did not have the right to return.

73. Mr. AL-ZAHAWI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the Israeli representative had mentioned the Near East Arabic Broadcasting Service as having reported Arab leaders' appeals to the Palestinian Arabs to leave Palestine. That radio service had been a British broadcasting station at the time, however, under direct British control and with no connection with Arab Governments. The Israeli representative had also cited a newspaper interview with the then Greek Archbishop of Galilee. In that interview, however, the Archbishop had simply been reassuring the Palestinians that they would be able to return, as anyone devoted to the well-being of his fellow citizens would have done.

74. The book Golda had been written by a woman who was heavily biased in favour of Golda Meir. How could her views be compared with statements actually made by Golda Meir herself? He would prefer to believe Golda Meir's own views as published in respectable British publications.

75. Mr. LEVIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that Arab representatives had first claimed that there had been no Arab broadcasts calling on the Palestinian Arabs to leave Palestine and then that there had been no Arab radio stations anyway. Of course, he did not deny that the Near East Arabic Broadcasting Service had been British, but there had been other radio stations which had broadcast the Arab leaders' appeals and statements. The latter had also been relayed by word of mouth. He reiterated his recommendation that those representatives should read John Zimmerman's work on the subject, which proved that various Arab leaders had admitted to making such broadcast appeals to the Palestinian Arabs.

76. Mr. HUSSAINI (Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, recalled that in 1948, he had been seven years old and living in west Jerusalem where his father had been a professor. Early in April 1948, shots had been fired at his house, and phone calls had been received

(Mr. Hussaini, Observer, PIO)

threatening the family if they did not leave. His father had decided to take the family to Aleppo until the trouble died down, and they had gone, leaving everything they had, in the belief that they would be returning shortly. The same had been true of thousands of Palestinians. As it had turned out, the family's house had been looted, including his father's library of 30,000 books, which had been given to the Hebrew University. Palestinians had been forced to leave Haifa and Jaffa as those cities burned, fleeing by boat or on foot over the mountains, many of them dying on the way, to the refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria. Many Palestinians from Galilee had fled to south Lebanon. Today, when they returned to visit their relatives in Galilee, the Israeli authorities forced them to return to south Lebanon where their camps lay in ruins. Those refugees insisted that they did not want to stay in the camps but to return to live with their relatives in Galilee, to return to their fields and homes and to live in peace with the Jews. Palestinian refugees everywhere had the right to return. He himself had the right to return to Jerusalem, to be able to teach without harassment by the Israeli authorities and to see his children live in peace with Jewish children.

77. Mr. HAMMAD (United Arab Emirates), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, observed that the Israeli representative had yet to answer the main question. Whatever the circumstances of the Palestinians' exodus, he wished to know on what basis Israel now refused them the right to return in accordance with the principles of justice, equity and law and with international public opinion and United Nations resolutions. The Special Political Committee would soon be voting on a draft resolution on the Palestinians' right of return, initiated as usual by the United States delegation. Only Israel would be opposing that resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 62: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued):

(b) SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/SPC/37/L.7, L.9) (continued)

78. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to document A/SPC/37/L.9 containing the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.7. In the second line of paragraph 8 of the financial implications, the figure "97,500" should be amended to read "97,900", while in the last line, the figure "119,900" should be amended to read "120,300".

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.