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Chairman: Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Fukushima (Japan), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 31

Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/5136, A/5214, A/5337; A/SPC/74, A/SPC/L.89 and Add.1, A/SPC/L.90) (continued)

1. Mr. ZABARAH (Yemen) observed that the Committee once again had before it the annual report (A/5214) of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), an agency which had been established as a temporary measure nearly fourteen years ago and which appeared to have become a permanent feature of the United Nations. During all that time, no progress had been made towards a solution of the refugee problem. The responsibility for that impasse fell squarely on Israel, which had consistently opposed the return of the refugees and the restoration of their property, notwithstanding the successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Was the conclusion to be drawn from Israel's defiance that it had succeeded in subverting the collective will of the United Nations? The Assembly had already compromised the principles of the Charter and forfeited all claim to morality in 1947 when it had recommended, by its resolution 181 (II), the partition of Palestine contrary to the wishes of the vast majority of the inhabitants. Those who had supported the creation of a "Jewish State" should have heeded the explicit warnings given them at the time by spokesmen for the Arab people of Palestine and the Arab States before committing that fatal error. Yet the Arab people of Palestine, strengthened by the support of all the Arab peoples, was as determined today as it had been in the past to recover their homeland and live there as a sovereign nation, despite the untold hardships and sufferings they might have to endure. In due time, they would exercise that inalienable right, for it was not subject to negotiation. His delegation had nothing but contempt for those who accused the Arab countries and their leaders of exploiting the refugee problem for selfish ends. The attempts made to prevent the party most directly concerned from being heard not only demonstrated the bad faith of the Zionists and their hatred for the

people of Palestine, but betrayed their fear that the Arabs of Palestine might actively play their rightful part in the international community. The just demands of the Palestine Arab delegation were the only possible basis for discussion.

2. Pending a just and lasting solution, it was essential to adopt the following palliative measures: the mandate of UNRWA should be extended until the United Nations decided to repatriate the refugees; the additional funds required by the Agency should be charged to the United Nations budget; and a custodian should be appointed for Arab property in Israel. Some of the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.89 and Add.1 calling for direct negotiations apparently believed that such a solution would lead to a peaceful settlement of the problem. In his view, they had made a basic error, and he urged them not to proceed further until they had weighed the following considerations.

3. The Arabs of Palestine and not the Arab States were the principal party concerned. Furthermore, the Arab States would continue to refuse to recognize the sovereignty of Israel because it represented a foreign body in the area; it would have to be removed eventually and would suffer the same fate as other colonial forces. The Middle East was an Arab sphere of influence, and it was the Arabs who would determine its future and destiny. Recent events should have been a lesson to those who refused to recognize that fact. Israel was in bad faith in urging negotiations with the Arabs; its sole purpose was to regularize and make legitimate its illegal occupation of Palestine and prepare for further aggression as a step towards enlarging the area under its control. In conclusion, he emphasized that instead of creating more despair among the Arabs of Palestine, the United Nations should endeavour to win their confidence by upholding law and justice.

4. Mr. GABITES (New Zealand) expressed regret that the debate had become so standardized and that the same familiar and often irrelevant statements were being repeated. His delegation took exception to some of those irrelevancies and, as a country which had given asylum to refugees from nazism, it supported the views expressed by the delegation of Denmark at the 364th meeting. He was, however, very glad that the debate offered him an opportunity to pay a tribute to the Commissioner-General for the clear and concise report he had submitted to the Assembly. Over the years, the New Zealand delegation had consistently tried to emphasize those aspects of the situation which it regarded as hopeful. It had always been encouraged by the beneficial and constructive activities being undertaken by UNRWA and felt that the Agency was to be congratulated on the excellent work it had done in the past year, in particular, in developing educational facilities for the refugees. It would be very unfortunate if international assistance to the refugees was terminated as long as there was no doubt that

the need for it remained. The New Zealand delegation would therefore support an extension of its mandate. However, it had been perturbed to hear from the Commissioner-General that if that mandate were extended beyond 30 June 1963, the Agency would have to receive an increase of \$3 million in regular contributions from States, if the youth programme was not to come to a halt. In the opinion of the New Zealand delegation, that difficulty was not likely to be met unless there was a substantial increase in the number of countries contributing to UNRWA.

5. The New Zealand Government had consistently maintained a very high level of contributions—in proportion to the country's population—and its contribution of \$1,735,800 placed it in seventh place among contributors. As the chairman of the New Zealand delegation had recently pointed out in the Fifth Committee (968th meeting), the Government and people of New Zealand were moved by the belief that it was their duty to look beyond New Zealand's immediate self-interest whenever they were called upon to allocate funds from the national budget for peace-keeping operations and humanitarian endeavours. New Zealand's readiness to contribute to UNRWA rested on those principles. Insinuations that the contributing countries were using blackmail by threatening to stop contributing if the refugees continued to reject a so-called solution of the problem were unfounded. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the clothing, equipment and money donated by the people of New Zealand through non-governmental groups were of greater value than their Government's contribution. That was a sufficient illustration of the humanitarian feeling of some countries which were far removed geographically from the scene. Obviously, all those who contributed voluntarily to the refugees were likely to become disillusioned if such irresponsible allegations continued to be made.

6. The basic problems of the refugees could not, however, be resolved either by an increase in the Agency's budget or by UNRWA itself. The Commissioner-General had made that point clear in paragraph 12 of his report. He had stated that the virtually fruitless outcome of work projects designed to resettle the refugees and of broader efforts undertaken under other auspices to negotiate a settlement of the Palestine problem strongly suggested that those efforts had been unacceptable to the inhabitants of the region (refugees and non-refugees) and to the Governments representing them. In the Commissioner-General's view, the feelings of the Arab people remained unchanged and it would be better for the time being not to undertake any significant resettlement projects. However, that did not mean that the people did not want the economic development of the region; on the contrary, they did want it, at an accelerated rate, but not in the context of refugee resettlement. The New Zealand delegation found this assessment by the Commissioner-General regrettable in some respects, although for reasons other than those given by the Libyan delegation (367th meeting), but at least it had the merit of recognizing realities and of emphasizing the need for parallel efforts outside the scope of UNRWA to reach an over-all political settlement. As the Commissioner-General had said some years before, the Agency's role was to maintain a climate in which the forces which could solve the problem might work effectively. In that connexion, the representative of New Zealand wished to comment on draft resolution A/SPC/L.90, which proposed to

appoint a custodian for Arab property in Israel. In his view, the adoption of that proposal would not advance matters at all. It was a partisan proposal which one of the parties was quite unable to accept and which was therefore most unlikely to improve the climate to which the Commissioner-General had referred. Moreover, the New Zealand Government continued to believe that, in a matter where there was some right on both sides, the General Assembly should not simply endorse the views of one side at the expense of the other.

7. General Assembly resolution 194 (III) was the key declaration of principle in relation to the refugees. He would remind the Committee of what the New Zealand representative had said on that subject at the sixteenth session (319th meeting), when he had pointed out that the precise wording of the resolution was less important than the element of justice to which it sought to give expression: the right of the refugees to return to a normal life through some form of choice between repatriation and resettlement with compensation. He had added that those choosing repatriation would return to the State of Israel, where they would have to live, in the terms of operative paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), at peace with their neighbours. For that reason the New Zealand delegation thought that the problem would never be solved unless greater attention was given to the obligations of the parties concerned. Those obligations were clearly stated in resolution 194 (III) and in resolution 512 (VI), in which the General Assembly recognized that the Governments concerned had the primary responsibility for reaching a settlement.

8. The Arab States obviously had an obligation to drop their pretence that the State of Israel did not exist. Conversely, the State of Israel had an obligation to make itself acceptable to its Arab neighbours. If those obligations were taken seriously, the whole question of the rights of the refugees would be seen in a more realistic and up-to-date perspective. It would thus be easier for both sides to take practical steps to improve the situation of the refugees. For example, the Arab States should encourage the refugees to establish self-support projects under the auspices of UNRWA; much more could be done along such lines, without prejudice to the ultimate choice of repatriation or compensation. Israel, for its part, could prove its good intentions and provide more convincing evidence of its desire to live at peace with its neighbours by making provision for the full compensation of those refugees who might not wish to live in Israel and by offering a significant number of refugees the opportunity to return to their homes, in co-operation with UNRWA and on the understanding that their repatriation would be subject to the normal requirements of national security. That condition was fundamental, for naturally the refugees repatriated to Israel should be willing to be good citizens and should have the same rights and the same duties as their fellow citizens.

9. Turning to the work of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, the New Zealand delegation observed that the Commission could play only a very limited role in the absence of any desire on the part of the parties concerned to reach a settlement. It was therefore short-sighted, to say the least, to blame the Commission for the present state of affairs. In the past two years, the Commission had embarked on what might yet turn out to be a promising line of approach by initiating fresh attempts at con-

ciliation. He hoped that the Commission would be given an opportunity to continue its efforts to discover, in the words of the United States representative at the 365th meeting, what might possibly work in the present situation. In an address at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore on 2 December, the Secretary-General had spoken of "the fact of bi-polarity in international relations" which had generated political tensions, and of a certain view of the world where compromise was betrayal and where alliances were based on mutual fear. Those words were pertinent to the situation in the Middle East, and the lesson was obvious.

10. Mr. USHER (Ivory Coast) wished first to pay a tribute to the dedication and humanitarian spirit of the UNRWA staff. The Commission-General's report (A/5214) clearly indicated what the Agency had been able to do and referred in guarded terms to the difficulties confronting it.

11. The United Nations was once again considering the complex problem of the Palestine refugees. The parties concerned had passionately reaffirmed their respective positions. Far from proposing a settlement, both parties rejected the responsibility for the Israel-Arab war. The United Nations was not called upon to sit in judgement: its only task was to maintain the peace by applying a peaceful method of settlement to every dispute. His delegation was convinced that, if that purpose was to be achieved, an attempt must be made to observe strict neutrality in the dispute.

12. It would soon be fourteen years since thousands of persons had left their homes to live in camps. What was the cause of that exodus? Before and during the British Mandate, Jews and Arabs had lived together in Palestine. They had not lived together without friction. Attacks by both sides had been frequent, and soon insecurity had prevailed in the area. The battle of Jaffa had led to such panic that almost 600,000 Arabs had left the country, although the Jewish authorities had appealed to them to remain in their homes, and 150,000 had remained. What was the point of seeking to fix responsibilities in a matter in which, in fact, nobody was innocent? One fact, however, was incontrovertible: the 40,000 children born to the refugees each year grew up with hatred and a desire for vengeance.

13. A number of countries, it was true, were attempting to alleviate the misery of the refugees by their contributions. The annual budget of UNRWA was approximately \$40 million, or almost the amount of the annual budget of many African countries with 600,000 to 5 million inhabitants. Yet that budget was inadequate, because it was distributed and not used for productive investments. One solution would be to create opportunities for remunerative employment and to develop economic self-sufficiency in accordance with paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). Some contended that would mean solving the Palestine problem by settling the refugees permanently in the areas in which they lived. Why would that be so outrageous? The majority of refugees had not left the area which had been Palestine before the partition and the Israel-Arab war. The Gaza Strip, the Jordanian part of Jerusalem, the areas of Hebron, Nablus and Jericho were in Palestine. Consequently, without prejudging their rights or the final settlement of the problem, the refugees could agree to develop the area in which they lived. The real solution would be to provide them with the means of becoming self-supporting and

living on the fruits of their labour. Yet nobody wanted that solution, as the report of the Commissioner-General indicated.

14. For some, the refugee problem was a trump card which they would play at the appropriate time; for others, it was an instrument of their policy of maintaining the world balance of power—all at the expense of the refugees, who were pacified by illusions. But it was impossible to deceive all the people indefinitely.

15. Apparently, the real problem was not the refugee problem. If that had been the only problem, a solution would have been found with a little good will on both sides. The real problem was the continued refusal to recognize the 1947 resolution (181 (II)) on partition.

16. Solutions had been proposed which would consist in combating Zionism, making the Arabs the masters of Palestine, applying only paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), and in the meantime appointing a custodian to administer the property of the refugees. Paragraph 11 recognized that refugees wishing to return to their homes had the right to do so and that those choosing not to return were entitled to compensation for their lost or damaged property; it also imposed on the refugees the duty of living at peace with their neighbours. Lastly, damage should be made good by the Governments or authorities. The difficulties which occurred in connexion with the application of paragraph 11 arose from the interpretations placed upon it. If the spokesmen of the Arabs of Palestine had been treated as petitioners, his delegation would have asked them whether the refugees intended, on returning to Israel, to become assimilated to Israel nationals. The Ivory Coast delegation had the impression that, in the opinion of some, paragraph 11 gave the Arab refugees the right to make themselves the masters of Palestine. That was what Israel believed, and for that reason Israel considered its existence threatened.

17. In asking for the application not only of paragraph 11 but of resolution 194 (III) as a whole, his delegation wished to explain how it understood that paragraph. In its view, the use of the words "their homes", in the plural, indicated that the reference was to houses and estates, rather than to the Palestinian homeland. Moreover, by imposing on Governments or authorities the duty of paying compensation in accordance with international law, the paragraph confirmed the recognition of the existing Government. Furthermore, during the debate, paragraph 11 had not been quoted in its entirety. That paragraph dealt with repatriation, resettlement and economic rehabilitation. Accordingly, a formal commitment to live at peace with their neighbours must be secured from the refugees, and they must be assured of peace in return. Lastly, there should be negotiations with the States in which the refugees lived, in accordance with operative paragraph 5 of resolution 194 (III). His delegation could not allow some delegations to quote out of context the provisions favourable to their own line of argument.

18. The immigration of Jews into Israel could not be prevented, not only because such immigration was one of the purposes of the partition resolution but also because immigration policy was a matter within the domestic sovereignty of States. Although his country opposed the racial policy of some States such as South Africa but did not address the same criticisms

to Israel, it was wrong to conclude from that fact that it opposed the faults of South Africa and not those of Israel. For Israel must not be confused with South Africa. In South Africa, the blacks were penned up in reserves; they could not make their voice heard at the United Nations, and they had no hope of receiving help from abroad. Yet they did not demand the destruction of the South African State; they simply asked for the same civic and political rights as were enjoyed by the white minority of European origin. If the Arabs demanded equality of rights, the Ivory Coast would support them.

19. It had been proposed that a United Nations custodian should be appointed to administer the property of the refugees (A/SPC/L.90); but how could a single person deal with property that was scattered all over the country, and what would be his guiding principles? Moreover, the United Nations main purpose was the maintenance of peace; it was not a commercial enterprise. The delegation of the Ivory Coast felt that that solution, too, was unrealistic. In addition, it would be necessary, as a preliminary step, to start negotiations with Israel, since it was an independent and sovereign State; otherwise the solution could not be applied and would not change the situation of the refugees.

20. All past efforts to isolate the problem of the refugees from the Palestine question had been doomed to failure, which showed that a solution of the refugee problem that would be equitable for all parties could be provided only by a final and peaceful settlement of the Israel-Arab conflict. It was appropriate to restate certain guiding principles. The United Nations had decided that Palestine was to be divided into two independent sovereign States, one Jewish and one Arab. The Jewish State existed *de facto* and *de jure*; its name was Israel. Under the resolution on partition (181 (II)), the Arabs living outside the Israel part of Palestine were free to establish their own State or to sign agreement for integration with any States of their choice. On the basis of resolution 194 (III), Israel should grant Israel nationality to the Arabs who were or had been living on its territory. That was the effect of the 1947 resolution on partition. In that connexion, he pointed out that, contrary to what one African representative had stated, that resolution was not colonialist-inspired. It had been a Commission of the General Assembly,^{1/} composed of small European, Latin American and Asian States—Africa alone had not been represented—which had proposed two plans, one for the establishment of two separate States^{2/} and the other for the creation of a federal State.^{3/} Later, a Committee of the General Assembly^{4/} had recommended the creation of two separate States and the General Assembly had adopted the resolution on partition (181 (II)).

21. In all objectivity, it should be recognized that both the Jewish and the Arab communities at least had the same right to Palestine. For, as history showed, Israel was the third Jewish State to have existed in Palestine. At the time of the Maccabees, the entire territory had been called Judea. The Romans had defeated Israel after a struggle which had lasted a hundred years and they had called that part of the

Levant Palestine in order to efface the name of Judea for ever. The Jews had not really emigrated from Palestine until the Christian persecutions in the fourth century. During the crusades and the Turkish domination, Jewish communities had remained in Palestine. Moreover, the Jews who had emigrated had always intended to return to their country. Zionism was a return to Zion, the hill on which Jerusalem was built. The Jews who had remained in Palestine had believed in the biblical prophecy that Israel would be restored. The genocide committed by the Nazis and the plight of the survivors in the camps of Europe had led to the emergence in the Jewish community of Palestine of groups like the Stern gang, Irgun, the Jewish Agency, and Haganah, which had been a real secret State within a still colonial Palestine. In *Le conflit judéo-arabe*, Razak Abdel Kader^{5/} pointed out that the Jewish minority had developed to such an extent that it had become the most advanced and most important social, economic, political and military element, not only in Palestine but in the whole Middle East. In taking its decision in 1947, the Assembly had borne all those factors in mind. How could a decision be called in question when it had established an irreversible situation? To link the fate of the refugees to a misunderstanding of the situation was to prolong their misery.

22. War could not be considered a solution. If an Arab Palestine were to be established by force, it would not survive, because force begets force. Moreover, war was not a domestic problem; the whole world was involved. There was, therefore, no alternative but to negotiate. The procedure for the peaceful settlement of disputes was laid down in the Charter. Israel was asking to negotiate, but the Arabs were refusing on the ground that to do so would be to recognize the State of Israel. In the view of the delegation of the Ivory Coast, the Arabs had already recognized the existence of Israel by signing the General Armistice Agreements with it. Surely they could negotiate a peace with the same people with whom they had negotiated an armistice.

23. The delegation of the Ivory Coast realized that the difficulties resulted from national susceptibilities and from the gulf that separated the opposing points of view. It wished to congratulate the Conciliation Commission on the efforts it had made, particularly to unfreeze the refugees' bank accounts. However, it would like to see representatives of African and Asian States on the Conciliation Commission; they would not be arbiters of course, but would simply lend their good offices to bring about a rapprochement between the Israelis and the Arabs.

24. His delegation wished to apologize if it had hurt anyone's feelings. It was not biased against anyone. Many Arab countries had been comrades of the Ivory Coast on the road to independence, for they had been colonized by the same country. The Ivory Coast delegation had in mind, among others, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania. The Ivory Coast maintained diplomatic relations with Arab countries and its population included many Arabs. It had maintained relations with Israel for only two years, but it had come to esteem the people of Israel through their leaders. The attitude of the Ivory Coast, moreover, was not subjective. It was in favour of negotiation in order to avoid war and the arms race. But first and foremost came the problem of the refugees. It was true that the Israel authorities had asked the

^{1/} United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.

^{2/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Supplement 11, vol. I, chap. VI.*

^{3/} *Ibid.*, chap. VII.

^{4/} *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Palestinian Question.

^{5/} *Cahiers libres* No. 20-21 (Paris, François Maspero, 1961).

Arabs not to leave their homes and had assured them that there was room for everyone in an independent State; but the Arabs had been seized by panic and had fled. Politics had taken a hand, and distrust had become firmly rooted. The delegation of the Ivory Coast was convinced that if that distrust could be dispelled, the Israel authorities would be able to work out a satisfactory solution with the Arabs. If there had been room for them before they had left, there must still be room for them. All the solutions that had been proposed seemed opportunistic. The only way out was to negotiate an over-all solution.

25. Mr. CHANG (China) said that it was to be regretted that after fourteen years, the United Nations had not yet found any acceptable solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees. Meanwhile, the refugees continued to suffer; but the psychological damage inflicted on them was even more serious, as the Commissioner-General of the Agency had pointed out in his report (A/5214). That problem had naturally created bitterness and hatred between the Arab States and Israel, and the gulf between them was very wide. Could it be bridged by direct negotiation? Negotiation was, of course, a Charter principle, but his delegation did not think that in the present circumstances negotiations would be fruitful. Not only were negotiations which were doomed to failure from the very start futile, they might even be dangerous, because their failure would only accentuate the animosity which existed between Israel and the Arab States.

26. It had been said that the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) were the key principles in relation to the refugees. The Chinese delegation regretted that they had not yet been applied, for confidence and goodwill, without which there could be neither peace nor harmony in the Near East.

27. Meanwhile, the Chinese delegation was prepared to support any practical measure which might be proposed to help UNRWA alleviate the sufferings of the refugees. Considering the magnitude of the problem and the paucity of the means at the Agency's disposal, the Commissioner-General was to be congratulated on all that he had achieved.

28. Mr. ATAULLAH (Pakistan) thanked the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his report and paid a tribute to him and to his staff for the dedication with which they were carrying out their humanitarian task.

29. The tragic lot of hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees, exiled from the homes of their ancestors, was a direct result of the creation of Israel, and therefore of the resolution on partition. As the Chairman of the Pakistan delegation had said in the Security Council in 1953,^{6/} under that resolution, which was contrary to every canon of justice and fair dealing in defiance of the purposes and principles of the Charter, and in complete violation of solemn pledges, a country with a settled population and ancient institutions had been handed over to alien immigrants who could claim no tangible connexion with it for 1,800 years and who shared neither culture nor outlook with the people of the country. What had happened in consequence had been bound to happen and the era of conflict, hostility and human suffering which had been inaugurated was the responsibility, not of the Israelis or the Arabs, but of those who, by design or over-persuasion, had given their support to a decision which in its conception had been inequitable.

30. It was therefore the duty of the United Nations to continue its assistance to the Palestine refugees until they were able to resume their own way of life in accordance with their freely expressed wishes and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The term of office of UNRWA must be prolonged and it must be provided with the funds needed to continue its task, in particular, for the purposes of education, vocational training and teacher training. The influence wielded by the great Powers in favour of the resolution for partition imposed a moral obligation upon them to assume the greater part of the financial burden; nevertheless all Member States should respond to the appeal of the Commissioner-General, according to the resources and their share of complicity.

31. The Pakistan delegation was one of the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.90, which requested the appointment of a United Nations custodian for the administration and protection of Arab property of which the refugees were the owners in Israel and the use of the income from that property for the benefit of the refugees, pending a definitive solution. The representative of Israel was opposed to that measure which, according to him, would be an infringement of the sovereign rights of the State of Israel. But that State had established itself by force and it maintained itself by force. It had been admitted into the United Nations on the faith of a presumption which had been belied by events; to the Palestine Arabs, it was and remained an intruder which had through guile, force and oppression possessed itself of their lands and turned the lawful inhabitants into homeless vagabonds and derelicts. Israel was ill-advised to appeal to international law after having, in defiance of that law, of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man dispossessed an entire nation of its land and built a State on the spoils. If the United Nations had the right to intervene to defend the rights of man against the racist policy of the South African Government, it could with equal right condemn the acts of aggression committed by Israel against the Palestine Arabs.

32. In seeking a solution to the situation it was necessary to take into account above all the desire, freely expressed, of the refugees themselves. To act otherwise would be to commit a breach of the provisions of the Charter and of the recognized principles of democracy and self-determination and to create a threat to the peace and stability of the East. The refugees persisted in demanding the application of the provisions of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Those provisions which had remained a dead-letter until today gave the refugees the choice between repatriation and compensation. Since 1948 they had been reaffirmed by several other resolutions. But Israel refused obstinately to apply them and in such circumstances it was paradoxical to hear the Heads of certain States greet as the champion of liberty and democracy that State of Israel the very existence of which, founded upon the occupation by force of an Arab country and the expulsion of the immense majority of its population, was a flagrant denial of the principles of liberty and democracy. If one were to accept the territorial claims, which the Zionists based upon a biblical past, a mythical assumption from ancient history, one would soon end by re-drawing the map of the world. Nobody could fail to be moved by the recital of the atrocious suf-

^{6/} See *Official Records of the Security Council, Eighth Year, 640th meeting, para. 33.*

ferings inflicted on the Jews by the Nazis but it was equally unjust to demand that the Arabs should expiate the crimes of Hitler in which they had taken no part.

33. The establishment in Palestine of a Zionist State, which far from consenting to return their houses and properties to the expelled Arabs even refused them the right to go back and live in the Jewish State, was equivalent to the worst forms of colonialism. The delegations that professed impartiality and realism should try to place themselves in the same situation as the Palestine Arabs. All that the latter demanded was that the principles of the Charter and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be applied to them, together with the resolutions of the United Nations which confirmed the right of all peoples to self-determination. They expected that decisions would be taken and enforced fairly and justly with a view to promoting the welfare and prosperity not only of the Jews but of all alike, so that the United Nations could keep the confidence of all the States and that peace and stability could once more reign in the Holy Land.

34. The Israelis continued to profess peaceful intentions and to ask for a settlement by negotiation as they had done already in 1953, after their dastardly attack on the innocent population of the Arab village of Qibya. As the representative of Pakistan had said at the time,^{7/} the peace offered by Israel was not founded upon the return of the refugees to their homes, nor upon the restitution of their lands and property, claims which Israel had constantly rejected. Israel restricted itself to offering its help in installing the refugees in Arab countries whose economy was already disrupted by the influx of the Palestine refugees. Israel claimed to base its action upon the General Assembly resolution which it had been the first to reject and sought to confront the Arabs and the United Nations with an accomplished fact with a view to demanding subsequently that those facts should be confirmed by a peace treaty. Nothing could guarantee that Israel would respect any peace treaty which it might sign. Israel was not a weak and harassed people but a dynamic country of great wealth and many resources which had to deal with a constant flood of immigrants since it claimed to be the mother country of the whole Hebrew race scattered throughout the world. The adjacent Arab countries were not in a position to impede that policy of expansion. So long as they were not powerful enough to ensure respect for any peace treaty that might be concluded, they did not dare to make peace. Moreover, it would be impossible to conclude a just and equitable peace until that time had come.

35. Those arguments were as valid today as in 1953. If the intentions of Israel were really peaceful then it must show evidence thereof by helping to apply the resolutions of the United Nations which affirmed the right of the displaced Arabs to return to their homes and resume a normal life in the country that belonged to them.

36. Mr. NONG KIMNY (Cambodia) thanked the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his report and commended the Agency for its admirable work in helping the refugees in every sector in spite of its limited means. One of the saddest elements in the situation of the Palestine refugees was the fact that the young arrived at adult age without having received

the necessary training and were therefore unemployed and reduced to idleness. It was essential that UNRWA should continue its work of vocational training and basic education while at the same time assisting the refugees to obtain food and lodging. Cambodia felt all the more sympathy with the refugees in their fate since it had itself been forced to accept in its territory Khmer refugees of Cambodian origin that had been expelled from South Viet-Nam by the Viet-Nam authorities, whose cruelties and exactions amounted to a veritable genocide. The Cambodian Government would therefore continue to contribute to the work of UNRWA in so far as its modest means allowed.

37. As the Commissioner-General had pointed out in his report, it was impossible to separate the human situation of the refugees from the political situation or to seek to solve the one without solving the other, and in particular the question of repatriation. The application of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) would greatly facilitate the solution of the whole issue. In order to give effect to that resolution the Cambodian delegation agreed with the Afghan delegation (361st meeting) that it was necessary to revise the terms of reference and the composition of the Conciliation Commission. With regard to UNRWA the prolongation of its term of office should meet with general approval.

38. The Cambodian delegation would vote for any resolution based on those two considerations.

39. Mr. PAPAGOS (Greece) thanked the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his statement (358th meeting), commended the work done by the Agency and congratulated Mr. Davis on his efforts to procure the necessary finances for his vocational training programme. Without desiring to make any statement for the moment concerning the coming expiration of his term of office, the Greek delegation would in any case give proper consideration to the excellent work done by him and the results he had obtained.

40. Greece, which belonged geographically to the Near East, attached great importance to the welfare of the people of that region and to the maintenance of peace and stability. It was also well acquainted with the humanitarian side of the question. After the First World War it had been obliged to absorb 1,200,000 refugees into a total population of 7 million, and again after the Second World War it had been forced to receive many more thousands of refugees expelled by countries where they had lived as a loyal and active minority for centuries. The question of the refugees must be settled rapidly and the solution must be final and viable so that the refugees could become useful elements of the international community and no longer serve solely for the purposes of propaganda and polemics.

41. Without taking part in the political discussion he would limit himself to emphasizing the little progress made during the last fourteen years. That was due to three reasons: the receiving countries had a limited capacity for absorbing the refugees, whose numbers increased every year; the refugees, the majority of whom were of peasant origin, had been deprived of their land and were either unemployed or underemployed; finally, the refugees were suffering from material privations.

^{7/} *Ibid.*, para. 37.

42. It was therefore not difficult to understand why the Palestine refugees insisted upon the application of resolution 194 (III), and it would be desirable if the Israel Government were to show a greater understanding of the matter.

43. Mr. ALBERTSSON (Iceland) recalled that his delegation was a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/L.89 and Add.1. Several delegations including that of the United States (365th meeting) had said that the text was unrealistic and thought that the time was not propitious for negotiation. He himself did not think that any evil could come from an appeal, even if premature, for direct negotiations and saw even less how one could hope to arrive at a peace without negotiation. The word "never" should never be used in politics, nor should one forget that time changed everything. The Icelandic delegation understood the feeling of the Arab delegations, and the compassion which the miserable fate of their Palestinian brethren inspired in them, but it was also necessary to think of the people of Israel who had succeeded in establishing a new State after having escaped the intolerable

fate waiting for it in other parts of the world. The Arab refugees desired to return to their own land but on the other hand Israel feared their hostility and refused to accept them. There were only three possible solutions: the status quo, war, and negotiation. The Icelandic delegation would prefer direct negotiations between the Governments concerned in the Israel-Arab dispute to the status quo or war. That formula alone would put an end to the tragedy without creating a new one. As the Secretary-General had stated at the 1182nd plenary meeting, when it was a case of the fate of humanity, no country, no group of interests could allow itself to adopt a rigid attitude nor to say that its attitude was the only correct one. No difficult dispute could be settled to the full and entire satisfaction of all the parties. In an imperfect world one must be content with imperfect solutions. It was in that spirit that the delegation of Iceland associated itself with the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.89 and Add. 1.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.