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Chairman: Mr. Abdul Samad GHAUS
(Afghanistan).

AGENDA ITEM 35

**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East: report of the Commissioner-
General (continued) (A/8013, A/8040, A/8084 and
Add.1, A/SPC/140, A/SPC/141, A/SPC/L.196)**

1. Mr. EL-ERIAN (United Arab Republic) paid tribute to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and his staff for the keen sense of duty and devotion they had shown in carrying out their difficult task.

2. After more than two decades, the grave injustice committed against the Arab people of Palestine continued to blot the record of the United Nations and torment the conscience of mankind. As the Secretary-General had pointed out at the twenty-third session, the United Nations bore a considerable measure of responsibility for the plight of the Palestine refugees.

3. He would not discuss in detail the various problems referred to in the Commissioner-General's comprehensive and lucid report (A/8013), since his delegation's views had been expressed in the statement made by the representative of Syria on behalf of the host countries at the 727th meeting. It was gratifying to note that the Committee had concentrated its debate on UNRWA's financial problems, which had assumed crisis proportions. Paradoxically, the Palestine people would be able to sustain themselves if their property and funds, usurped by Israel, were returned to them. It was a cynical irony that while the Agency was having difficulty in raising a few million dollars to cover its deficit, and maintain its health and educational activities for the Palestine refugees, the Israeli aggressors and usurpers were being granted hundreds of millions of dollars. The \$5 million deficit in the Agency's budget was a small fraction of the military and economic aid given by the United States to Israel, and could not but sustain the latter in its aggressive designs.

4. The discussion in the Committee had clearly demonstrated the vital importance of maintaining the Agency's services at least at the present level, particularly those in the educational sector which, as the Commissioner-General noted in his report, was the most constructive part of the Agency's activities, and the only one to go beyond mere relief and look towards the future of the Palestine refugees. It was sad to reflect that the right to education might be denied to the children of the noble Palestine people who had contributed richly to the cultural life of western Asia.

5. His delegation had noted with great concern that during the year covered by the Commissioner-General's report, Israel had continued its repressive measures against the refugees and its obstructionist policies towards UNRWA. The report made several references to Israeli acts of repression, the destruction of shelters and camps, and the harassment of UNRWA staff. All such acts had, of course, created additional problems for the Agency.

6. The report further noted that Israel had disregarded all resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council calling for the implementation of resolution 194 (III) of the General Assembly, and the immediate return of the persons who had been forced to leave their homes and camps following the Israeli aggression of June 1967.

7. It was essential that the international community should not, as the Israeli authorities attempted to do, reduce the Palestine refugee problem to a humanitarian question of resettlement. The problem, as the late President Nasser had stated, was one of a whole people in exile. To adopt a purely humanitarian approach would be to fail to do justice to the Arab people of Palestine. The establishment of UNRWA had been an emergency measure to be followed by the solution of the refugee problem through their return to their ancestral homeland, in accordance with operative paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the provisions of the Lausanne Protocol. Resolution 2452 B (XXIII) of the General Assembly, which had extended the mandate of UNRWA, had specifically provided that that action was without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III).

8. Between 1950 and 1970, the General Assembly had adopted twenty-one resolutions reaffirming the right of the refugees to repatriation or compensation. Throughout that period, the people of Palestine had looked to the United Nations to restore their lawful rights and to remedy the injustice inflicted on them. Israel had not only refused to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations, but it had compounded the problem of the Palestine refugees by undertaking a campaign of repression in the west bank, Gaza and other Arab territories it had occupied in 1967, in order to drive more Arabs from their homes and land. In the face of Israel's stubborn refusal to implement the United Nations resolutions for their return to their homeland, with the repressive acts committed by Israeli authorities and their refusal to allow the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other United Nations bodies to investigate conditions, and with the lack of determination of the United Nations to enforce its resolutions, the Arab people of Palestine were waging a great and heroic struggle for their right to exist, to return to their homes and to determine their own future. That was a legitimate struggle

which deserved the support of all forces which believed that all men, regardless of race, colour or religion, were entitled to such rights.

9. By refusing to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and by adopting an aggressive policy of persistently denying the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, Israel was creating a serious situation in the Middle East, fraught with great danger to international peace and security. The time had come for the United Nations to take prompt and effective action to put an end to Israel's reckless and lawless policy, and to compel it to desist forthwith from defying the authority of the Organization and the will of the international community.

10. Mr. NAUMENKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the problem of the Palestine refugees, who had been driven from their homeland by the Israeli aggressors, had remained unsolved for more than twenty years, and had recently been exacerbated by an influx of 350,000 refugees following Israel's aggression of June 1967. An entire generation of refugees had grown up in exile without ever seeing their homeland. The Commissioner-General's report had described eloquently the sad plight of the nearly 1.5 million refugees. UNRWA was providing valuable humanitarian assistance to the refugees in the fields of health and education, but that was not the essence of the problem. The question was primarily a political one, and must be solved in accordance with the principles of justice and international law. In the course of the years, the United Nations had adopted a number of resolutions repeatedly endorsing its General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which affirmed the right of the refugees to return to their homeland or to receive financial compensation for their property. Israel, however, had defied the will of the United Nations. The refugees had not been repatriated and had not received payment or compensation for their property, and no real progress had been made in the programmes of repatriation or rehabilitation for the refugees. Furthermore, the Israeli Government had made no official statement of its willingness to resettle the refugees who wished to return to their homes. Even UNRWA workers were harassed by the Israeli authorities, placed in detention and, in some cases, tried by military tribunals. The Agency's property had been damaged and destroyed by Israeli intrusions.

11. The lack of any progress towards a settlement of the Palestine refugee problem was obviously a matter of concern to the refugees themselves, to the neighbouring Arab States and to all those who desired peace in the Middle East and upheld the principles of the United Nations.

12. It was clear from the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories,¹ and from the report of the International Committee of the Red Cross, that the Israeli Government was attempting to prevent thousands of people in the occupied territories from remaining in or returning to their homeland. Many of the inhabitants of the Golan heights had been forcibly

expelled from their homes. According to confirmed reports, Israel was establishing settlements in the occupied territories, clearly in order to prevent the return of the indigenous population. The Israeli authorities were also deporting leaders of communities. Israeli representatives had spoken at great length of Israel's right to a native land, but the Palestine refugees representing an entire nation with an ancient history, traditions, customs and culture also had a right to their homeland. The people of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic were giving fraternal assistance and support to the Arab States in their legitimate struggle for national liberation against the forces of imperialism. His delegation believed that the solution to the Palestine refugee problem lay in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Urgent steps should be taken to improve the serious situation in the Middle East. The peoples of the world should compel Israel to withdraw its troops from the occupied Arab territories, and an adequate solution should be found to the problem of guaranteeing the rights and interests of the Arab people of Palestine.

13. Mr. OGOLA (Uganda) associated his delegation with the tributes paid to the Commissioner-General and his staff and pledged the continuing support of the Government and people of Uganda to UNRWA. Although the question of the Palestine refugees had been on the agenda of the General Assembly for more than two decades, a solution was still far from sight, and indeed the situation appeared to grow ever more complicated. Among the many factors responsible for that situation, the following could be singled out: the failure to find political solutions which would ensure the freedom and human rights of the Palestine refugees; the psychological alienation of the refugees; the persisting effects of the 1967 hostilities, including military occupation and the maintenance of high tension in the area; and the continuing displacement for a third year, despite the calls of the General Assembly and the Security Council for their return, of the hundreds of thousands of persons who had fled in 1967.

14. The Commissioner-General's report contained nothing new, but it described situations and conditions which belied much of the professed goodwill and humanitarian intentions of the international community. His delegation remained convinced that the plight of the refugees must be viewed as part of a broader political problem. It also believed that there could be no peace in the Middle East without justice founded on freedom. There were some who professed to desire peace in the area while, in reality, they were afraid of peace because it was incompatible with their selfish interests.

15. His delegation was aware of the tremendous workload of UNRWA and had always supported its humanitarian activities. It would continue to do so in the future, but it regretted that the approach of the United Nations to the problem was apparently based on the assumption that there would be no change in the present status of the Middle East refugees in the foreseeable future. If the United Nations continued to hold that view, people who were now willing to help would become disillusioned with the Agency and begin to suspect that its main role was to keep the refugees contented in order to divert their attention from the main problem. They would begin to question the good faith of those who were willing to spend millions of dollars year

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, agenda item 101, document A/8089.*

after year, but were unable to resolve the root causes of the problem. Unfortunately UNRWA's humanitarian activities, however noble they were, promised the Palestine refugees everything except what they wanted, namely freedom, justice and dignity.

16. His delegation wished to state that it supported the work of UNRWA and was concerned at the Agency's financial difficulties. The Government and people of Uganda would continue to do their modest part by supporting the regular budget of the United Nations so that the Agency could continue to function. It was convinced, however, that humanitarian gestures alone could not solve the Middle East problem, and it therefore continued to hope that favourable conditions would soon develop for the resumption of talks between the parties concerned, under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring. It was to be hoped that the eventual solution of the refugee problem would be along the lines envisaged in resolution 194 (III) of the General Assembly.

17. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished to reply to the statements made by certain Arab representatives. At the dawn of time, when peoples, States, civilizations and religions were still in a formative stage, a nation had been born destined to preserve its identity and survive through the ages until the present day. At a time when, in most parts of the world, the concept of community was confined to the tribe or the city, and the political unit was based on loyalty to a ruler rather than on ethnic affinity, the Jewish people had emerged as a nation distinct in its political personality, and as a separate cultural and religious entity. For more than a thousand years it had maintained its sovereignty over the land of Israel. The Jews had been the last people in the Mediterranean basin to be subdued by the Roman empire. Part of the nation had been carried away into bondage in distant lands, and those who remained had continued to resist. The conquerors had tried to suppress Jewish sovereignty by even erasing the name of the country and renaming it Palestine. After several revolts against Roman rule, the Jews had raised an army which, together with Persia, had put an end to Roman domination in the Holy Land. Thereafter, waves of invaders had swept across the country and the Jewish population had dwindled under the impact of massacre and exile. However, the land had remained a centre of Jewish life and learning, producing works of great national and cultural significance.

18. In the meantime, the Jews exiled to foreign lands had preserved their identity as a nation, and remained bound to their homeland by civilization and religion. Forbidden by their faith to intermarry with non-Jews, they had remained a distinct people, transmitting their national heritage from generation to generation. Persecuted on account of their Asian origin and oriental civilization, the Jews had known that they were strangers and that their home remained in Israel, and through the centuries they had striven to return to it. For that attachment to their nation they had paid with their lives. Yet they had never surrendered, never abandoned their heritage, always remained a nation proud of its identity, linked to its land by a myriad bonds.

19. During that time the land of Israel had stood desolate, its successive conquerors seeing it as occupied territory. It

had never become a separate sovereignty, and its ancient capital, Jerusalem, had not even been considered an administrative centre. The few conquerors who had settled in the land had never seen themselves as different from the inhabitants of neighbouring lands, never produced a national culture or aspired to be regarded as a separate political entity. Travellers who had visited the area had always described it as a dying land and referred to its desolation and depopulation. Until the mass return of the Jews at the end of the nineteenth century and, especially, after the First World War, Palestine had been a wasteland inhabited by impoverished peasants in debt to absentee landlords residing in Beirut, Damascus or Cairo. The population had begun to increase and the country to develop only with the beginning of organized Jewish return.

20. Mr. ABDILLEH (Somalia), speaking on a point of order, said that the Israeli representative's historical lecture was totally irrelevant to the agenda item under discussion.

21. The CHAIRMAN requested the Israeli representative to continue, if possible, shortening his statement.

22. Mr. TOMEH (Syria), speaking on a point of order, said that the position as to points of order was clearly defined in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. He agreed with the representative of Somalia that the statement of the Israeli representative was completely out of order.

23. Mr. PAL (Pakistan), speaking on a point of order, said that a point of order always related to a particular issue or to the clarification of a particular matter. The representative of Israel was fully entitled to clarification of any point, but should make proper use of the right of reply.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that he had not interrupted the representative of Israel because he was under the impression that he was exercising the right of reply, not raising a point of order. He appealed to the Israeli representative to confine his statement in exercise of the right of reply within reasonable limits.

25. Mr. TOMEH (Syria), speaking on a point of order, said that under rule 73 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, a point of order must be immediately decided by the Chairman. He did not consider a lecture on the history of Zionism to be in order, especially as the Israeli representative had said that he was replying to statements made by certain Arab representatives.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that it was very difficult for the Chair to confine a speaker within rigid limits. The realities of the debate on the question under consideration were well known to all members of the Committee. He would request the Israeli representative to continue, keeping his statement within the limits of the right of reply.

27. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel) said that the Arab population of Palestine had increased from 565,000 in 1922 to 1.2 million in 1947, largely as a result of Arab immigration from abroad. During the same period, Egypt's population had increased by only 25 per cent and in Transjordan the Arab population had remained static. In its information bulletin No. 6 of September 1962, UNRWA referred to the immigration which had taken place from neighbouring

countries into Palestine, particularly during the Second World War, thanks to new opportunities of employment and the higher rate of industrialization in that country. It was thus clear at the time Israel obtained its independence, that the majority of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine were immigrants or sons of immigrants who had come from neighbouring Arab States in a migration which paralleled the arrival of Jews in the country. It was not surprising, in those circumstances, that Arab nationalists had not regarded Palestine as a separate national or political personality. Arab statesmen had said that Palestine was merely a part of Syria. In October 1966 the representative of Syria had declared in the Security Council that his country considered Palestine to be and to have been from every point of view a part of Syria.

28. Throughout history, therefore, Palestine had been different and separate from other lands, and the cradle of the national aspirations of one people alone—the Jewish people. That had been recognized by the Arabs themselves. The Koran even stated with reference to the Jews: “enter . . . the Holy Land which God hath destined for you”. The Arabic name for Jerusalem meant the Holy Temple, the Jewish temple. In 1918, Sharif Hussein, the ruler of Mecca, in an article published in *Al Qible*, had referred to the Jews as the “original sons” of Palestine and had said that their return to their homeland would prove materially and spiritually an experimental school for their brethren, in other words the Arabs. Emir Faisal, the father of modern Arab nationalism, had said in 1918, in an interview with Reuters, that the two main branches of the Semite family, Arabs and Jews, understood one another, and that he hoped that at the forthcoming Peace Conference, each nation would make progress towards the realization of its aspirations. A month later, Emir Faisal had signed, on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz, an agreement with Dr. Weizmann, representing the Zionist Organization, in which provisions were made for co-operation between the Arab State and Jewish Palestine.

29. Mr. ABDILLEH (Somalia), speaking on a point of order, said that the Israeli representative's statement was not a reply but a justification of the occupation of Arab land by Israel, and had nothing to do with the agenda item under discussion.

30. The CHAIRMAN urged the representative of Somalia to be co-operative and to let the speaker continue his statement, especially since other delegations had dwelt at some length on all aspects of the question.

31. Mr. OLEANDROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on a point of order, said that during the Israeli representative's lengthy statement he had not once mentioned the agenda item under discussion, which concerned the Palestine refugees.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that in the many years the item had been on the agenda, members of the Committee had come to realize the historical and political scope of the item under discussion. Because of the realities of the debate, it was difficult to confine statements to the refugee question. All speakers had availed themselves of the occasion to discuss the matter in depth. Their best course of action was to listen to the speaker and, if necessary, exercise the right of reply at the end of the meeting.

33. Mr. TEKOA (Israel) said that in March 1919 Emir Faisal had written in a letter to Justice Felix Frankfurter of the Supreme Court of the United States that the Arabs and the Zionist movement were working together for a reformed and revived Near East, that the two movements complemented one another and that the Jewish movement was national and not imperialist. That attitude had changed with a change in Arab leadership. Brotherhood and co-operation had been replaced by hostility and violence. Enmity towards the Jews had been so extreme that some Arab leaders who now invoked human rights and sought the support of African and Asian States had had no inhibitions about associating themselves with Nazi policies and actions regarding Africans, Asians and Jews. Before 1967 they had spoken of throwing the Jews into the sea. Their terminology had since become less bloodthirsty, and they now spoke of the establishment in Palestine of a secular, democratic State, without mentioning that that meant the elimination of the Jewish State and the denial to the Jewish people of Palestine of its rights to self-determination and freedom. The minority of Jews allowed to remain would be treated like the remnants of the Jewish communities in Egypt, Iraq or Syria. Before 1967, the Palestine Liberation Organization had been ready to allow Jews who had entered Palestine before 1948 to remain in the country; but under the Palestinian National Covenant, as amended by the Fourth Palestinian Council held in Cairo in July 1968, that right would be accorded only to those Jews who were in Palestine in 1917. The aim therefore remained the same as in the past, the destruction of a State Member of the United Nations.

34. The methods also remained unchanged, terror against the civilian population. The attempts to describe as resistance to military occupation the same terror activities which Palestine had known for fifty years was no less hypocritical than the attempts to depict the desire to destroy Israel and annihilate its people as an effort to establish a unitary democratic Palestine. The more extreme of the Arab Governments and their representatives in the Committee accompanied those policies with incessant distortions of facts, and vilification of the Jewish people. They alleged that Russian and even European Jews were descendants of a Khazar king and his nobles who had been converted to Judaism about 800 years before the first Jews had begun to arrive in Russia, those alleged descendants of the Turkic Khazars having inexplicably chosen for their vernacular a Germanic dialect, Yiddish. Equally absurd were the references to Israel as a foreign European State, even though the majority of its citizens were born in Israel and almost half were Jewish refugees from Arab lands. It was ironical that Jews who had been discriminated against by Europeans for being of Semitic Asian stock should be vilified as Europeans by their own Semitic brethren.

35. Freed of distortion, acrimony and abuse and treated in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding, the problem of Jewish and Arab rights in Palestine became tractable. There were several basic, undeniable facts. First, the re-establishment of Jewish independence in Israel was a vindication of the fundamental concepts of equality of nations and self-determination. Secondly, only the Jewish people had seen the land of Israel as a distinct political entity, the centre of its national existence and its civilization. All the other peoples who had settled there had

regarded themselves and the country itself as parts of larger entities. Thirdly, the Arab inhabitants of the land had always considered themselves to be part of a larger Arab nation which had vindicated its rights to self-determination and independence in fourteen sovereign Arab States, with several more on the way to achieving independence. Fourthly, within the area of Palestine itself two Arab States had been established by the international community, Transjordan by the League of Nations, and an Arab State, alongside the Jewish State, under the partition of the country by the United Nations. But for the invasion by neighbouring Arab States, there would now be two Arab States in Palestine-Jordan. Fifthly, the existence in Palestine of one rather than two Arab States did not alter the fact that the Arab population of Palestine exercised its right to political independence within a sovereign Palestinian Arab entity. In 1963, King Hussein had declared that Jordan was Palestine and Palestine Jordan, and a former defence minister of Jordan now living in Jerusalem had stated in October 1970 that Jordan and Palestine were one State and their inhabitants were one people.

36. It was thus clear that the rights of Jews and Arabs in Palestine to national existence were not irreconcilable. The Jews exercised them in the State of Israel and the Arabs in the Arab State, the name, political structure and unity of which they were free to decide.

37. It was no secret that the Arab delegations were preparing draft resolutions reflecting the view that only Arab rights should be respected, and that warfare pursued with the avowed aim of the destruction of Israel should be approved and assisted. Such draft resolutions would not only be contrary to the principle of equality of States and nations, but would also undermine the possibility of reaching agreement on a just and lasting peace, as called for by the United Nations. It was to be hoped that the Arab Governments and all Member States would carefully consider whether, at the present crucial stage of the Middle East situation, the fragile hope for peace should be endangered by disregard for the rights of one of the parties to the conflict.

38. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Israel had referred to the state of social and political thought at the dawn of time, when concepts of tribe, race, religion, community and State were blurred. The significance of time was precisely that it had enabled man to exercise his ability and imagination in order to introduce distinctions which primitive man was unable to conceive. The Israeli representative, however, appeared to consider the blurring of the concepts of race, religion and State to be the acme of human development.

39. At present it was difficult to know where to draw the line between Israelism and Judaism. Many Jews, in the United States and elsewhere, insisted on separating the idea of Israel from Judaism and Jewishness. As a non-Jew, he was of course not qualified to discuss what Jewishness was, but the Jewishness which was used by the Israeli Zionists as justification for depriving the Palestinians of their right to return to their homeland was based on European colonialism of the nineteenth century.

40. The representative of Israel had implied that the Hebrew tribes, and they alone, had had a long-standing, intimate association with the territory of Palestine, a land which had fallen into desolation after their departure. Those allegations were historically untrue. Indeed the Bible confirmed that the history of Palestine extended back more than two thousand years before the arrival of the first Hebrews, who had actually remained there for only two generations before moving on. They had returned to Palestine several hundred years later and forcibly occupied certain parts of the territory, but had at no time been its sole occupants. It was true that there had for a time been not one, but two Jewish States in the area, but their subjects had left as a result of war, and later returned only to be driven out once again by further conflicts. During the greater part of the history of Palestine, only a very few Jews had actually resided in the territory; the association of the Hebrews with Palestine had been confined to three individual episodes centuries apart from one another. Thus, any historical identification between Palestine and the Jewish people was fallacious.

41. The Israeli representative appeared to have neglected the identity of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians were in fact directly descended from the earliest inhabitants of the area, though their stock had been mixed with that of all the other peoples who had subsequently migrated into the region, including among others the Philistines, Canaanites, Hebrews, Amorites, Arabs, Ottomans and Crusaders. Of the latter, those who had not eventually emigrated had over the years lost any characteristics which distinguished them from other Palestinians. The Palestinians were indeed a distinct people, as were those of all the countries represented in the United Nations, regardless of the arbitrary boundaries which often separated them. Distinct in their own right, they were at the same time part of a greater Arab nation.

42. It was true, as the representative of Israel had said, that the Arab peoples had exercised their right to self-determination in at least fourteen different States, although many Arabs would have wished that those fourteen States had been one. Yet no one could contend that the aspirations of the Arabs for independence and nationhood had been fulfilled, so long as a single Arab people was denied its right to self-determination in its own homeland. To argue that an Arab people must be driven from its homeland to make room for an alien people was as misleading as to contend that the existence of some forty independent African States justified the usurpation by Europeans of sovereignty over the territory of Southern Rhodesia.

43. According to the Israeli representative, Palestine had suddenly become a land of desolation on the departure of the Hebrews, and had remained so for many centuries, only to bloom once more upon their return. In fact, Palestine, like the rest of the region, had had its golden ages and its dark ages in the course of history. It was common knowledge that a new surge of life had swept through all of Africa and Asia in the past half century, as flourishing civilizations arose through the process of modernization. Were the sweeping changes which had taken place in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Morocco and Iraq all due to the return of the Jews to Palestine? That was merely the

traditional logic of colonialism: before the colonizers had come there had been no civilization, and the highways, railways and other paraphernalia of civilization which they had brought with them entitled them to a moral claim on the lands which had been modernized as a result of their presence. That claim had been rejected by the United Nations. Indeed, half its Member States stood as evidence of that rejection.

44. The representative of Israel had attributed the increase in the Arab population of Palestine under the British Mandate to new immigration attracted by improving conditions in the territory. However, a report prepared by a British Royal Commission, citing ample evidence, had indicated that while the rise in the Jewish population from 7 per cent to 33 per cent of the total during the mandate was due almost entirely to immigration from outside, the increase in the Arab population was predominantly attributable to the excess of births over deaths among indigenous inhabitants.

45. Speaking on his favourite theme, the Israeli representative had charged a number of Arab leaders with Nazi associations. He had omitted, however, to mention the many Zionists who had collaborated with the Nazis, some of whom had been exposed and had been sued in the courts of Israel. If necessary, his delegation was in a position to refresh the Israeli representative's memory on that subject.

46. The current turn of the debate provided an excellent opportunity to compare the views on justice and peace held respectively by the Palestinians and the Israelis. The Palestinians spoke of a single secular, democratic, pluralistic, humanistic State, made up of indigenous Palestinian Arabs of the Moslem and Christian faiths and of non-indigenous Jews, all of whom would participate equally in the benefits and duties of citizenship. Theirs was not a vision of vengeance, but one of forgiveness and self-transcendence. It was their desire to share their birthright with those very people who had denied it to them. The Israelis, on the other hand, spoke of continued exile and dispossession. For them, the Jewish State was there to stay. Its policies would always be determined with a view to the perpetuation of its exclusive nature, and non-Jews would never have a significant role to play in its national life. Its leaders would always be willing to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians, provided that they were willing to live elsewhere and abandon their homes to invaders.

47. Mr. TOMEH (Syria) said that the long lecture which the Committee had been subjected to by the representative of Israel was totally unrelated to the subject under discussion, namely, the report of the Commissioner-General (A/8013), which was concerned with the political, social and humanitarian dimensions of the Palestine refugee problem. The representative of Israel had endeavoured to raise a large number of extraneous and controversial issues in order to divert the attention of the Committee from the question before it.

48. The Israeli representative had traced the history of Israel, from the Zionist point of view, all the way from the dawn of history to the present day. His arguments had already been answered by an Arab speaker. For his part, he would attempt to throw some light on the roots of the

refugee problem, using official documents of the United States State Department to show how colonialist European settlers had driven out the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine. The real issue was not a religious one, nor one of interpretation of biblical history, but the plight of a people driven from its homeland by Zionist terrorism.

49. On 23 January 1943, the United States Minister in Cairo had sent the Secretary of State the following telegram:

“On the Jewish side I have found Zionist officials of the Jewish Agency uncompromisingly outspoken in their determination that Palestine at the end of this war shall become not merely a national home for the Jews, but a Jewish state despite any opposition from the 1,000,000 Arabs living there. In various ways main result of many of their efforts seems to be to goad Palestine Arabs into breaking informal truce that has existed since war began . . .

“It is no secret that the Hagana, their secret Jewish military organization, has plans fully made and is well equipped with not only small arms, but also with Tommy-guns and machine guns many of them purchased from Vichy French forces in Syria and smuggled into Palestine during the past 2 years.”

That telegram, sent five years before the establishment of the Jewish State, made clear who was responsible for the outbreak of armed conflict in Palestine.

50. On 5 May 1943 the Personal Representative of President Roosevelt, Brigadier General Patrick J. Hurley, had sent him the following letter from Cairo:

“For its part, the Zionist organization in Palestine has indicated its commitment to an enlarged programme for (1) a sovereign Jewish State which would embrace Palestine and probably Transjordan, (2) an eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq, and (3) Jewish leadership for the whole Middle East in the fields of economic development and control.”

51. Thus, the Zionists had evidently planned the elimination of the Arab population of Palestine.

52. As Mr. I. F. Stone, a Jewish American and a former member of the Haganah, had put it in an article published in *The New York Review of Books* on 3 August 1967:

“Jewish terrorism, not only by the Irgun, in such savage massacres as Deir Yassin, but in milder form by the Haganah, itself ‘encouraged’ Arabs to leave areas the Jews wished to take over for strategic or demographic reasons. They tried to make as much of Israel as free of Arabs as possible.”

53. Thus, what had to be considered was no longer alleged Arab intentions to drive Israelis into the sea, but the hard fact of concerted Zionists' efforts to drive the Arabs into the desert, while Jews took possession of their ancestral homeland.

54. According to the representative of Israel, Palestine had been desolate for centuries until the arrival of the European

Jews. However, statistics prepared by the Mandatory Power made it clear that up to the time of the termination of the Mandate, the Zionist settlers had been able to acquire no more than 6 per cent of the land, while the Palestinian Arabs had then been the recipients of 70 per cent of the territory's agricultural income and 40 per cent of the revenue from trade and services.

55. The Shaw Commission, established by the Mandatory Power in 1929 to investigate the situation in Palestine, had commented that "viewed in the light of the history of at least the last six centuries, Palestine was an artificial conception". In point of fact, it was one of four artificial territories which had been carved out of the vilayet of Syria. Palestine had been created purely for the purpose of bringing Jewish settlers into the area. The League of Nations had made careful provision for the future statehood of Palestine, providing in article 7 of the Palestine Mandate itself that

"The Administration of Palestine shall be responsible for enacting a nationality law. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine".

It was ironic that a people which had so grudgingly been given the right to citizenship in its own homeland should now be denied it by the occupiers of its territory.

56. The Bible related that Moses had taken refuge with Jethro the Midianite and had married his daughter; they were not Jews but were in fact among the ancestors of the Arabs of today. Indeed the first use of the word "Jew" in the Bible dated from 500 B.C. or later. Prior to that time the Jews had been referred to only as Hebrews, a term derived from a Semitic root signifying "transient". Even then, the Jews had been composed of groups of migrants with little in common.

57. In their rewritten version of history, the Zionists never failed to refer to the agreement concluded between Dr. Weizmann and Emir Faisal. However, they always

forgot to mention that Faisal had stipulated that the agreement would be void in the event that the Arabs were ejected from Palestine. That much-publicized agreement no longer had any meaning outside the minds of Zionist historians. Moreover, in the 1930s Faisal had denied any knowledge of the famous letter he was alleged to have written; there was evidence to indicate that it had been written by T. E. Lawrence, and the fact that Faisal had no knowledge of English was sufficient proof that he could not have been its author.

58. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that although it would be easy to refute the Zionist theory of the history and alleged origin of the Jews, he would limit himself to a few general observations. First, when the Hebrews had invaded Palestine they had not been able to subjugate the entire indigenous population, which had resisted them for many years. Secondly, once installed in Palestine the Hebrews had adopted the native religion. Thirdly, modern Jews were not of Palestinian origin; the Jewish Encyclopaedia showed that Sephardic Jews represented only 10 per cent of the population of Israel, 90 per cent being Ashkenazis. Further proof of the non-Palestinian origin of the Jews could be found in the fact that there were several thousands of Negro Jews living in New York, and that there were also Indian Jews. Even the language of the Jews, Yiddish, was a European language with merely a few Hebrew words.

59. The question at issue was not, however, one of history, it was the recognition and restoration of the sacred rights of the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine. The Palestinians sought only to create a modern democratic Palestine in place of the chauvinistic, discriminatory, expansionist and imperialist State which existed at present.

60. Mr. ABDILLEH (Somalia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said the representative of Israel had asserted that Israel had rights as well as the Arab States. It might well be wondered, however, what rights Israel needed when it was already arrogantly exercising the right of power.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.