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### CONTENTS

#### Agenda item 31:

*Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued) . . . . .* 193

**Chairman:** Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

### 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/SPC/74) (continued)**

1. Mr. EL SANOUSI (Sudan) said that it was impossible to discuss the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) without alluding to the circumstances of its creation, its purposes, its achievements and the justifications for its continuation. That led to the refugee situation and the whole question of Palestine. It was the duty of the United Nations to deal with the condition of the refugees, since it had created the issue by its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 that partitioned Palestine against the will of its people.

2. Good relations had existed between the Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine before the advent of Zionism, just as they had existed between Jews and Arabs in previous periods of Arab rule in the Mediterranean world. Violence and hostility between Jews and Arabs in Palestine had been caused by the illegal and unjust resolution of the United Nations and the subsequent terrorist acts of the Zionists. The refugee issue was not the result of intervention by the Arab armies.

3. Fourteen years after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) the United Nations had not yet secured compliance with its decisions and the Arab refugees were still living in the frustration and agony of camp life. Although originally planned for only nine months, UNRWA had had to remain in existence throughout all that time. The cause of that situation was Israel's failure to carry out the resolution of the General Assembly.

4. The Agency had performed a great humanitarian task throughout its lifetime, and that work, even if only palliative, should be continued as a compelling necessity for it served as a psychological stabilizing factor by reassuring the refugees of the United Nations presence in their midst.

5. Meanwhile, his delegation would insist on the fulfilment of resolution 194 (III). For refugees from the areas allotted to Arabs in 1947, immediate repatriation would be one step in giving effect to the resolution which had created Israel itself and which Israel

could not deny without denying its own existence. The rest of the refugees should be given an immediate choice between repatriation and compensation. All necessary safeguards should be guaranteed for those who were repatriated.

6. As for the Israel recommendation (362nd meeting) that the matter should be solved by direct negotiations with the Arab States, such negotiations would be a violation of the right of the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination. No Arab State would accept any solution which was not determined by the people of Palestine themselves.

7. In conclusion, he wished all friendly States, particularly the African States, to understand the depth of feeling of the Arab States with regard to the situation in Palestine. He appealed for the sympathy of the Latin nations and recalled that the representative of Ecuador had said that the Spain which had given to the countries of Hispanic origin their cultural roots was as much Arab as European. In those countries the traditions of self-determination and fundamental human rights still lived.

8. Mr. SOULEYMANE (Mauritania) said that the Palestine refugee question was as far from solution as ever, since virtually nothing had been done to carry out the various United Nations decisions.

9. An alliance between colonialism and Zionism had uprooted 1,200,000 Palestinians, deprived them of their homes and property, and compelled them to live in refugee camps in the neighbouring Arab countries under inhuman conditions. At the same time, an attempt had been made to wipe Palestine off the map and substitute for it the pseudo-State of Israel, whose existence made a mockery of the elementary principles of morality and international law.

10. The establishment of a Jewish State by the Zionists had been effected with the complicity of certain great Powers, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. At the end of the First World War, when the United Kingdom had become the Mandatory for Palestine, that country's Jewish population had represented less than 8 per cent of the total. However, the United Kingdom, working closely with the Jewish Agency and the forces of international Zionism, had done everything possible to encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine. It had also attempted, through unjust legislative and administrative measures and in violation of the League of Nations Mandate,<sup>1/</sup> to stifle the national personality of the Palestinian people. After the Second World War, the United Kingdom had suddenly terminated the Mandate and turned Palestine over to the Zionists, thus once again betraying the mission entrusted to it by the League of Nations.

<sup>1/</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Supplement No. 11*, vol. II, annex 20.

11. The situation of the Palestine refugees was not only a human but also a colonial question, since it could not be separated from the Palestine issue itself. The type of colonialism that existed in Israel was annexationist in character and far more reactionary and dangerous than the standard type. The statements of Israel's leaders made it clear that Israel's 2,500,000 inhabitants would not be content to remain within the country's present boundaries but would seek to expand into the rest of Palestine and into the territory of neighbouring Arab States. Moreover, Israel was even more racist in its policies than South Africa; its European Jewish leaders discriminated not only against the Arab population but also against Jews of Oriental or African origin. Although Israel was conducting a vast diplomatic offensive in black Africa, it was significant that it had never accepted immigrants from among the thousands of black Jews in Abyssinia.

12. The Israelis were trying to draw a false distinction in the Palestine refugee question, between so-called black Africa and Arab Africa. At the same time, they sought to create the impression that the refugee question was a conflict between the pseudo-State of Israel and the Arab States. In fact, however, it was a conflict between the Zionists of Israel, who had invaded a country that had never belonged to them, and the population of Palestine, which had lived there for fourteen centuries and had had a history of friendly relations among Moslems, Christians and Jews. The Palestinians alone had the right to decide their future and to negotiate for the restoration of their lawful rights. The Palestine issue was naturally a matter of direct concern to the Arab countries, since their security was gravely threatened by the existence of Israel, as the attack on Suez had shown, and they were forced to bear the heavy economic and social burden of the Palestine refugees. However, the matter also affected all those who believed in freedom and in the right of peoples to self-determination. Further, the United Nations, which in 1947, under tremendous pressure from the great Powers, had adopted resolution 181 (II) partitioning Palestine and had admitted Israel to membership (resolution 273 (III)), was responsible. There was no hope for a solution so long as the Israelis refused to apply paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which provided that the Palestine refugees should be given the choice of returning to their homes or receiving compensation for their property. If the resolution was carried out, it might then be possible to bring about a final solution on the basis of a multireligious, multiracial Palestinian State; the problem could not be solved in any other way.

13. The methods chosen for dealing with the Palestine issue had made a solution difficult from the very outset. If the membership of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine was changed and enlarged, that body could create an atmosphere favourable to negotiation. Up to now, however, certain of its members had shown a lack of impartiality, the Commission had frequently supported the Zionist viewpoint and had treated the problem of restoring the Palestine refugees' natural rights as a dispute between the Arab States and Israel. Although its terms of reference under resolution 194 (III) had been reaffirmed by resolution 1604 (XV), it had once again shirked its responsibilities by appointing a Special Representative to discuss the refugee problem with the Governments of the host countries and the Government of Israel. His delegation was of the opinion that

the Committee should take another look at the Conciliation Commission.

14. In the circumstances UNRWA constituted one of the few sources of help for the refugees. The excellent report submitted by the Agency's Commissioner-General (A/5214) was highly informative and made possible a better understanding of certain difficulties which the refugees faced.

15. The three-year programme had greatly improved assistance to young refugees, and relations between the Agency and the Arab host countries continued to be excellent. However, the realities of the situation required certain immediate measures: an increase in relief services, an expansion in general education and vocational and teacher training and an increase in the number of schools, as well as additional scholarships, loans and grants to deserving refugees. The Agency should endeavour to create conditions which would permit a considerable extension of individual relief services after the end of the three-year programme. If those improvements were not made within the next few months, the condition of the Palestinian refugees would undoubtedly become worse than ever.

16. It was well known that the Governments that were the main contributors to the financing of UNRWA were committing a veiled form of blackmail by threatening to stop their contributions if the Palestinian Arabs continued to reject the imposition of pre-fabricated solutions for the benefit of international Zionism and its allies. That was a reason for the United Nations to give more attention to the material and financial aspects of the refugee problem, particularly because it was specifically a United Nations problem. The income from the Arab property seized in Palestine was large enough to serve the needs of four times as many refugees. The United Nations should appoint a trustee for that property, who would pay the income to the rightful owners, pending an over-all settlement.

17. Nevertheless, whatever measures were taken to satisfy urgent human needs, it was essential that the entire question of Palestine should be examined in its true context. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, who had dealt ably with the problems of Cuba and the Congo, should bring his talent and experience to bear on the dangerous and explosive Palestinian situation. His delegation urged serious negotiation to eliminate that danger to world peace. A people should never be required to renounce its homeland, and no extensive efforts should be made to justify a *de facto* situation. The existence of an unfavourable situation was no more reason for urging defeatism on the Palestinian people than it would be for abandoning discussion on such matters as Angola, South Africa and Rhodesia. The Arabs of Palestine were struggling to recover their land and their homes, and the Zionists, like the Afrikaners, would eventually realize that any situation imposed by force could not last.

18. Mr. SHUKAIRY (Saudi Arabia) said that the representative of Israel had begun his speech at the previous meeting by complaining that the Arab delegations had already intervened fifteen times in the current debate on the Palestine refugees. That was perhaps the only unchallengeable statement that representative had made on his country's behalf. To judge however from the space given to the Arab statements in the Press in the United States they might never have been made at all. He personally did not feel that fifteen

interventions were too many to devote to an exile of a whole people that had already lasted for fifteen years.

19. A great many of the Israel representative's contentions could be refuted by quotations drawn from the Zionist leaders themselves. The Arab identification of Zionism with colonialism and imperialism to which the representative of Israel had objected could be proved by reference to the statements of Mr. Weizmann, and to many unimpeachable sources, such as Sir Winston Churchill, and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in its *Yearbook* for 1959.

20. Despite his objection to alleged references to persons by the Arab delegations, the Israel representative had not hesitated to make personal references to Arab leaders, including the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem whom he had accused of being a supporter of Hitler. A brief review of the Grand Mufti's career would show that during the last war he had been hunted by the British authorities. Berlin had been the only place in which he could take refuge in order to avoid arrest by the British. While the Grand Mufti had been building up the Arab movement for the liberation of Palestine, and trying to persuade the British not to establish a Jewish National Home there at the expense of the country's rightful inhabitants, the Zionist leaders had been soliciting support for their cause from all the major Powers. They had adopted a different approach to each one, but in every case they had used arguments calculated to appeal to the colonialist instincts of the Governments in question. To the United States, Zionism had been presented as a movement that would irrigate the desert and bring material progress to the Middle East. To Great Britain, Zionism had been advanced as a movement that would help to defend the Suez Canal and the British route to India. Yet, at the same time, the French had been told that a Jewish National Home, to include lower Egypt, southern Syria and southern Lebanon as well as Palestine, would be able to control trade with India, Asia and South-east Africa, and that it would be a great advantage to France to have the route to India occupied by a people who would be its friends until death. The Zionist leaders had tried to persuade Germany that a Jewish State on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean would be both directly and indirectly a prop of Germanism, constituting as it were a German-Turkish Gibraltar on the edge of an Anglo-Arab ocean.

21. The Arab charge that Zionism was a subversive movement which destroyed friendly relations between peoples all over the world could not be refuted. Arab relations with the United States and the United Kingdom had been greatly impaired as a result of Zionist pressure. President Wilson had been advised by his Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, in 1917, to resist pressure for approval by the United States of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>2/</sup> In return for a promise of support in his Presidential campaign, however, Mr. Wilson had succumbed to pressure for the establishment of a Jewish National Home. A whole people had been driven from their homes because of electioneering in the United States.

22. The Arab charge that Zionism was an expansionist and imperialist movement was supported by the report of the United States Commission (the King-Crane Commission)<sup>3/</sup> that had been sent to Syria after

the First World War to inquire into the wishes of the people of the area. That report, which had been suppressed for many years, had made it clear that the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish State could not be effected without greatly trespassing on the rights of the existing non-Jewish communities. All delegations should read the report of the King-Crane Commission which had already predicted in 1919 the tragedy of 1948.

23. The representative of Israel had denied that Zionism destroyed the loyalty of Jews to their mother country, yet Mr. Ben-Gurion claimed that when Jews in the United States or South Africa, or other parts of the world, used the words "our Government", in speaking to their fellow Jews, they usually meant the Government of Israel, and that Jews all over the world considered the representatives of Israel as their representatives. Mr. Ben-Gurion had also said, in 1951, that the Jews had reached independence in only a portion of their small country. Zionists, as the representative of the United Arab Republic had said (361st meeting), clearly envisaged an Israel stretching from the Euphrates to the Nile. In 1961, Mr. Ben-Gurion had asserted that Jews all over the world were violating the Torah if they remained in the dispersion. Such religious fanaticism and intolerance was characteristic of Zionism.

24. The representative of Israel had protested against the Arab view that Jews were believers in Judaism and not a race or a nation. UNESCO, however, had recently published a study<sup>4/</sup> of the Jewish people that disposed of the fallacy of Jewish nationhood. It held that Jews belonged to their mother countries. If that idea took root all over the world, Zionism would collapse and the refugee problem would solve itself.

25. The Israel representative had also referred to the sanctity and legality of the Balfour Declaration. Lloyd George, however, Prime Minister in the British Cabinet that had issued the Balfour Declaration, had admitted that it had been done for propaganda purposes. The Allies had been in a very serious position at the time, and it had been thought that Jewish sympathy might contribute greatly to the Allied cause.

26. The representative of Israel had dwelt at length on the Agreement between Emir Feisal and Mr. Weizmann. He had neglected to mention, however, that the Agreement contained no provision accepting a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Emir Feisal had been addressing himself to the Jewish inhabitants of the Arab countries only, and not to those of the rest of the world. The Israel representative had carefully refrained from referring to article 4 of the Agreement which laid down as a prerequisite for future co-operation between the Arab States and the Jews that the Arab peasants should remain settled on their lands in Palestine.

27. The representative of Israel had sought to invoke the sympathy of those States which had voted in favour of the partition of Palestine at the second session of the General Assembly. Many of those States had voiced misgivings at the time, and many of them had made assumptions in regard to Israel which had not been borne out by later events. The United States, in particular, had expressed confidence that the boundary between the Jewish and Arab States would be as peaceful and friendly as the boundary between the United

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*, annex 19.

<sup>3/</sup> See *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference 1919*, vol. XII (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 792.

<sup>4/</sup> Harry L. Shapiro, *The Jewish People, A Biological History* (UNESCO, 1960).

States and Canada (124th plenary meeting). Great misgivings had been expressed by the Foreign Minister of Belgium (125th plenary meeting).

28. Responsibility for the war in Palestine and the flight of the Arab refugees was a question that came up at every session. On each occasion, the Israel presentation of facts had been shown to be a distortion. There was no resolution condemning Arab aggression in 1947 or in 1948. Of the twenty-five resolutions by the Security Council on the Palestine problem, there was not one referring to Arab invasions of Israel. The sole purpose of the military intervention of the Arab States had been to save the Palestinians from being massacred by Jewish terrorist organizations as a result of the departure of the British military. Massacres by the Zionists were the reason for the exodus of the Arab refugees. It had been proved beyond question that the massacre at Deir Yassin had been ordered by the Israel Government and was not the work of irresponsible terrorist groups.

29. The representative of Israel (362nd meeting) had referred once more to direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab States. Since the Israel position on the three aspects of the Palestine problem, the refugees, the status of Jerusalem and the territorial arrangements, was admitted to be adamant, any such move would be useless. Moreover, there was no assurance that any agreement which Israel entered into would be respected, in view of the number of times it had already violated the General Armistice Agreements and the resolutions of the United Nations.

30. The representative of Israel had also claimed that various attempts to absorb the refugees into productive life had been thwarted by the Arab States for

political reasons, including the self-support projects advocated by the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East (Clapp Mission) in 1949.<sup>5/</sup> That Mission, however, had told the General Assembly that the refugees in Gaza could be saved only by permitting them to farm their adjacent land which was now cut off by the armistice lines. That was precisely what the Saudi Arabian delegation had proposed in regard to the so-called economic refugees in its opening statement in the debate (359th meeting).

31. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA had spoken in his report of the injustice committed against the Arabs of Palestine. That injustice must be undone if peace was to be restored. Arabs and Jews had lived together in peace for centuries and they could do so again, once Zionism was destroyed.

32. Mr. MOLTOTAL (Ethiopia), exercising his right of reply, said that the name "Abyssinia" which the representative of Mauritania had used instead of Ethiopia was not acceptable to the Ethiopian delegation. In regard to the Mauritanian representative's reference to Ethiopian Jews, his delegation did not know of any section of the Ethiopian population that wished to migrate to any part of the world.

33. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the list of speakers would be closed at 1 p.m. on Friday, 7 December 1962. The Committee might wish to envisage the possibility of invoking the provisions of rule 115 of the rules of procedure, in view of the short time remaining before the end of the session.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

<sup>5/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, Annex, vol. I, document A/1106.