

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 401st
MEETING**

Thursday, 7 November 1963,
at 10.55 a.m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 32:</i>	
<i>Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued)</i>	137

Chairman: Mr. Mihail HASEGANU (Romania).

AGENDA ITEM 32

Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/5513, A/SPC/89) (continued)

1. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) said that the discussion of the Palestine issue year after year in the United Nations was evidence of its increasing gravity. The Israel usurpers had hoped that time would work in their favour in dispelling feeling, but the conscience of the world was now being aroused. The injustice suffered by the Arab people in Palestine had become apparent to all, and was important both from the point of view of the human conscience and for its influence on international politics in the Near East and elsewhere. It was fifteen years since the Palestine Arab people had become a refugee nation as a result of the conspiracy between international Zionism and colonialism in aggression against the indigenous inhabitants. Since then many Arab and other peoples had gained independence from colonialism and now sat in the United Nations as sovereign Members. Time would not allow such countries to forget their right to live in national dignity. Those countries were fully aware of the true nature of the drama in Palestine and they would not consider their struggle over until all peoples had won their rights. The Arab people of Palestine continued to hope. Their right to recover their homes, lands and country was unquestionable. Their struggle against an imported minority brought in against the will of the indigenous peoples had its parallel in South Africa, South West Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Like the problem of apartheid, the situation in Palestine had grown more serious over the years. The only difference between South Africa and Palestine was that the Palestinians had become refugees, so that their fate was even worse than that of the South African people. Just as the fate of the latter aroused ever-growing indignation, the injustice suffered by the former became more and more painful to the conscience of the world.

2. The Arab population of Palestine, in its majority a people of refugees, was represented at the debate by a worthy delegation. Its leader had described at the 399th meeting all the injustices suffered by his people,

which was now waiting anxiously for the recovery of their lawful rights. The delegation of Yemen was glad that the Committee had extended a more definite invitation to the group to present its case at the present session and hoped that although it had entered by the back door, it would soon enter by the front door as the accredited delegation of Palestine. The issue was that of the Arab people of Palestine, Moslems and Christians, who had been expelled for the sole reason that they were not Jewish. The group led by Mr. Shukairy represented that people, the principal party in the case, and its views should be taken into account first and foremost. All the Arab countries felt its cause to be their own cause and hoped that Mr. Shukairy's speech had reached the hearts of those who supported the Zionist aggression, whether actively or tacitly.

3. The control of information media by the Zionists and their allies enabled them to distort the facts flagrantly. They sought to show that people of unknown origin were entitled to take the place of the indigenous people of Palestine simply because they were Jewish. The Jewish populations that had endured discrimination, the ghettos of Europe and Nazi atrocities were now applying the same treatment to the people of Palestine which had received them. They could only do that with the help of their allies, who called themselves defenders of peace and freedom. The phenomenon was apparently sociological and pathological. Israel also followed the Nazis in their belief in aggression and expansion, and its policy was an amalgam of apartheid, colonialism and Nazism, the very policies which were condemned by its supporters.

4. The Zionists had attempted, like conjurors, to wave a magic wand whose secret only their allies understood, to make a million and a quarter Palestine Arabs disappear who, they claimed, existed only in the minds of politicians. Happily, there were still honest men in the world, and in the United States, who did not allow the Zionists to influence them, who had the courage to tell the truth and lay bare the real issue of Palestine. The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was such a man; he deserved the admiration of the Committee and it was fortunate that he had escaped the fate of another honest and noble man, Count Bernadotte, who had been assassinated in Palestine for following the dictates of his conscience. In his statement to the Committee at its 398th meeting, the Commissioner-General had said that the feeling of the Arabs was a product of centuries and existed not only among the Palestine refugees, but also among the Arab nations as a whole, and was being transmitted in full force to the rising generation. Moreover, the Arab politicians did not control it but, on the contrary, were themselves governed by it. Thus it was not the politicians who had created the problem. It had existed and would continue to exist

as long as the Arab people of Palestine were denied their rights. Those statements by a man who had lived with the problem of the refugees for five years, emphasized that the time factor would not work in favour of the usurpers.

5. As the Commissioner-General had noted in his statement, the refugees' feeling about Palestine was being transmitted in full force to the new generation. That feeling was universal among the Arab people and the Arab nations and the younger Arab generations in particular who, outraged at the injustice imposed upon the Palestinians, were committed to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The day would come when the truth about Palestine would no longer be hidden and distorted by propaganda media under the control of international Zionism and when it did the younger generations in all parts of the world would be awakened to the injustice which had been imposed upon the people of Palestine.

6. It was impossible to describe the feelings and sufferings of refugees who saw usurpers living in their houses and tilling their fields while they themselves were banished from the land in which their ancestors had lived from time immemorial; they saw themselves forced, as refugees, to live in tents, humiliatingly dependent on international charity for survival. Their right to their homeland was inalienable and the General Assembly had, in effect, recognized it by adopting at each session a resolution reiterating the substance of resolution 194 (III).

7. He wished to reserve the right to comment in more detail on the Commissioner-General's report at a later stage.

8. In conclusion, he stated that his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by Mr. Shukairy on behalf of the Arab people of Palestine who had the whole-hearted support of their Arab brothers in Yemen in their struggle to assert their rights. His delegation considered that the group led by Mr. Shukairy was the representative of the Palestinian Arabs and that, accordingly, its views should be treated as the views of the party primarily concerned.

9. Mr. TARAZI (Syria) said that although the item before the Committee had been on the agenda ever since 1947, some of the Member States which had joined the United Nations since that time might not be fully aware of the real nature of the situation which had been created by an act that was one of the gravest injustices in history. The comprehensive statement made at the 399th meeting by Mr. Shukairy, the representative of the Palestine Arabs, made it unnecessary for him to go into the details of the matter. The representative of the Israel authorities had appealed to the Committee at the 398th meeting not to reopen old wounds and so he admitted their existence. But to ignore those wounds would not heal them. Those wounds could not be made to disappear, for future generations could never forget the tragedy of Palestine. And what had to be said on the matter must be said by the Arab people of Palestine. The Israel authorities, having won possession of Palestine by illegal means and at the expense of that country's rightful inhabitants, now cynically declared that they did not recognize the existence of Palestine but that monstrous cynicism could not deceive anyone who knew the real facts of the situation. To say that the question of the Palestine refugees should be settled as a factor of the relations between the Arab States and Israel

was unrealistic because the existence of Israel in the midst of the Arab countries had been imposed by the will of forces alien to both the Arabs of Palestine and the Arabs of the surrounding countries, namely the will of the Zionists allied with imperialism and international finance. The situation had been made by the Balfour Declaration^{1/} in 1917, a document in complete contravention of international law, and it had been aggravated by the artificial creation of a State following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. The Arab conscience could never accept the founding of that artificial State and it was therefore out of the question to try to settle the issue on the pretext of maintaining international peace and security, as connected with the relations between it and the Arab countries. It was not for the Arab States, much less the General Assembly, to decide the fate of a particular Arab nation. Consequently, to refuse to recognize the representative character of the group speaking on behalf of the Arabs of Palestine was to be deliberately blind to the facts. If the facts were ignored then all the arts of diplomacy would not suffice. That was why his Government had refuted the statements contained in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/5545). According to those statements, a member of the Commission had taken it upon itself to settle the issue, a procedure which was unacceptable inasmuch as the Commission received a delegation of powers from the General Assembly and could not under an old and admitted principle of law delegate those powers in turn to one of its members; the Commission had acted ultra vires. The reason why there had been no objection within the Commission to such a re-delegation of powers delegated by the General Assembly was that the three members were all of the same mind. If the Commission had included members who would not have been too favourable to one of the parties, the attempted re-delegation of powers, with all its detrimental implications for the Arab people of Palestine, would not have occurred. The question could be settled only by the Palestinian people themselves, whether Moslems, Christians or indigenous Palestine Jews. It could not be settled by a commission made up of countries which were all members of the same political and military alliance and partisans of the same ideology.

10. The pleas made at earlier sessions of the General Assembly by representatives of certain African and Asian countries for the preservation of peace and security in the Middle East were valid in themselves but erroneous conclusions should not be drawn from them. Certainly it was desirable from the standpoint of international peace and security that the matter should be settled, but the interested party was neither Israel nor the Arab States. The interested party was the group which for centuries had constituted the population of Palestine, and it alone had the right to decide its fate. The Palestine question had been on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council ever since 1947. Consequently it was for the competent organs of the United Nations to find a solution but it must be a solution which would take into account the lawful existence of Palestine and the Palestinian people. To say that the situation in the Middle East had its origin in tensions between certain other countries and Israel was to deny the reality of the Palestine situation. That reality was shown by

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Supplement No. 11, vol. II, annex 19.

the General Armistice Agreements entered into in 1949^{2/} between Israel and four Arab States on the understanding that the armistice was to remain in force until the final peaceful solution of the Palestine question.

11. It was thus impossible not to recognize the existence of Palestine, since official United Nations documents having the force of law and approved by the Security Council recognized the existence of a Palestine question. The point then arose: who was to settle that question? That could only be done by the United Nations, because the question had been passed on to it by the League of Nations. The League of Nations itself had entrusted the mandate over Palestine to the United Kingdom because the latter had wanted it; and the United Kingdom had wanted the mandate because it had already issued the Balfour Declaration promising the Jews a national home in Palestine.

12. The situation was thus a typically colonial one, and he would ask those countries which had recently thrown off the shackles of colonialism to ponder that fact. Before the First World War Palestine and the other Arab countries had been provinces, "vilayets", of the Ottoman Empire. When the British occupied Palestine in 1917, the inhabitants of the country were called Palestinians and were mainly Arabs. There was a Jewish minority, but they were Palestinian Jews who at that time did not think of imposing their will on the majority. The Balfour Declaration was in fact made for the benefit of the Zionists, as a reward for their assistance in the war.

13. From the time of the adoption of the Declaration it was evident that its ultimate objective was the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. According to an article in The Times of London of 21 August 1937, the Balfour Declaration envisaged the eventual establishment within the area of an independent Jewish State and that construction had been placed on it by Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, Lord Cecil and General Smuts at the time it was made; by Viscount Samuel in 1919; by Mr. Winston Churchill in 1920; and by President Wilson and the American nation, to consolidate whose support at perhaps the blackest moment of the whole war the pledge had in large measure been given.

^{2/} Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year, Special Supplements Nos. 1-4.

14. In other words, to obtain, with the help of international Zionism, United States support in the war, the United Kingdom envisaged the creation in Palestine not merely of a national home for the Jews but of a Jewish State—and that without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants of Palestine. Was that not a typical application of colonialist policy and a violation of the right of peoples to self-determination? It must be recognized that a State had been created in flagrant violation of the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, a principle to which the African nations owed their own independence. Many years later a great Soviet writer, Ilya Ehrenburg, was to liken Israel to an American colony. It was a colonialist issue and to continue to tolerate a status quo based on unlawfulness and illegality was to betray the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. And if the United Nations betrayed those principles it would risk meeting the fate which had befallen its predecessor, the League of Nations.

15. To prove that the Palestine problem was a typically colonial problem, it was unnecessary to look further than a statement made by Mr. Winston Churchill in 1922. Addressing a Committee of the House of Commons he said textually on that occasion:

"Broadly speaking, there are two issues raised tonight, and it is very important to keep them distinct. The first is: Are we to keep our pledge to the Zionist made in 1917 to the effect that His Majesty's Government would use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of a National Home for the Jewish People? Are we to keep that pledge or are we to abandon it? That is the first issue. The second issue is a separate one, and it is: Are the measures taken by the Colonial Office to fulfil that pledge reasonable and proper measures?"

16. Thus, in Mr. Winston Churchill's eyes, the Mandate agreement under which the United Kingdom was to administer Palestine until it became fully independent was to be based not on the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people but on the Balfour Declaration.

17. Such then was the colonial history of the question and the Syrian delegation fully supported the statement made by Mr. Shukairy on behalf of the Palestine Arabs (399th meeting). In conclusion, he reserved the right to speak again later on other aspects of the question.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.