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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. SHUKAIRY (Saudi Arabia) said that as Israel was inclined to distort the facts of the case he would preface his statement with a few indisputable figures and dates.

2. The General Assembly had passed twenty-five resolutions on the question of Palestine, each and every one of which had been defied by Israel. The Security Council, for its part, had passed forty-five resolutions urging that a just solution should be sought and four of those resolutions had condemned Israel for its acts of lawlessness and armed aggression, acts the like of which had not been committed by any other Member State since the United Nations had been founded. Israel's aggression against the Sinai Peninsula on 29 October 1956 had almost brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war. The Trusteeship Council had adopted five resolutions calling for a United Nations statute for the internationalization of Jerusalem but those resolutions too had been flatly rejected by Israel. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had submitted to the General Assembly nineteen progress reports, the gist of which was that there had been no progress. Fourteen years after the Commission had been entrusted with the task of repatriation and compensation there was still not a single refugee who had been repatriated or a single refugee who had been compensated. In early 1947 there had been 30,000 refugees; by the time a year had passed their number had risen to 400,000 and by the end of 1950 it had reached 900,000. Now it totalled well over a million and it was still growing. It should be noted that the progressive increases in the refugee figures had paralleled the progress of Israel's acts of terrorism, expulsion, murder, usurpation of Arab towns and villages, occupation of demilitarized zones and other violations which could only be compared to the lawless acts of the Nazi régime. The United Nations Library had on its shelves no less than fourteen reports concerning Palestine refugee relief operations and the current report of the Commissioner-General of the United

Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/5214) reminded the Assembly that the Agency's mandate would come to an end in June 1963. Yet the solution of the refugee situation was no nearer. Something was wrong for, despite all those reports and resolutions, the Assembly still found itself confronted with the same item year after year.

3. The Commissioner-General of the Agency had accurately indicated what was wrong when he had written of the feeling of the Arab people that an injustice had been committed against the Arabs of Palestine, that a country had been obliterated and a people uprooted and dispossessed (A/5214, para. 5). Injustice therefore was at the root of the wrong. That injustice had been visited, moreover, not upon the Arabs of Palestine alone but upon the Arab people as a whole.

4. The delegation of Member States which had had to fight for their emancipation from colonialism could surely appreciate the gravity of the situation for it was made up of colonialism in its most obnoxious form. There were refugees in all parts of the world. The Palestine refugees, in common with the refugees from such African countries as Angola, Kenya and the Rhodesias, were the victims of colonialism. Yet the situation of the Palestine refugees was even worse than that of the latter for, although the white settlers in the Rhodesias and South Africa had been able to impose their rule, they had not expelled the indigenous inhabitants from their homeland. The tragedy of the Palestine refugees was the doing of Israel; Israel was the doing of Zionism, and the base of the pyramid was imperialism. Zionism, with Israel as its spearhead, was a blend of colonialism and imperialism, a combination of fascism and nazism with all their cruelties. Israel was practising apartheid in Palestine, but, whereas apartheid in South Africa was a measure of discrimination, in Israel it was a measure of extermination. The Anti-Sabotage Act (General Law Amendment Act) of South Africa had its counterpart in the Law of the Return in Israel. That law was intended to facilitate the entry of Jews from distant parts of the world to a country they had never known and never possessed.

5. The injustice to which the Commissioner-General of the Agency referred did not begin with the establishment of Israel in 1947 but with the plans of Great Britain to partition the Ottoman Empire. British imperialism had found in Zionism a tool which it thought would be useful to it in carrying out its designs.

6. In May 1854 the Earl of Shaftesbury had urged that the Sultan of Turkey should allow the Jewish people to hold land in Syria or any part of the Turkish dominions. Some twenty years later Disraeli and Salisbury had proposed the settlement of Jews on a vast tract of land east of the Jordan river. The

Zionists for their part were fully aware of the connexion between their cause and imperialism. In 1897 Theodore Herzl, the leader of the Zionist movement, addressing a message to a Jewish conference in London, had said that England was the lever by means of which the Zionists could realize their goal. Asquith had noted in his diary in March 1915 that Lloyd George was a partisan of the proposal to establish a Jewish national home because he did not want the Holy Places to come under France's control. Similarly, Mr. Amery had said that from the British point of view a prosperous Jewish population in Palestine might be an invaluable asset as a defence of the Suez Canal against attacks from the north and as a station on the future air-routes to the East. Even the United States, despite its isolationism, had discerned the relationship between British imperialism and Zionism, as was to be seen from a note among President Wilson's papers on the subject of a Jewish national home that the English naturally wanted the road to Egypt and India blocked.

7. The wrongs and injustices done had been in violation of the principles of the Charter.

8. The greatest wrong done to the Palestine refugees had been the denial of the principle of self-determination. At the time of the Balfour Declaration^{1/} the Jews in Palestine numbered one out of twelve of the total population and owned no more than 2 per cent of the land. A refugee problem had therefore been inherent in the Declaration, since a Jewish national home could not be established unless the rightful inhabitants of the territory were driven out. Prominent British statesmen as well as Zionist leaders had been at considerable pains to reconcile the establishment of a Jewish home with the principle of self-determination. Realizing that American trusteeship would apply majority rule on the American democratic pattern, they had been anxious to ensure that British trusteeship over Palestine would be established. Balfour had thus said that while he agreed to the creed of self-determination, it could not be indiscriminately applied to the whole world and that Palestine was a case in point.

9. After consideration of those events it was now necessary to seek a solution. The first step was to check Jewish immigration and facilitate the repatriation of the Arab refugees.

10. Instead of yielding to United Nations demands for repatriation, Israel had ignored General Assembly resolutions, although it owed its own statehood precisely to such a resolution (181 (II)). Every year the Assembly reiterated its decision concerning the repatriation of the refugees, only to be confronted by a fresh wave of Jewish immigration.

11. The representative of Australia in the Third Committee (1170th meeting) had suggested that the Jews of the Soviet Union should be permitted to migrate to Palestine. To suggest such a possibility at a time when a million Arab refugees were denied the right to return to their homeland was little short of an attempt to undermine the authority of the United Nations. The Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, were rendering a great service to the cause of peace in the Middle East by outlawing Zionism as a subversive movement of imperialist inspiration.

12. It was therefore clearly the duty of all Members of the United Nations jointly and severally to curtail that Jewish immigration—or rather invasion—and to outlaw all organs engaged in promoting it. The United Nations was fully entitled in 1962 to assume the same competence on immigration as in 1947. In view of Israel's record, there was even more justification for taking resolute action.

13. The prohibition of Jewish immigration, under the supervision of a neutral United Nations commission, was thus an absolute necessity. It would open the door to a solution of the refugee problem and ensure peace in the area. With the establishment of such a commission not only would Jewish immigration be stopped, but thousands of Jews now in Israel would go back where they belonged.

14. Another suggestion therefore would be to launch an international crusade against racist and fictitious nationalist movements, such as Zionism. For the latter was not to be confused with Judaism, which was a great religion worthy of respect. As Sir Moses Montefiore had pointed out, the word "Jew" denoted not a member of a given nation, but a member of a given religion.

15. It should not be thought that the Arabs were anti-Semitic, for they themselves were Semites—far more so than the Zionists, in fact. The tragedy of the Arab refugees came from Zionism and the only way of helping them return to their homes was to combat Zionist activities all over the world. The United Nations should therefore denounce Zionism and prohibit all its manifestations. To say that this would be an infringement of freedom and democracy would be a fallacy. For to allow activities that perpetuated the exile of a million people had nothing in common with freedom or democracy. If nothing positive could be done to assist repatriation, the least that could be done was to prevent activities in support of expatriation. But the injustice seemed to be continuing. President Kennedy, in a message to the annual Jewish Conference of the United States, had just described the establishment of Israel as "a significant event in world history" and had referred to Israel as "a strong democracy dedicated to freedom and human rights". That message was surely ill-timed and ill-worded. Some explanation was required of the United States as an important member of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. Its answer would determine whether or not it was still qualified to serve on that body. The United States, it would be recalled, bore the responsibility for having created the Palestine disaster which had led to the problem of the refugees, and subsequent developments had shown that the Arab people could expect no justice from that quarter.

16. In Argentina a national movement known as Tacuara had recently been started to combat Zionism. Since the abolition of Zionism was the key to the refugee problem, he hoped that Tacuara would spread in Latin America and its principles be adopted by the United Nations.

17. His third proposal was that a United Nations custodian should be appointed to administer the property of the refugees. In paragraph 5 of his report (A/5214), the Commissioner-General had referred to the physical privation suffered by the refugees and the psychological damage inflicted on them by their prolonged dependence on charity. The Commissioner-General was the agent of the United Nations and his

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

conclusions should be acted upon. The Saudi Arabian proposal was not that budget should be increased, but that the refugees should be allowed to be self-supporting. They had not been landless or penniless people in their own country. Of the 1 million refugees, there was scarcely one who did not own property in Palestine. Palestine had been a country of small owner-farmers and all the enticements of Jewish capital had failed to persuade the people to sell their land. In the course of 100 years, Jewish companies in Palestine had succeeded in buying only about 6 per cent of the land, and that mostly from absentee owners. Only 1,666 square miles of Palestine were actually owned by Jews. Arab property had been seized by Israel by means of discriminatory legislation or naked usurpation. A Palestine-Arab refugee received \$30 a year in charity, while Israel enjoyed \$160 million from the proceeds of a robbery. The refugees, moreover, were forced to witness that robbery.

18. His fourth proposal related to the so-called "economic refugees". In paragraph 47 of his report, the Commissioner-General estimated their number at 317,000 who did not qualify for relief because they lived in villages near the armistice line. He proposed that they should be permitted to cultivate their lands and to graze their cattle. They would then be able to support themselves and the international community would be relieved of further financial commitments. The proposed United Nations custodian could be vested with additional powers to settle those people on their lands and help them to lead a decent and self-supporting life.

19. After fourteen years of suffering and humiliation, the refugees still stood by their demand for repatriation and would never give up their homeland. As a colonial issue, the problem of the Palestine refugees must be liquidated in the way in which all colonial problems were liquidated. The last six new Members of the Organization, admitted during the current session, had achieved their independence in recognition of the principle of self-determination and the Arabs of Palestine were entitled to do the same. The United Nations could not practice discrimination; Palestine belonged to its people and the people should be restored to their homeland.

20. Neither negotiation nor conciliation could ever lead to a lasting solution. Negotiation was a United Nations practice, but it could not be used to destroy the fundamental principles of the United Nations. Likewise, conciliation could not be used to deny the purposes of the Charter. If justice was still to be denied, redress would have to be sought outside the United Nations. That was the last alternative left to the Arab people. Let all the Members of the United Nations unite their efforts to avert war, remedy the injustice done and bring a lasting peace to the Holy Land.

21. Mr. GARCIA DEL SOLAR (Argentina) referred to the Saudi Arabian representative's mention of the so-called Tacuara movement in Argentina. Tacuara was not a national movement but youthful groups numbering less than 1,000 out of a population of 20

million. The Argentine Government's policy was one of complete respect for human rights and it could be counted upon to deal appropriately with any activities by that group which violated those rights. Argentina's contribution to the strengthening of human rights was more deserving of mention than the activities of a neo-Nazi group.

22. Mr. COMAY (Israel) in the exercising of the right of reply, said that he would confine himself to the central theme of the Saudi Arabian statement that the only solution to the Arab refugee question lay in the dissolution of the State of Israel. Unfortunately, the doctrine espoused by the representative of Saudi Arabia was being systematically pumped into the minds of the refugees and the Arab countries of the Middle East. When backed up by missiles and bombers that theory became even more dangerous. The Saudi Arabian representative had tried firstly to rewrite the history of the past and secondly to present, to the Asian and African countries in particular, an ugly and distorted picture of Israel.

23. In 1947, the Arab claim to Palestine as an Arab country had been unanimously rejected by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.^{2/} In the General Assembly, the Arab case had received only six non-Arab votes. The United Nations had offered a plan for self-determination and independence to both the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine. The Jews had accepted the compromise but the Arabs had rejected it. As the United Nations Mediator, Count Bernadotte, had reported at the time,^{3/} the Jewish State could be eliminated only by force and the United Nations had decreed that force must not be employed; the Arab States must therefore accept the Jewish State or defy the United Nations and in so doing incur incalculable liabilities. Israel was fully prepared to co-operate with any United Nations initiative for peaceful negotiations aiming at an agreed settlement.

Mr. Fukushima (Japan), Vice-Chairman, took the chair.

24. Mr. SHUKAIRY (Saudi Arabia) said that Mr. Comay might have been wiser not to refer to the presence of missiles in the Middle East. It was only very recently that the United States had agreed to supply Israel with missiles on the pretext of helping it to defend itself. It was almost unimaginable that a Member of the United Nations should supply such highly dangerous weapons to another Member which had four times been condemned by the Security Council for offensive action and which was in constant violation of the Charter and the General Armistice Agreements. There were three main sub-divisions of the situation in Palestine: the question of the Palestine refugees, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and the territorial arrangement. Any negotiated settlement must deal with all three and there could be no negotiation when Israel had already rejected all of them.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

^{2/} *Ibid.*, vol. I, chap. V, para. 3.

^{3/} *Ibid.*, Third Session, Supplement No. 11, part one, chap. II, para. 6.