

refugee problem was submitted by Dr. C.C. O'Brien, Irish delegate. He suggested the sending of a group of 100 Palestine Arab refugees back to Israel. This might be a first step in breaking "a political deadlock in which nearly 1,000,000 lives are now trapped." After a year the pilot group would be urged to return to the UNRWA camps in the Arab states and report on their experiences in Israel. "In this way," he said, "a knowledge of actual conditions in Israel would gradually permeate the refugee camps." If the initiative proved successful, a second group of some 1,000 Arab refugees could be given a choice between repatriation and compensation.

Dr. O'Brien disclaimed any magical efficacy for his suggestion but insisted that some effort must be made to ~~solve the problem~~. The Israeli delegate, while expressing his gratitude for the Irish delegate's good intentions, doubted that the proposal "would meet the realities of the situation."

November 30 - Michael Comay renewed Israel offers to negotiate with the Arab states. If the latter preferred, he said -- in a departure from previous offers -- the negotiation could be conducted indirectly through a third party. The Israeli delegate cited various conciliatory steps that his country had taken on behalf of the refugees. He mentioned the release of bank accounts totalling \$8 million, the integration of thousands of Arabs through the "family-reunion scheme," and noted that the Israel government has not rejected the possibility of allowing a further number of refugees to rejoin their families in Israel. The offer of compensation for the Arabs' abandoned property was reiterated. As in the past, this was conditioned on financial aid from the international community and on payment for property losses suffered by Israeli Jews formerly in Iraq and other Arab states.

December 3 - A compromise agreement was reached between the Arab states and the U.S. under which UNRWA would continue its relief activities for a three-year period. [Sevanty percent of the UNRWA budget is carried by the U.S.] The agreement, reached in the course of private talks between U.S. and Arab delegates, represented a compromise as the Arab states had pressed for a long-term extension of the agency while the U.S. had hoped for a two-year limit. Also agreed upon were provisions calling upon the long-dormant Palestine Conciliation Commission to revive efforts at implementing the 1948 resolution on the Arab refugees, requesting a review of the UNRWA ration lists, and appealing for improved cooperation between the Arab states and the agency.

December 7 - Israel announced that it was not a party to the U.S.-Arab states compromise agreement on the Palestine refugee question, and that it had not been consulted in advance. Israeli objections centered on the clause ~~seeking renewal of efforts to return~~ the refugees to their former homes in Israel.

December 8 - The U.S.-Arab states agreement was presented as a resolution sponsored jointly by Pakistan and Indonesia to the Special Political Committee where it passed by a 71 to 0 vote. Israel ~~abstained~~. On a special vote confined to the provision regarding the reactivation of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, 19 states abstained. [A number of delegates expressed doubts about the usefulness of the Commission. The vote on this section of the resolution was 54 to 1 in favor, Israel casting the lone negative ballot.]

December 9 - The General Assembly voted 80 to 0 in favor of the Pakistani-Indonesian resolution.