

Prepared at the Specific Request of the Refugees Studies Center
for the Students at An- Najah National University

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I was born in Jerusalem in 1922, and have lived all my life in this eternal, sacred and beloved city.

As a child, I grew up in the atmosphere of the Palestinian Arab uprising against the British government's policies for the implementation of the provisions of the Balfore Declaration. The tempo and intensity of these acts of defiance increased yearly. They continue to remain, main causes of pride for me as a Palestinian Arab; because what our people sacrificed, was great; the national principles they up held were sacred - and they spared no amount of sacrifice for maintaining Palestine for the Palestinians.

World War II came in 1939, tempers eased in Palestine considerably, until a victory for the allies was assured.

Then problems began once more- America and some European powers wanted Jewish survivors in Europe to be allowed to be brought to Palestine. The British Mandatory Power refused. Eventually this deadlock caused the British government to rid itself of its mandatory responsibility over Palestine. When a new United Nation was being set up at Lake

Success, Britain officially requested to be relieved of its responsibilities in Palestine.

The newly born U.N. in 1947, established a United Nation Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) which was to examine the situation and recommend solutions, to the Palestine problem, which was created mainly by the British government.

UNSCOP carried enquiries and examined proposals, and after approximately six months of work, could not agree on a unanimous report to submit to the UN. A majority report recommended to partition Palestine into an Arab and Jewish states. The minority report recommended the establishment of a secular democratic state in Palestine to be ruled by its inhabitants

After very careful manoeuvring in the 50 nations Un General Assembly, it was decided by 33 votes, on 29 Nov, 1947; to partition Palestine through resolution 181.

(In order to appreciate and understand how these 33 votes were mobilized, it is recommended that one reads the Book "What Price Israel" by Alfred Lilienthal).

By virtue of this partition scheme Palestine was to be divided as follows:

Of the total area of Palestine which was 26323 square kilometers (equivalent to 10162 squares miles.

57% would become the Jewish state - (14500 sq kilometer or 5700 sq miles)

43% would be the Arab State (11823 sq kilometers or 4300 sq miles).

Jerusalem and its surroundings would be declared a corpus separatum area and would come under UN rule. (The area of this international zone was to include the 1948 Municipal area of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis. The most southern Bethlehem, the most western Ein Karem; including the built up area of Motsa, and most of northern Sh'ofat).

The population in situ in these areas at the time UN Res. 181 was passed; was as follows:

In the area proposed for a Jewish state- the total population was 1008800 persons consisting of 509780 Arabs and 499020 Jews

In the area proposed for an Arab state the total population was 825000 persons consisting of 72500 Arabs and Jews 100000.

Jerusalem area would have had a population of 205000 persons of whom 100000 would have been jews and 105000 non-jews .

The Arabs opposed the proposal to partition Plestine;on the ground that it was incompatible with law and justice and the principles of democracy - the Arabs also questioned the legal competence of the UN. to recommend the partition of their ancestral homeland. They tried unsuccessfully; to obtain a vote to refer the legality of the UN partition decision to the International Court of Justice but failed

33 nations voted for Partition

13 nations voted against partition

10 nations abstained.

The partition solution was accepted by the Jews - but not by the Arabs.

Israel knew that the demographic situation in the future state of Israel had to be changed, in order to make the future state of Israel compatible with their zionist principlis.

As early as the 1930s the Jews had begun to think about this matter and eventually they developed plans as to how to resolve this problem.

Dr. Walid Al-khalidi has studied such plans extensively and had written about this considerably. The plans were:

- 1. OPERATION NACHSON to be implemented 1st April 1948 to carve corridor connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and by so doing split the main part of the Arab State into two, (defeated).**
- 2. OPERATION HAREL To be implemented 15 April 1948 A continuation of NACHSON but centered on villages in the Latrun area (defeated).**
- 3. OPERATION MISPHARAYIM to be implemented 21 April 1948, to capture Haifa and rout its Arab population (successful).**
- 4. OPERATION CHAMETZ to be implemented 27 April 1948; to destroy the Arab villages around Jaffa and cut off Jaffa (successful).**
- 5. OPERATION JEVUSSI to be implemented 27 April 1948; to isolate Jerusalem and domination of the Ramallah- Jerusalem road. The Jericho - Jerusalem road and the Bethlehem Jerusalem road (defeated).**
- 6. OPERATION YIFTACH to be implemented in 28 April 1948; Purify eastern Galilee of Arabs (successful).**

7. **OPERATION MATATCH** to be implemented 3rd May 1948; destroy Arab villages connecting Tiberias and eastern Galilee (successful).t
8. **OPERATION MACCABI** to be implemented 7th May 1948; destroy Arab villages near Latrun and try penetration of Jerusalem from the North (defeated).
9. **OPERATION GIDOEN** to be implemented 11th May 1948; occupy Beisan and drive beduins away (successful).
10. **OPERATION BARAK** to be implemented 12 May 1948; destroy Arab villages near Bureiz on the way to the Negev (partially successful).
11. **OPERATION BEN AMI** to be implemented 14TH May 1948; to occupy Acre and purify Western galilee of Arabs (successful).
12. **OPERATION PITCHFORK** to be implemented 14th May 1948; to occupy the Arab residential quarters in the new City of Jerusalem (successful)
13. **OPERATION SCHFIFON** to be implemented 14 May 1948; to occupy the old city of Jerusalem (defeated).

Operation 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 were designed for areas which would have been included in Arab Palestine as per resolution 181. All these areas were occupied, when the British Mandate existed, and before Arab Armies could have defended them.

HENRY CATAN a prominent Palestinian Arab lawyer and author of several books on the subject of the Palestinian Problem - writes:

"... The Jewish forces occupied Arab cities and seized a considerable part of the territory of Palestine.

TIBERIAS was occupied on the 19th April 1948.

HAIFA was occupied on the 22nd April 1948.

JAFFA was occupied on the 28 April 1948.

ARAB QUARTERS OF JERUSALEM were occupied on the 30th April 1948.

BEISAN was occupied on the 8th May 1948.

Safad was occupied on the 10th may 1948.

ACRE was occupied on the 14th May 1948.

Thus; the Jews seized territory which was populated by Arabs and was to be part of Arab Palestine. In the process some 300000 Palestinian Arabs had been made refugees before the 15th May 1948, and this under the eyes of the British Mandate. The British neither did anything to stop such actions,

nor did they allow others - including the UN to do something about it.

4\5 of Jerusalem that was to be part of the Corpus Separatum area by Resolution 181 was occupied by Jews before the 15th May 1948.

During this period Palestinian Arabs were subjected to campaigns of fear - shock and intimidation. When the state of Israel was proclaimed the Jews had 70,000 trained military personnel, while all the Arab forces that came to help Palestinians could do not have been more than 8000. Palestinians sold their valuable belongings to buy arms in order to defend themselves.

When the British Mandate ended - there was a short war. on the 22nd of May 1948 the security Council ordered a cease fire - then on the 29th May 1948 the UN Security Council called for a truce for two weeks, which began on the 11th June 1948. This truce lasted until the 7th July 1948. The Israeli's violated the terms & utilized every minute of the truce to rearm and reorganize.

Meanwhile the situation of the Palestinian refugees was getting worse and a human tragedy of major proportion was in the making. Although Palestinian Arabs in the towns and

villages to which the refugees went, did everything in their power to help shelter, feed and clothe these refugees; but their efforts were marginal and the sufferings of these people were considerable.

During the second round of fighting in 1948, the Israeli's occupied all of the area demarcated as state of Israel plus western Galilee, Lydda, Ramleh and a larger part of central Palestine; which was to form part of Arab Palestine. The UN Security Council ordered a second stoppage of fighting, which came into effect on the 18th July 1948. Count Folke Bernadotte was assigned by the UN to see peace agreements reached, but he was assassinated by the Jews on the 17th September 1948 in Jerusalem.

On the 15th October 1948 the Israelis broke the UN Security council order and launched an offensive against the Egyptian forces in the southern front. They captured Beersheva on the 21st Oct 1948 Beit Hannoun on the 22nd October 1948 and Beit Jibrin soon thereafter.

A cease fire was ordered on the 22 nd October 1948; but on the 31st October 1948, the Israelis defied the warning of the UN chief of staff and attacked Southern Lebanon and occupied 15 villages. In November 1948 they moved towards the Gulf of Aqaba and achieved considerable penetration in Sinai. On the 22 December 1948 they occupied Auja, on the

10th March 1949, the Israeli's in another breach of the agreement with Egypt occupied Um Rashrash which is Eilat.

These actions of Israel produced more refugees, who were either stranded in Gaza Strip or they had moved into the Hebron area. The winter of 1948-1949 was real harsh and the suffering of these new refugees in the Hebron area were extreme; many of them moved toward Jericho, where water was available and the weather bearable, they settled in the open spaces around Jericho; which eventually became the Aqabat Jaber - and Ein Sultan and Nuweimeh camps.

The area under Israeli occupation was increased from 14500 sq kilometers (the size of the state approved by Resolution 181) to 20850 sq kilometers; almost 80% of the area of Palestine. Count Folk Bernadotte summarized the causes for the Palestine Arab refugees as having resulted from the Panic created by the fighting in their communities, by the rumors of real and alleged acts of terrorism by the Israeli's and expulsions.

The Israeli's were quick in destroying Arab villages which had been emptied of their Arab population in order to prevent the Arabs from returning to their homes.

On the 10th September 1948 it was estimated that there were 330,000 refugees.

On October 1948 it was estimated that there were 472,000 refugees.

On June 1949 it was estimated that there were 940,000 refugees.

It is estimated that 2/3 of the refugees came out of the areas, which Israel occupied in excess of the territorial boundaries fixed by Resolution 181.

In its resolution 194 (II) of 11th December 1948 the General Assembly of the UN had adopted the recommendation of Count Folke Bernadotte.

Later on the 12th May 1949, a protocol was signed by the Arabs and Israel, in which Israel agreed to implement Resolution 194; preserve Arab property and other matters. A map as approved by Resolution 181 was signed and attached to these protocols referred to as the "Lousanne Protocols". The Palestine Conciliation Commission was to work on this: Israel, it appeared, was unwilling to allow the return of refugees, it refused to abandon territories seized beyond their boundaries and Jerusalem; hence no progress was achieved.

The serious condition of refugees in the areas where they had taken refuge was very serious and needed attention. 1949 brought some international relief agencies to assume responsibility to administer assistance to the refugees on behalf of the UN.

The American Friends Service Committee (The Quakers) took over in Gaza, The British League of Red Cross Societies took over in Lebanon. Syria & East Jordan the International Committee of Red Cross took over in Palestine. What assistance they gave to refugees was minimal and essential and was carried out haphazardly. Meanwhile the Palestinians and host countries began to be seriously concerned with sanitation - water - education, jobs, and care of refugees children. A lot of bold efforts, on an emergency basis were carried out, but these were far from sufficient.

The presence of these international organizations helped to draw the attention of the world to the needs of the Palestinian people. These organizations also realized that they could not continue to administer their program; which needed greater resources Than that they possessed.

The needs of the refugees were many, and they increased with the passage of time. Arab governments, indigenous organizations, international relief groups tried their best to serve. Whatever they give was far short of what was needed. In the best of times refugees never received more than 20% of what they needed to subsist. It was a period of great sadness, anxiety and concern.

On the 8th December 1949, the UN General Assembly founded UNRWA and instructed that it should assume its responsibilities on the 1st of May 1950.

UNRWA was to be a temporary agency - it would not be part of the UN Secretariat. It was not placed under the care of UN High Commissioner for refugees. It was to be a non political organization. It was to be run by a Director (Commissioner General) who would be responsible to the General Assembly, it had no fixed budget and had to operate on donation made voluntarily by member states and other organizations. UNRWA was to be assisted by an Advisory Committee.

The main tasks for UNRWA, it then appeared would be:

- a) To determine who was a Palestine Refugees eligible for assistance.**
- b) to expend voluntary contribution made to UNRWA in the best possible manner to provide for the basic living needs of refugees.**
- c) To find means to employ and economically rehabilitate refugees. This, being without prejudice, to their political rights, which unfortunately no body defined.**

UNRWA took over its responsibilities on the 1st May 1950. Then I joined UNRWA for employment. The main task

of UNRWA was to feed, shelter refugees and provide health and educational services on a most rudimentary bases.

Not all refugees lived in camps. The Jordanian government undertook to provide security, water and camps sites etc. UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO were to assist UNRWA in the execution of its responsibilities to refugees.

One of the first tasks which UNRWA undertook on a large scale in 1950 was the so called "investigation of the status of refugees entitled to receive assistance from UNRWA".

More than 300 staff members were hired for the job. These officials travelled all over the country, in order to determine, by interrogation, examination of documents, and other evidence, which the refugees were requested to produce, to decide whether such persons could truly be classified as a Palestinian refugee entitled to receive assistance from UNRWA.

This operation eventually became very irritating to the refugees and went slightly corrupt. So much so, that the Jordanian government considered that the investigation operation could be a threat to the security of the country. In October 1953 the mass investigation program was stopped; upon the request of the government and the ration rolls for Jordan refugees were frozen.

Many truly eligible persons were not investigated and were not included in the rolls of UNRWA, some remain unregistered up till now.

The definition used by UNRWA to decide as to who was refugee eligible for relief was:

- i. The person should have resided in Palestine prior to 1948 for at least two years.**
- ii. The person should have lost his /her permanent residence and source of livelihood because of the 1948 Palestine conflict and**
- iii. The person should be needy. (UNRWA considered any refugee who, during the early fifties, earned JD 4 or 205 per month not needy)**

A lot of pressure was exercised by the donor countries on UNRWA, requesting UNRWA to economically rehabilitate the refugees. Most Arab governments & refugees in general demanded repatriation as provided by Resolution 194.

In April 1950 the WB, and Transjordan joined in order to create the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; where Palestinians would obtain citizenship. Jordan needed development & accepted it. Jordan hoped all of its citizens including Palestinians will benefit from such development and the opportunities it would provide.

During the period 1950-1955; UNRWA in Jordan, concentrated on the preparation for economic development projects which could rehabilitate refugees, while paying minimal attention to relief services.

UNRWA tried then to provide some Relief Work projects, e.g. building of roads, terracing, afforestation - small cottage industries- these relief work projects were extremely unworkable to refugees who had to work far away from their families - and they were difficult and costly for UNRWA to administer - soon they vanished.

With the approval and participation of the Jordanian government; a technical body was created within the Ministry of Development and Construction; concerned in dealing with UNRWA affairs; to encourage refugees to apply for funds to establish individual projects - the government would examine them and pass them onto UNRWA for approval. Some 7000 refugee families benefited from this program - they established carpenteries - tailor shops - built houses - blacksmiths etc. UNRWA provided capital of upto to JD 150 per person in the family seeking such help: in return the refugee beneficiary would renounce his claim for relief assistance from UNRWA.

Simultaneously - UNRWA established technical staff to examine and prepare for larger rehabilitation schemes.

In 1952\1953 the UN recommended that a three year budget be promised to UNRWA; a sum of 250 million was recommended for this period. \$200 million was to be expended progressively over three years, to establish rehabilitation schemes - while \$50 million was to be utilized on a diminishing scale for relief - social welfare programs.

Several major and feasible economic projects were studied and documented.

- a. It was proposed to construct a Dam on the Jordan - Yarmouk river confluence. Store the regional water and through an east Ghor and West Ghor canal, bring the ghor available on the Arab side, under irrigation. It was estimated that 250000 persons could be settled and gainfully employed by this project (later on Lake Tiberias was considered for the storage of water).
- b. It was recommended that the Euphrates River be dammed in the Jazireh area of Syria to bring parts of Jazireh under irrigation and settle refugees there.
- c. It was proposed to dam the Litani River in south Lebanon to make land available for agricultural projects which could rehabilitate the refugees who had fled to Lebanon.

- d. **It was proposed to syphon the extra water of the Nile to Sinai (syphoning the water under the Suez Canal to make Sinai cultivable where refugees from Gaza could be rehabilitated.**
- e. **A vocational training school was established in Qalandia on the West Bank to provide skilled workers in 1953.**

Other associated projects would follow e.g housing, social, educational health care services etc. The 1956 war in which Israel occupied Gaza and Sinai, demolished all hopes for the execution of these projects, which had been studied and made ready for implementation

The living condition of the refugees continued to deteriorate. A new Commissioner for UNRWA took over in 1955 Mr. Henry Labouisse, who established the policy that:

- a. **The suffering of refugees should not be a pawn for the solution of the political problems e.g rehabilitation.**
- b. **The living conditions and standards of services to refugees must be improved.**
- c. **The cases of unregistered eligible refugees must be resolved, especially the people of frontier villages.**

In 1955 Mr. Henry Labouisse submitted a special report to the UN General Assembly on these categories. Unfortunately the General Assembly did not authorized UNRWA to assist, but called on N.G.O and other voluntary, relief agencies to help.

During the period of Mr. Henry Labouisse's Leadership of UNRWA:

- a. Huts of concrete blocks replaced tents for refugees in camps more than 16000 huts were constructed 1955-1966 and all tents in the Jordan camps were replaced by concrete huts.**
- b. Built school classrooms began replacing tented classrooms as well as tented clinics and health services centers.**
- c. Approximately 75,000 babies of refugees in Jordan who were not receiving services from UNRWA were made eligible for all services except that, they could not be given rations.**
- d. Roads and sanitary services for refugees in camps were improved.**

Unfortunately the simple norms on the bases of which UNRWA provided services didn't improve.

5-10 liters of water per refugee in camps per day.

1 medical officer for 10,000 refugees.

1 staff nurse per 25,000 refugees

1 latrine for 50 refugees in camps

1 sanitation worker per 600-800 refugees in camps.

1 classroom for every 45 refugee children

40-45 students per class.

1500 calories of food per refugee per day.

Refugees could not, on the average, receive such food since generally UNRWA was giving 6 rations only to 10 refugees on its rolls.

When the Armistice Agreements were signed in Rhodes in the early months of 1949, The Armistice Line between Israel & Jordan cut through 111 villages , 105 of these villages lost their lands, sources of water, etc to the Israeli side of the Armistice Line- these villages had a population near 200,000 who were left poor and needy.

During the five years in which Mr Henry Labouisse was head of UNRWA conditions of services to refugees slightly improved. And their plight was presented more forcefully at the international level.

Many refugees squatters (refugees living in bad shelter conditions out side camps) were taken into camps which were expanded.

Unfortunately, in 1959 the U.S.A a major voluntary contributor to UNRWA, began to want to end UNRWA, and this particularly when the U.S.A realized that the sharp edges of the political needs of the Palestinians could not be blunted by rehabilitation. Rehabilitating refugees was not a possible option. Rumors were widespread that most UNRWA relief beneficiaries were false etc.

In the 1959 General Assembly, the proposal to end UNRWA was pushed vigorously by some Western Countries. Fortunately for us Arab governments representative spoke with one voice: They supported the proposals that contributions to UNRWA by the donor nations could stop provided that the General Assembly would establish a special UN Agencies to collect yearly revenues from Israel of Palestinian property which was usurped by Israel and was being used by them. It was estimated that in 1959 money values, the yearly income of such properties would amount to \$150 million, when UNRWA's budget was approximately \$30 million. This discouraged the proposal - the UN General Assembly voted to extend UNRWA for another year, the UN Secretary General was asked to report on the situations to the next UN General Assembly for consideration.

Don Peretz an expert writer on the Israel Arab conflict writes:

" of the nearly 400 new Jewish settlements between 1948-1953, 350 were located on abandoned Arab property.

In 1954, more than 1/3 of Israel's Jewish population lived on Arab abandoned property. Nearly 1/3 of the immigrants, were settled in urban areas and whole cities which were taken over, In addition to nearly 400 towns and villages containing 1/4 of all buildings in Israel. In 1954 10,000 Arab shops and business stores were left in Jewish hands. In the first five years of Israel's existence nearly one half of the citrus production came from abandoned Arab orange groves. More than 2/3 of the cultivable area acquired by Israel had belonged to refugees.

(Don Peretz, "Israel and the Palestine Arabs"). Mr. Henry Labouisse was disappointed and left UNRWA to become Director of UNICEF.

Mr. John Davis was appointed as the next Commissioner General.

The UN Secretary General's report to the UN General Assembly in 1960 stressed that the unemployed youth amongst the refugees, which were estimated to be around 500,000, should be an asset for a future developing Middle East. It urged that such youth should be taught skills and or otherwise should be healthily occupied. It was recommended that UNRWA should give training to such youth and provide Youth Activity

Centers for them in camps to keep them away from the vices of idleness and unemployment.

The period 1960-1965 was characterized by expanding the vocational training facilities of UNRW four fold, by opening Youth Activities centers by improving the efficiency of staff in serving refugees, etc. Unfortunately, however, this was also a period which created situations which would eventually lead to the 1967 War.

The cost of services to refugees which had averaged 5 cents to a person per day in 1950-1960, now became 10 cents per persons per day because costs were rising. The 1960s brought a new awareness amongst refugees that self improvement in the lives of refugees was extremely essential - Self help projects were introduced, and refugees responded to them very enthusiastically. Refugees would present to UNRWA projects they needed in camp - materielle would be provided by UNRWA and labor by the refugees.

Politics and political beliefs were extremely necessary for refugees - the passage of time - the lack of progress in the solution of their problems had their effects on UNRWA and refugees.

The situation amongst refugees, during this period, is well described in a book called "The Palestinian Refugees In Jordan 1948-1957 By Avi Plascov".(Avi Plascov was a Jewish

scholar who after 1967 studied the secret archives of the Jordanian government and examined the government's actions with regards to refugees).

The early sixties launched UNRWA into actions as follows:

- a. UNRWA began to work vigorously for the elimination of ration cards from the hands of the so called "ration cards merchants".**
- b. The rectifications of the rations rolls of UNRWA, on a voluntary basis by the refugees. Refugees would declare to UNRWA names of non existent persons in their ration cards - such names would be deleted - the rations would go to children in the family ration card where the child was not receiving rations. This program proceeded satisfactorily for sometime but it was abused and hence it was stopped.**
- c. UNRWA began reexamining it's organizational patterns and efficiency with the aim of improvements in its ranks.**

While a considerable amount of good work was being achieved, the security situation on the armistice line was deteriorating, there were attacks by Israel on border villages.

The frustration of the people in these frontier villages was considerable.

Additionally, Israel illegal pumping of the water from Tibarias to the Negev began to take importance, the Arab governments began to threaten to divert the waters which fed Lake Tibarias from Lebanon and Syria. Some diversion works began Israel raided these diversion project works. All these and other events caused considerable upheavals in the life of the people of the West Bank.

Eventually, war broke out in June 1967. The refugees claimed they had learned much from their experiences of 1948. There was general talk that in case of war with Israel, and come what may, the people would not leave and become refugees for either the first or the second time.

UNRWA did everything in its power to be ready for the emergency situation arising out of the possible outbreak of war. UNRWA stocked:

- a. Two months supply of rations in a decentralized manner in its many ware houses and ration distribution centers.**
- b. Medicines were similarly stocked and decentralized.**

- c. **Each operational unit was assigned responsible officials on a list, sometimes five names deep, to act on their own for the good of the refugees in that particular area, in situation of emergency, etc.**

But when the war brokeout and in less than a week, the West Bank and Gaza were occupied, people began to leave. Some 400,000 people left the West Bank and some 55,000 people left Gaza.

They left because :

- a. **Of the terror tactics of the Israeli occupying forces.**
- b. **The destruction of houses and villages by the Israeli army. Some examples :800 houses were destroyed in Qalqilya, 400 houses in Beir Awwa, all houses were destroyed in Beit Mersin.**

Destruction of houses were reported in Beit Illo, Kharas, Sourif, Edna, Zeita.

All village houses were destroyed in Beit Noba, Yalo, Emmwas, in Latroun. 150 houses were destroyed in the Magharbe quarter in Jerusalem to make space before the Western Wall.

- c. **Refugees and others, who were dependent on money remittances from their family members, were afraid**

they would lose this source of their livelihood and would suffer.

Isolated Arab villages on the West Bank continued to suffer under the occupation considerably.

By the end of June 1967 there were still 3000 persons crossing the destroyed the Allenby Bridge to the East Bank.

There was a brief battle in Karameh on the 21st March 1968. It raised the moral of people but this was shortlived.

In the immediate post 1967 War period, UNRWA measures did mitigate the situation of refugees and other West Bank people.

UNRWA had become almost fully operational in most parts of the West Bank from by the 10th June - 20th June 1967.

The most devastating exodus was in Jericho were some 80,000 of the refugees there, began their 9 kilometers march to Allenby Bridge on the 7th June 1967.

On the 14th June 1967, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 237 which requested Israel to facilitate the return of all the Arabs who had left because of the 1967 June War.

The I.C.R.C began to receive applications in Amman of such people who wanted to return. It collected 35184 applications totalling 140,000 persons which were handed to Israel.

UNRWA hoped many thousands would return and prepared to receive such returning people back in the West Bank. Unfortunately the Israeli Government by the 31st August 1967 had approved 4699 applications totalling 19,000 persons only 14051 returned.

The post 1967 June War period was severe. Difficulties were many, curfews were repeatedly imposed on several areas, demonstrations against the occupying power were constant, closure of schools and other forms of collective punishment were frequent. The number of arrested and or imprisoned Palestinians was very high, and inspite of the tough measures of the Israeli army; resistance toward occupation could not be quelled. It kept on increasing until it covered all the occupied territories and finally it expressed itself by the Intifada in December 1987.

During the few years following the 1967 June War many incidents, by the Palestinians were causes of pride to us, but two were very outstanding for me.

Sometimes, young refugees would come to me and express their concern as to the havoc which the actions of the

occupation authorities was causing to the outlooks of young refugees in camps.

They requested that I arrange and conduct some sort of a summer camps for them. To get young refugees from all over the occupied territories together, to give them a healthy and Jolly atmosphere, to let them realize that there was a brighter sid to life, and thus to encounter the feeling of fatalism that was building up within them. I liked the idea and promised to examine possibilities.

Soon girls demonstrated in front of UNRWA office, requesting the same opportunity, UNRWA had no money, I launched, on a personal fund raising crusade.

Beginning 1969, we began a summer camp program which went on till 1980. Some \$ 200,000 were raised by me over the years. 3500 youngsters attended the 20 camps.

Approximately 250 International Councilors from all over the world volunteered to help and made many lasting friendships with our youngsters, but the greatest contribution was from many scores of our teaching staff, who worked hard on planning and executing these camps in their free vacation times.

I am convinced that their contribution was extremely useful to the future of our youngsters.

These summer camps were held in the Deir Ammar camp, where we planted more than 2000 forest trees built several playgrounds, a swimming pool, and improved many of the camp facilities. I am still proud of this achievement.

The second occasion was in late September of 1970 when our people in the East Bank and a specially in Amman were being subjected to considerable hardships because of the civil disturbances occurring there at the time.

On the 27th of September 1970, news arrived that our people may be starving or suffering because of lack of drinking water and food.

By a spontaneous decision I organized a team; and we vowed to send food and the water to the people suffering there. On the 28th September 1970 a first convoy of few trucks left to the Amman outskirts filled with foods we were able to prepare by volunteer workers during a period of less than 12 hours.

This project earned considerable momentum. Almost everybody in the West Bank and Gaza was eager to contribute or help. There was a long list of groups who wanted to contribute and needed to know how and what they should give.

The spirit of concern and dedication was superior and are upto now causes of great pride for those who helped.

There were 13 convoys altogether from 28th September 1970 to 15th October 1970. I have a detailed list of what was sent and contributed by whom .

A rough summery of what was sent follows:

**Bread 300,000 loaves of bread various sizes.
Hot meals 27,000 cooked hot meals.
Family meal sandwiches etc 50,000 bags.
Cigarettes 6000 packets.
Bananas, 5000 kilograms.
Fresh tomato 32 boxes.
Tomato juice 3024 tens.
Potatoes 2500 kilograms.
Lemon 360 kilograms.
Dates two truck loads.
Raisins and dried figs 3200 kilograms.
Water two tank loads.
Eggs 15,000 eggs.
Blankets 3500 blankets.
Ambulances on loan four UNRWA (2 UNRWA
and 2 L.W.F).
Mandarins, 500 kilogram.
Splints 200 splints.
Demathole insecticide 115 kgs.**

All of these where donated by the people and when the operation stopped there was a long waiting list of donors who

waited their chance to do something. There were some who donated money. It was my greatest exercise as to people power, cooperation, charity and contributions.

The difficulties of life and living under occupation continued and increased non stop. coercion, repression, oppression, collective punishments, arrest, curfews, expulsions, house demolitions, etc could not defeat the desire of the Palestinians living under occupation from wanting to rid themselves of the yokes of occupation. The sacrifices of the Palestinians were extremely great. We have now begun a process for peace: whether, one agrees with the timing, or the procedure one has to hope that peace could be achieved. There are many roads by which a person can reach to the top of a mountain.

The road to peace and eventual freedom is difficult and long, we shall continue to sacrifice, we can never lose hope that we can and should achieved our goals. We need to up hold and increase our faith in our leadership. We need to give them support, we need to respect opinions and develop dialogue and understanding. We need foresight, a good knowledge of our past history, we need statesmen and diplomats, we must master the art of negotiations, we need to educate our public with the prerequisites of freedom and selfrule, we must spare no sacrifice to build our state.

Above all we need time to heal our wounds, to forget and forgive and to receive forgiveness.

We are capable of these tasks. We will prevail. Our war for peace should be sincere, well sustained and backed by our powers of perseverance.

We owe much to our future generations, we cannot lose the opportunity to do so.

So help us God.