

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held at the Y.M.C.A. Building, Jerusalem,
on Tuesday, 17 June 1947 at 9:30 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. Sandstrom	(Sweden)
	Mr. Hood	(Australia)
	Mr. Rand	(Canada)
	Mr. Lisicky	(Czechoslovakia)
	Mr. Garcia Granados	(Guatemala)
	Sir Abdur Rahman	(India)
	Mr. Antezam	(Iran)
	Mr. Blom	(Netherlands)
	Mr. Garcia Salazar	(Peru)
	Mr. Fabregat	(Uruguay)
	Mr. Brilej	(Yugoslavia)

Secretariat: Mr. Hoo (Assistant Secretary-General),
Mr. Garcia Robles (Secretary)

The CHAIRMAN called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Meeting to be attended by Representatives of the Jewish Agency.

Before proceeding with discussion of the items on the Agenda the CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to a conversation which he had had with the Chief Secretary to the Palestine Government (Sir Henry Gurney) and Mr. D.C. MacGillivray, regarding publicity of meetings.

Mr. HOO (Assistant Secretary-General) said that, as arranged, he had interviewed representatives of the Jewish Agency and they favoured a public meeting. The Palestine Government had requested,

for security reasons, that it should be given three days' notice of such a meeting in order to check on those invited to attend. Considering the short time available, it was proposed that interested organizations should be given a number of invitation cards to the meeting for distribution by them among their members. Both Jewish, Arab and other appropriate organizations or individuals would be invited.

The SECRETARY stated that a list of organizations was being prepared for distribution to each member of the Committee.

Sir Abdur RAHMAN (India) expressed the opinion that the various organizations should themselves apply for seats and that the Committee should refrain from sending invitations in order to avoid an impression that discrimination had been exercised.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) suggested that the meeting should be open to the press but that, if the Committee itself issued invitations to organizations, difficulties might arise.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) felt that tickets should be sent to the Jewish Agency and Arab Higher Committee only.

(After distribution of the list of proposed invitees, discussion was resumed.)

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) felt that the Jewish organizations had been given preference and Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) enquired why labour organizations had been omitted.

The CHAIRMAN agreed that the list was slightly in favour of the Jewish community since they had a total of 45 invitations as against 33 for members of Arab organizations (excluding the Supreme Moslem Council as a religious body). He explained that the distribution was that adopted by the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.

Sir Abdur RAHMAN (India) reiterated that tickets should be issued on application and he felt the Committee should not commit itself to a policy from which any unfavourable conclusions could be drawn.

Mr. HOO (Assistant Secretary-General) pointed out that tickets (23 in all) would have to be sent to the Consular Corps.

DECISION: As no objection was raised to Sir Abdur RAHMAN's (India) proposal, the Committee agreed to communicate with the organizations as listed and issue tickets as they might request.

Censorship

The CHAIRMAN then referred to a discussion which he had had the previous day with the Palestine Administration on the question of censorship. It had been decided that there would be no press censorship of reports of hearings nor of the Committee's activities in general. An assurance had also been received that there would be no censorship of private letters.

The Committee then proceeded with discussion of the items on the Agenda.

Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted.

Consideration of telegram of the Arab Higher Committee to the Secretary-General (Document A/AC/13/NC/16)

The CHAIRMAN expressed the opinion that the Committee should take no immediate action but should try to make contact with members of the Arab Higher Committee to ascertain their attitude, and see whether there was a possibility of getting in touch with the Arab population.

Mr. BRILEJ (Yugoslavia) said that in the view of his delegation it would not be possible to make contact with either the Arab Higher Committee or the Arab population of Palestine.

Not only had the Arab Higher Committee decided to boycott the work of the Special Committee, but they had issued a manifesto in the local press. He read out points from the manifesto as follows:

- "(1) On the day of the commencement of the Committee's work the country goes on a complete strike including offices, business houses, cafes, entertainment places, schools, transport, etc.;
- (2) All groups and individuals refrain from testifying before the Committee;
- (3) All Arabs refrain from contacting the Committee in writing and by any other means;
- (4) No Arab is permitted to attend the Committee's public and secret meetings and parties. These instructions also apply to Arab pressmen;
- (5) Nobody is permitted to confer officially or non-officially with the Committee members;
- (6) The above-mentioned points do not mean that any individual is free to react to statements or acts by the Enquiry Committee with harshness or any unsuitable behaviour. All they are requested is just to keep away from the Committee with great respect, harmonising with our traditional manners and national dignity."

Mr. BRILEJ emphasized that the Yugoslav people had great respect for the Arab peoples, and especially for the Arab people of Palestine who had long been fighting for their freedom and independence. This sympathy for the cause of the Palestine Arabs confirmed his belief that the Arab peoples would more nearly realise their wishes by strengthening their ties with other freedom-loving peoples. Cooperation with the Special Committee gave the Arab people in Palestine a good opportunity to do this. He therefore considered that the reasons motivating the Arab Higher Committee's boycott of the Special Committee were not sufficiently convincing.

The task before the Special Committee was set out in its terms of reference. Nothing had been prejudiced by these terms of reference, as was claimed in the manifesto of the

Arab Higher Committee. No solution had been excluded beforehand; not even the possibility of a solution providing for a cessation or termination of the Mandate and the establishment of a free and independent Palestine.

Mr. BRILEJ stressed that in order to realize the aims of the Committee, it was necessary to have the cooperation of all organizations representing the Palestine population. By refusing to cooperate with the Committee, the Arab Higher Committee would make it impossible for the interests of the Palestine Arabs to be represented before the Committee. The boycott might postpone the final solution of the Palestine problem, and worsen the already bad situation in Palestine. These reasons, as well as the fact that there probably were some groups among the Arab population of Palestine prepared to cooperate with the Committee, gave hope that the Arab Higher Committee would reconsider its decision and would work with the Committee in a spirit of cooperation.

Mr. BRILEJ finally proposed that the Committee should issue the following communiqué:-

"The CHAIRMAN of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine has received a cable from the Arab Higher Committee in which Jamal Hussein, Vice-Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee, informs the UNSCOP of the decision of the Arab Higher Committee to boycott its work.

In this connection the UNSCOP wishes to state that it considers that the cooperation of the whole population of Palestine would be most desirable and would do much towards the fulfilment of the most vital interests of the Palestine population which are expressed in their desires for freedom and independence.

The UNSCOP further considers that the cooperation of all groups, parties and organizations representing the Palestine population would also be in the interest of the realisation of the aims of the United Nations whose task it is to ensure peace, freedom, independence and cooperation among peoples.

Thus, the UNSCOP expresses the hope that this decision on the part of the Arab Higher Committee is not definite and thinks that further consideration of the decision by the Arab Higher Committee would be in the best interests of all, and would serve usefully for the

orientation of the Committee regarding the Palestine problem.

Accordingly, the UNSCOP, conscious of its responsible and difficult task, directs to the Arab Higher Committee and to the entire population of Palestine an appeal for full cooperation with the Committee so that conditions may be created enabling this Committee to make a full report and just proposals for the realisation of the rights of the people of Palestine."

Sir Abdur RAHMAN (India) pointed out that the press interview and radio broadcast given yesterday by the CHAIRMAN included an appeal to all parties for cooperation, including the Arab Higher Committee. He felt it advisable to postpone further immediate action and await developments. The Committee could, if necessary, take action at some future appropriate moment.

The CHAIRMAN, whilst appreciating the reasons for the view of the delegate of Yugoslavia, said he supported the opinion of the delegate of India.

Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) thought it would be preferable at this stage for the Committee to limit itself to the appeal that had already been made for the collaboration of all parties with the Committee's work. He did not think that by taking this decision all future contacts with the Arabs would be impossible. If the Committee found that Arab organizations and institutions were to be closed to it and attempts at cooperation frustrated, an appeal might then be made. If non-cooperation persisted, the fact might be mentioned in the Committee's report to the General Assembly, indicating that since the Arabs had refused to cooperate it had been difficult, or even impossible, to understand their attitude and thus arrive at a solution.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) stated that fundamentally he agreed with the remarks made by the delegate of Yugoslavia, particularly in regard to obtaining the cooperation of all parties in the work of the Committee. He had intended voting in favour of the

Yugoslav proposal. After hearing the remarks of the CHAIRMAN, and of the representatives of India and Iran, however, he was ready to support the inviting, then or in future, of the Arab Higher Committee to explain its viewpoint on the Palestine problem before the Committee.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) said that the question was essentially one of means since there was no disagreement on the desirability of receiving cooperation from the Arab Higher Committee. He felt that to address a public request or invitation would invite public rebuff and therefore have an unfortunate effect on the standing of the Committee. He shared the views expressed by other members that the issue of a communiqué at present would be premature and inappropriate. He proposed that the press release of the meeting should simply mention that the Committee had had the Arab Higher Committee's telegram under consideration and had re-affirmed the Chairman's appeal for cooperation by all parties.

Mr. RAND (Canada) agreed with the views of the representative of India and the CHAIRMAN said he would put this proposal (i.e. to defer any further action) to the vote.

Mr. BRILEJ (Yugoslavia) objected to discussion of the item in a private meeting pointing out that the Committee's Rules of Procedure provided that, in general, meetings should be public. The Arab Higher Committee had proclaimed a public and official boycott and he reserved the right to explain publicly the views of his delegation when considered necessary. He regretted that some Committee members did not agree that immediate steps should be taken to achieve the cooperation of all parties.

The CHAIRMAN said he had understood it had been decided on the previous day that the present meeting was to be private. With regard to communiqués, he referred to Rule 11 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure (Document A/AC/13/7) requiring

official press communiqués to be approved by the Chairman of the Committee. It was not advisable for individual members of the Committee to issue communiqués.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) stated that, contrary to what had been said by the delegate of Yugoslavia, all members of the Committee agreed it was essential to obtain the cooperation of all parties. The question was one of procedure.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the two proposals be put to the vote.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) said that the question was an important one needing further consideration and he would therefore refrain from voting.

Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) said, whilst sharing the point of view of the Delegate of Yugoslavia, that he would vote against the latter's proposal as he felt it would not realize the purposes in view.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) was of the opinion that acceptance of the second proposal did not mean rejection of the Yugoslav proposal: it was simply a case of postponement to permit the Committee to watch the results of the Arab boycott, and to enable the Chairman to make informal contact with the Arab Higher Committee and try to persuade it to desist from its present tactics.

Mr. BRILEJ (Yugoslavia) said he could not agree to a postponement since it would mean inviting the Arab Higher Committee and representatives of the Arab population after the boycott had become completely effective.

The two proposals were then put to the vote.

DECISION: Mr. BRILEJ's proposal received only his own vote.

The second proposal (to defer any further action for the time being) was adopted by nine affirmative votes with two absentiors.

Mr. BRILEJ (Yugoslavia) still pressed his right to explain publicly the views of his delegation.

After some discussion the CHAIRMAN ruled that the decision having been taken, it was against accepted procedure for a communiqué to be issued on this matter by an individual member of the Committee.

It was then proposed by Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) that the meeting be suspended for ten or fifteen minutes in order to permit an informal exchange of views.

The CHAIRMAN, while not withdrawing his ruling, agreed to suspend the meeting.

(The meeting was suspended at 11:20 a.m.)

(The meeting resumed at 11:45 a.m.)

DECISION: The CHAIRMAN stated that the delegate for Yugoslavia had agreed not to make any statement without giving him twenty-four hours notice so that there would be an opportunity for prior discussion.

Press release

Discussion then took place on the substance of the press release of the meeting.

DECISION: It was decided that the wording should indicate simply that the Special Committee was considering the telegram of the Arab Higher Committee to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Committee reaffirmed its hope of cooperation from all groups in Palestine.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) said that before discussion closed, he wished to make it clear that he would be invariably opposed to any appeal to public opinion being made by members of the Committee against the view of the majority.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) stated that he understood the delegate of Yugoslavia only desired to express his own or his delegation's views at a press conference: not to appeal to

public opinion against the Committee. Every delegate had a similar right to express his own opinions or those of his delegation.

The CHAIRMAN then closed discussion on this item.

Itinerary of proposed trip to ascertain conditions in Palestine.

Sir Abdur RAHMAN (India) said that he had some important questions to discuss which he did not wish to be recorded and he requested that members of the Secretariat might therefore withdraw.

(The CHAIRMAN concurred and the meeting was therefore suspended at 11:55 a.m.)

(The meeting resumed at 12:25 p.m.)

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) referred to two proposals - one from the Palestine Administration and the other from the Jewish Agency. He said he had attempted to work out a combined programme covering about nine days and including a two-day trip in the northern part of the country. Various proposals were put forward by members of the Committee.

DECISION: At the suggestion of Mr. HOOD (Australia) it was decided that the itinerary should be worked out by a Sub-Committee comprised of the delegates' alternates which would keep in touch with representatives of the Palestine Government and the liaison officers of the Jewish Agency.

It was further decided that any invitations extended to the Committee and the Secretariat should be passed to the Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee One).

Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) suggested that the first two days should be spent in a place that was neither entirely Arab nor Jewish, and the CHAIRMAN proposed that Haifa would be very suitable.

Presence of Jewish Correspondents at Moslem Holy Places.

Mr. SYMEONIDES (Press Officer) stated that it had come to his knowledge that the Arab Authorities would object to Jews accompanying the Committee on its visit to Moslem mosques.

DECISION: The Committee agreed that the Press Officer should explain in his personal capacity to Jewish correspondents the attitude of the Moslem authorities, while making it clear that this was not an intimation from the Committee.

Provision of Committee Documents.

The SECRETARY asked the Committee for a decision regarding the supply of Committee documents to the Jewish Agency. He explained that the practice during meetings in New York had been to give two copies of all documents (other than those marked "secret") to the representative of the Jewish Agency.

Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) suggested the same policy be followed and that a copy of each document be sent also to the Arab Higher Committee.

The SECRETARY asked whether copies should be given also to the representative of the Government of Palestine.

DECISION: It was decided that copies of all Committee documents, other than confidential documents, be supplied to representatives of the Jewish Agency, the Arab Higher Committee and the Government of Palestine.

Next Meeting

The CHAIRMAN announced that the next meeting would be held in public session in the auditorium of the Y.M.C.A. Building at 4 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.