

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held at the Y.M.C.A. Building, Jerusalem,
Monday, 16 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. Entezam	(Iran)
Mr. Blom	(Netherlands)
Mr. Garcia Salazar	(Peru)
Mr. Fabregat	(Uruguay)
Mr. Brilej	(Yugoslavia)

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

The CHAIRMAN called the meeting to order at 9.30 a.m.

Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted.

Consideration of preliminary stage of the Special Committee's work in Palestine.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that several telegrams and letters had been received, and Dr. Garcia ROBLES (Secretary) read out the text of the following messages :

- (1) Telegram from the Secretary-General of the United Nations giving the text of a cablegram dated 13 June from the Vice-Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee advising its decision to abstain from collaboration with the Special Committee (Document A/AC.13/NC/16).
- (2) Letter from the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine extending a welcome to the Committee and assuring it of the full cooperation of the Jewish Agency (Document A/AC.13/NC/14).

Accompanying the letter were thirty copies of a volume entitled The Jewish Case submitted for the Committee's consideration.

- (3) Letter from the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency naming two liaison officers chosen to represent the Jewish Agency, namely, Major Aubrey S. Eban, and Mr. David Horowitz. (Document A/AC.13/NC/15).
- (4) Letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine (Document A/AC.13/NC/13) accompanied by twenty copies of the following documents :
 - (a) A Survey of Palestine in two volumes prepared in 1945-1946 for the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry;
 - (b) Supplementary volume revising in part the two preceding volumes;
 - (c) The draft estimates of the revenue and expenditure of the Government for the financial year 1 April 1947 to 31 March 1948, together with an explanatory memorandum;
 - (d) 9 maps.

The letter further advised that a memorandum proposed by the Palestine Government on the experience of the Administration in attempting to carry out the obligation imposed by the Mandate would be submitted to the Committee by the end of the week.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the hope that contact might be made at a later date with Arab representatives.

The SECRETARY then read a letter from the Government of Palestine (Document A/AC.13/NC/12). The letter stated that the Government appointed the following persons to be of assistance to the Committee :

Mr. H.C. Dobbs (whose functions would be confined to purely administrative matters), and

Mr. D.C. MacGillivray (who would supply any information on the Administration of Palestine which might be required by the Committee).

In addition to the above correspondence the Secretary referred to :

- (1) a letter from the Executive of the General Federation of Jewish Labour in Eretz Israel (Palestine) asking on what date their representatives might be heard;

- (2) a message addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by Mr. Max Seligman asking for suspension of the military courts pending the recommendations of the Committee;
- (3) a letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine welcoming the Chairman and members of the Committee and assuring it of the full cooperation of the Palestine Government.

Closing Date for Requests for Oral Hearings and Provision of Written Testimony.

Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) suggested that a closing date be set for reception of requests for hearings and the furnishing of written statements, subject to the right of the Committee to consider requests or statements which might subsequently be made.

DECISION :

After considerable discussion it was decided to fix 5 July 1947 as the final date for the filing of all requests for hearings and for the furnishing of written statements, with the understanding that the Committee might consider statements or requests for hearings submitted at a later date.

Publicity of Meetings

Mr. Garcia GR/MADOS (Guatemala) drew attention to a press report in The Palestine Post stating that the next meetings of the Committee would be held in private and outlining the Committee's programme of work. Along with several other delegates he expressed surprise and concern at release of the information prior to consideration by the Committee of the matters therein contained. He proposed that the next two meetings of the Committee should be held in public.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the rule of procedure adopted by the Committee which enabled verbal briefings to be made to the press by the Press Officer attached to the Committee.

The PRESS OFFICER, on request, explained that the press had been informed as to the possible plan of work of the Committee and it had not been intended to prejudge the Committee's decisions. In future, possibilities of misinterpretation would be safeguarded against and only the Committee's decisions would be given to the press.

The CHAIRMAN then referred to a request from the Palestine Government that for security reasons hearings of its officials should be in private.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) drew attention to possible political implications should the Committee engage in a closed meeting immediately with representatives of the Palestine Government and Mr. BRILEJ (Yugoslavia) considered that the representatives of the Palestine Administration should be heard in public.

Mr. RAND (Canada) felt that, in view of the request of the Palestine Government, the Committee had no choice but to hear its representatives in private, or not at all, and several other delegates expressed agreement with this point of view.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) considered that the Committee should make clear in any press statement that its decision to meet in private with the representatives of the Palestine Government was taken on grounds of the prevailing situation ^{and} not with a view to receiving any confidential information which could not be disclosed at a public meeting. He agreed with the representatives of Guatemala and Yugoslavia that the Committee's activities should be public unless there were special reasons to the contrary.

DECISION:

It was agreed that representatives of the Palestine Government should meet the Committee in private session in the afternoon for the purpose of providing factual information requested by the Committee. The text of a press release on the question was also approved.

Hearings

(a) Jewish Agency:

The CHAIRMAN suggested that representatives of the Jewish Agency might present information requested by the Committee on Tuesday. He referred to the decision of the fourth meeting that information furnished would be primarily factual and not concerned with detailed political aspects of the Palestine question (document A/AC.13/SR.4, pages 4-5).

Mr. BRILJ (Yugoslavia) pointed out that prior to making journeys into the country the Committee would find it useful to receive information on political questions.

DECISION: It was agreed after further discussion that, in general, information sought at the preliminary hearings would be factual but that each member of the Committee had the right to put any question which he considered necessary.

(b) Arab Higher Committee:

Mr. RAND (Canada) proposed that the Arab Higher Committee be formally advised that it might present its views on the Palestine Government's A Survey of Palestine either in written form or at a hearing to be arranged.

DECISION: After discussion it was agreed to place the question on the agenda for the meeting to be held on Tuesday morning.

Method of Work

Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) proposed that in future the Committee should hold only one meeting, possibly of five hours' duration, per day instead of two shorter meetings.

DECISION: It was decided to consider the question again after return from the journey into the country.

Itinerary

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) enquired concerning the Committee's

itinerary.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to alternative proposals submitted by the Palestine Government and the Jewish Agency.

DECISION: It was agreed that the question would be considered on Tuesday after these proposals had been circulated and studied.

The CHAIRMAN indicated that on Wednesday morning and afternoon a visit had been arranged to the Holy Places for members of the Committee.

DECISION: On the suggestion of Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) it was agreed that no advance reference should be made to the visit but that, to avoid possible misinterpretation, a suitable press release might be issued subsequently.

Press Conference and Radio Broadcast

The CHAIRMAN advised that he proposed to make a radio broadcast and hold a private conference in the early afternoon. The text in part of the broadcast was read by the Chairman and approved.

Release to the Press of Correspondence received

Mr. HOOD (Australia) considered it important, in accordance with the principle of public activity wherever practicable, that the Committee should release to the press the text of the letters and telegrams considered at the meeting.

DECISION: After discussion it was agreed to postpone a decision until the Committee had considered the telegram from the Arab Higher Committee at Tuesday's meeting.

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It was decided to meet again at 4 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.