

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Lake Success, New York

Wednesday, 21 January 1948, at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. Lisicky	(Czechoslovakia)
Members:	Mr. Medina	(Bolivia)
	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Roxas (Observer for Mr. Francisco)	(Philippines)
Secretariat:	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)

RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS

The CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention to the press dispatches which had appeared in several New York newspapers covering the meeting of the previous day, and, in view of the inaccuracy of these dispatches, called for an exchange of views on the general subject of the handling of the press.

The SECRETARY read aloud the above-mentioned dispatches as well as the press release which had been given out by the Press Officer. The latter was found by Members to be entirely satisfactory.

Mr. BARNES (Public Relations Adviser) stated that it was impossible to control precisely what made its way into the press. He thought that the best procedure to follow was to give the press an account of the substantive progress made without indicating any details or intimate discussions. He observed that the Commission was very much in the public eye, and that so far little solid information had been given to the press. In order to counteract the resultant impression that the Commission was making little headway he had endeavoured to indicate to the press what the Commission was attempting to accomplish from day to day as it examined its various working papers.

It was the general view that the holding of press conferences would be desirable.

Mr. BARNES (Public Relations Adviser) pointed out that if press conferences were held the Commission would have to adopt a frank attitude as the only workable formula.

/At the conclusion

At the conclusion of the exchange of views on the matter of the press, the CHAIRMAN summarized the conclusions as follows: It would be useful to give the press as much information as it was convenient and opportune to do, but great care had to be taken in deciding which material could appropriately be given out. He stated that the Commission should maintain its attitude of confidence towards the Press Officer who would thereby be enabled to discharge his function with all necessary competence.

It would be preferable not to adopt a rigid schedule for press conferences but rather to hold such conferences whenever there was substantial information to give out; decisions to hold press conferences would be made when such occasions arose.

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY THE MEMBER FOR THE PHILIPPINES (document A/AC.21/5)

Mr. ROXAS (Philippines) informed the Commission that Mr. FRANCISCO, in whose place he was participating as Observer, requested the Commission to withdraw from its agenda for the present meeting the item respecting the resolution which Mr. Francisco had submitted.

The CHAIRMAN stated that although the item in question had been placed on the agenda at the express request of Mr. Francisco, it would now be removed since the latter so desired. However, he thought that it would be desirable in the future to avoid as much as possible having to make last-minute changes in the Agenda. Such changes made for an awkward situation as far as the press was concerned.

It was understood that the resolution which Mr. Francisco had submitted would be placed on the Agenda again whenever Mr. Francisco desired that it should be.

CONSIDERATION OF WORKING PAPER ON "ELECTIONS TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLIES TO BE HELD BY THE PROVISIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF ELECTION REGULATIONS APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION" (Document A/AC.21/W.10)

With reference to paragraph 3 of the working paper, it was agreed to ask the Mandatory Power whether they would be ready to refer to the Commission any request for a change of residence on the part of Jewish or Arab voters in contradiction with the provisions of paragraph 9, Section B, Part I of the Assembly resolution. However, this question would be put at a later stage of the Commission's work.

With reference to paragraph 4 of the working paper, the CHAIRMAN observed that the tasks involved therein would be given preliminary study by that Member of the Commission to whom that particular assignment would fall at the time of the general distribution of tasks among Members.

With reference to paragraph 5, the question was raised as to whether the
/Commission

Commission would have sufficient time to approve the electoral procedure between August and October.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Commission would not be bound to postpone work on this task until August; it could begin in the period preceding that time and, if it was not yet in Palestine at that stage, it could work with the representatives of political parties of the proposed States here in New York or elsewhere.

With reference to paragraph 6, particularly with respect to the sentence reading, "Much will depend on the will and ability of the Mandatory to co-operate with the Commission in this question", it was agreed that the matter would be the subject of one of the questions to be put to the Mandatory Power.

CONSIDERATION OF WORKING PAPER ON "DRAFTING OF DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTIONS, DECLARATIONS AND CHOICE OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENTS BY THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLIES" (Document A/AC.21/W.11)

The CHAIRMAN noted that it would be the obligation of the Commission to examine the contents of the Declaration referred to in paragraph 2 of the working paper to ensure that the Declaration and particularly Chapters 1 and 2 thereof, were embodied in the Constitutions of the two proposed States; also that the five provisions set out in paragraph 10, Section B of Part I of the Assembly Resolution were embodied in the Constitutions.

The CHAIRMAN also called the Commission's attention to the following possible situation: that by 1 October it would not be possible for the Provisional Governments of the two proposed States to make the Declaration in question, or that it would not be possible for the two Constituent Assemblies to agree on their respective Constitutions. The Commission should foresee such a contingency and give consideration to the action which could be taken in such an eventuality.

The CHAIRMAN noted that the General Assembly would be in session at that time and that the matter could be referred to it.

CONSIDERATION OF WORKING PAPER ON "CONTROL OF LAND REGULATIONS"
(Document A/AC.21/W.8)

With reference to paragraph 3 of the working paper, the CHAIRMAN noted that it would be in the interest of the Jewish Agency to endeavour to show all possible tact in handling the matter concerned.

ADDITIONAL WORKING PAPERS TO BE PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT

The SECRETARY indicated that the Secretariat was preparing further working papers on economic matters and on the City of Jerusalem.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.