

GENERAL
ASSEMBLYASSEMBLEE
GENERALEA/AC.21/SR.24
28 January 1948

ENGLISH ONLY

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Wednesday, 28 January 1948,
at 3.00 p.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. LISICKY	(Czechoslovakia)
Members:	Mr. Medina	(Bolivia)
	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Francisco	(Philippines)
Secretariat:	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)

The CHAIRMAN asked Mr. Ryan, of the Department of Public Information, if he could give any information on the subject of an article which had appeared that morning in the Press, containing details of the twenty-second meeting.

Mr. RYAN (Department of Public Information), in the absence of the Public Relations Adviser, stated that Mr. Barnes had given the usual verbal briefing to the Press, in the course of which he had stated that Mr. Morgan had asked Mr. Shertok if the Commission could now function in Jerusalem were it there. In his reply Mr. Shertok had used the word "safely", and the correspondent of the "Herald Tribune" had attributed the word to Mr. Morgan, thus giving an entirely false impression.

The Commission agreed that in future Mr. Barnes should refrain from mentioning members of the Commission by name when briefing the Press.

The Secretary raised the matter of a rumour which had spread among Press correspondents and asked Mr. Ryan for fuller information.

Mr. RYAN (Department of Public Information) confirmed that an

The CHAIRMAN was assured that no such telegram had been received either by a member of the Commission or by the Secretariat.

The Secretary reported that he had received a visit from Mr. Trafford Smith and Mr. Falla in connection with the questions that had been submitted to the delegation of the United Kingdom.

He called to the attention of the Commission a letter, signed by Mr. Falla, dated 28 January 1948, enclosing a statement setting out the reasons which had led His Majesty's Government to the conclusion that they could not comply with the passage in the General Assembly resolution concerning the evacuation of a seaport and hinterland in the territory assigned to the Jewish State.

Mr. Trafford Smith and Mr. Falla had had some advance information on the United Kingdom Government's answers to the Commission's questions.

They raised first the question which had been put orally to Sir Alexander Cadogan concerning the possibility of sending one or more members of the Secretariat to Palestine in advance. In reply to a question by Mr. Bunche, they had agreed that Sir Alexander would transmit this information formally to the Commission. They had informed him, however, that the reply would be that His Majesty's Government would be willing to welcome one or more members of the Secretariat for three purposes:

1. For the purpose of making arrangements for the housing, transportation, etc., of the Commission;
2. For the purpose of discussing the possible future admission of what they referred to as "embryo departmental staffs"; i.e. members of the Secretariat authorized by the Commission to do so could discuss with the Palestine Government the possibility of engaging staff to take over the offices at the date of the termination of the Mandate, but these staffs could not go into the offices before that date as observers or apprentices;
3. For the purpose of discussing with members of the Palestine administration the question of contacts with Arabs and Jews.

In reply to a question, they had emphasized that this meant that the members of the Secretariat must confine themselves to discussing with the Palestine administration the question of contacts with Arabs and Jews, but must not enter into such contacts.

They had also discussed the question of secondment. Mr. Trafford Smith and Mr. Falla had stated that it would not be possible for British personnel, either in Palestine or elsewhere, to be loaned or seconded to the Commission for the purpose of carrying out the General Assembly's resolution. His Majesty's Government would, however, have no objection to British

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nationals volunteering for such service, provided they had first resigned from the British service. With regard to the Palestine police, they had admitted that these were locally employed, that their employment would automatically end with the termination of the Mandate, and that they would therefore presumably be free to volunteer. Mr. Smith had added that, subject to the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act, there was nothing in British law to prevent these individuals from accepting service with the Commission; but Mr. Fletcher-Cooke, who was a member of the Palestine administration, while admitting that British personnel in the Palestine police force were locally employed, pointed out that they were recruited by Crown agents and were under contract; that they had accrued leave; and that his information was that it was quite likely that they would all be repatriated to England and then given three months' leave, after which they could make their own way back to Palestine if they wished to do so. He had admitted that such action could not be interpreted as strictly neutral, and had added that he believed a very large number of the British police in Palestine would be glad to serve with the Commission if the terms were favourable.

The Secretary had taken the opportunity to transmit to the United Kingdom delegation the Commission's request for information concerning parties and public groups in Palestine. They had promised to provide the Commission with information as to the democratic parties and public organizations referred to in Part I, Section B, paragraph 4 of the Plan of Partition.

He informed the Commission that the United Kingdom representatives had said there was good reason to believe that the replies of the United Kingdom Government would be available by the end of the week.

SECOND READING OF THE DRAFT REPORT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Sections 1 and 2 were approved without discussion.

The heading of Section 3 was amended to read: "Meetings of the Commission".

The word "however" was deleted in the last line but one of page 4.

The Commission decided to redraft the second sentence of paragraph 5 a to read: "The Commission is fully conscious of the enormous responsibility entrusted to it and harbours no illusions concerning the formidable obstacles it must surmount, even apart from Arab resistance."

Sub-paragraph b (v) was redrafted to read as follows: "The preparatory work in connection with the establishment of the Economic Union, including the creation of the Preparatory Economic Commission and the maintenance of the

economic services with which it will be concerned in the transitional period."

Paragraph 5 c was approved with minor drafting changes.

In the first line of Section 6, the words "the Commission has noted that" were inserted after "...Assembly's resolution".

The second paragraph on page 10 was redrafted as follows:

"Note: The date of 15 May 1948 has been officially communicated to the Commission by the representative of the United Kingdom Government as the ultimate date on which the Mandatory Power will contemplate terminating the Mandate."

Section 7 was approved without discussion.

After a brief exchange of views, during which it was suggested that the questions dealt with in Section 8, paragraphs c and d should be made the subject of a separate report, it was decided that the first sentence of paragraph c should be deleted and that the second sentence, redrafted as follows, should be placed at the end of paragraph b:

"Under this policy of the Mandatory Government, there could be no progressive assumption of authority in Palestine by the Commission prior to the termination of the Mandate. This matter will be the subject of further discussion with the Mandatory Power."

Paragraph d then became paragraph c.

Paragraph 8 c (formerly 8 d) was the subject of a lengthy discussion, in the course of which the view was expressed that in accordance with the terms of the General Assembly's resolution, the report should make it clear that the Commission was not in a position to start organizing the Provisional Councils by 1 April. It was also suggested that the resolution was impossible of fulfilment and that in the present situation the time-table could not be adhered to.

The Secretary pointed out that the Assembly had not been informed before it adopted the resolution of the vital fact that the Commission would not be permitted to enter Palestine until two weeks before the termination of the Mandate.

It was also observed that the Commission was negotiating with three different organs of the United Kingdom Government - the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the Palestine Government. It might perhaps be helpful to whichever one of these was most favourably disposed to the Commission if a statement of the position was put on record.

The following text was proposed to replace paragraph 8 c:

"The Commission is now also engaged in discussions with the Mandatory Power concerning the necessity for the Commission's arrival
/in Palestine

in Palestine sufficiently in advance of the termination of the Mandate to permit it to perform its tasks. The Commission does not find satisfactory the suggestion that the Commission should not come to Palestine until approximately a fortnight before the termination of the Mandate, that is 1 May 1948, if the Mandate is to be terminated on 15 May as at present indicated."

After thorough discussion, the Commission decided to adopt this text. The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

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