

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Saturday, 24 June 1950, at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Mr. de BOISANGER (France) Chairman
Mr. PALMER (United States of America)
Mr. ERALP (Turkey)
Mr. de AZCARATE Principal Secretary

1. Reply from the Government of Jordan

The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of members of the Commission to the reply of the Government of Jordan to the Commission's note of 30 May 1950. The Jordan Government, giving as its motives the absence of goodwill on the part of the Israeli Government and its own concern to act in concert with the other Arab States, had found itself obliged to reply in the negative to the Commission's invitation to take part in the negotiations which the latter proposed to open at Geneva. According to Mr. Quimper's conversation with the Jordan Foreign Minister, it appeared that hardly any hope remained of succeeding in getting the representatives of the Israeli and Arab Governments together for a thorough examination of the questions dividing them. The Commission could therefore do no more than take note of the communication and acknowledge its receipt.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) thought that while, for the moment, the possibilities of reaching an understanding were practically non-existent, it was none the less true that the terms of the reply of the Government of Jordan gave, on careful scrutiny, some ground for thinking that the door was not entirely closed on the possibility of negotiations at a later date. It was

worth noting (a) that there was some discrepancy between the negative reply of the Foreign Minister and the declaration made by the King offering hope of a positive answer; (b) that, after the reply of the Jordan Government had been sent, the Foreign Minister of that country had informed Mr. Quimper that he would like to meet him in order to offer him some further explanations; (c) that in its reply the Government of Jordan had taken the trouble to enumerate point by point the conditions acceptance of which by the other party would be considered by the Jordan Government as a manifestation of goodwill; (d) that it had added a request that the other party reply to the conditions enumerated; and finally (e) that the Jordan Government had considered it necessary to follow up its reply with a telegram explaining its attitude in which the following very significant sentence occurred: "When the other party begins to give evidence of its goodwill, the Kingdom of Jordan, which is desirous of peace, will be prepared to consider the position of the other party." Such were the facts upon which he based his impression that the Jordan Government's refusal to negotiate should not be considered as irrevocable.

The CHAIRMAN would have liked to share that impression, but the fact that the difficulties hitherto serving as obstacles in the way of negotiations between Jordan and Israel had since been aggravated by the desire of Jordan to act in concert with the other Arab States, left, in his opinion, scant grounds for further hope. However, there was nothing to prevent the Commission finding out on the spot whether the hypothesis of the Turkish representative was well grounded.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY thought that he might informally divulge to members of the Commission some information of a purely anecdotic character, which might however make it possible more clearly to appreciate the atmosphere in which the conversations between Mr. Quimper and the Jordan Foreign Minister had been conducted. A point, in any case, worthy of attention was the insistence placed by the Jordan Foreign Minister on his Government's desire to adopt a line of conduct common with that of the other Arab States, since that

might imply that any new development of the problem would be re-considered not only by Jordan but also by all the Arab States.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) felt that the fact that certain conditions satisfied Jordan would henceforth imply that they might prove satisfactory to all the Arab States. It was quite clear that the attitude of Israel made a favourable decision on the part of Jordan difficult, and equally clear that Jordan, though speaking on its own behalf, would in future be speaking in the name of all the Arab States.

The CHAIRMAN concluded that, for the moment, a stalemate had been reached in the question of negotiations between Israel and the Arab States. As far as the innermost thoughts of the Jordan Government were concerned, the Commission had no clues sound enough for valid conclusions to be drawn from them. Once on the spot, the Commission would no doubt be able to form its own opinion in full knowledge of the facts.

He added that it would be desirable to inform the Israeli Government of the reply of the Government of Jordan.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY enquired whether such communication should be made orally or by official letter.

An exchange of views in which the Chairman, Mr. Palmer and Mr. Barco (United States of America) and Mr. Eralp (Turkey) took part, made it clear that, generally speaking, the members of the Commission considered it would be desirable to send the Israeli Government a letter indicating the tenor of the Jordan Government's reply, and since the two questions were interconnected, informing it, at the same time, that the Commission was preparing to move to the Near East.

It was agreed that the Secretariat should draft a letter on those lines.

2. Future activity of the Commission

The CHAIRMAN said that, the Jordan Government's reply having arrived, the time had come to arrange for the departure of the Commission for the Near East.

After an exchange of views during which the Commission members voiced their observations and desires on the subject of the material organisation of the move, the Chairman remarked that it would be desirable in the first place to fix the exact date of the Commission's departure then to decide on the date of the Commission's first meeting in Jerusalem and finally, once the progress report to the Secretary-General had been adopted, to decide on the date on which the Commission would cease its meetings at Geneva. Since all those points required careful consideration, he proposed that the members of the Commission should think them over so that an official decision could be taken at the next meeting of the Commission.

3. Press Release

The CHAIRMAN considered that when the Commission had taken an official decision on the question of its departure, it would be desirable to issue a press release going exhaustively into the question and indicating that the Commission, faced with the impossibility of obtaining the agreement of the States concerned to take part in the negotiations it had proposed, had decided to move to the Near East with a view to seeking on the spot to bring about acceptance of the plan which it had failed to carry through at Geneva. It would also be desirable to indicate that the Commission, in so doing, had always as its principal concern the implementation of General Assembly Resolution of 11 December 1948.

After discussion,

it was agreed to request the Secretariat to produce a draft press release for consideration by the Commission at its next meeting.

4. Draft Seventh Progress Report to the Secretary-General

The CHAIRMAN wondered whether in that report, which dealt with a very important phase in the work of the Commission, it would not be desirable to give in greater detail the general terms of the correspondence between the Commission and the various Governments on the subject of the opening of the negotiations proposed in its note of 30 May. In view of the gravity of the question, it seemed to him inadequate simply to refer readers to the annex, although such reference could still be retained.

He likewise thought it desirable to indicate very clearly that, during that phase of its work, the Commission's activity had been guided in certain circumstances, by motives which the report would then proceed to outline and, on all occasions, by the terms of the Resolution of 11 December 1948.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) agreed with the Chairman that in the next progress report to the Secretary-General, the Commission should trace the course of its work in detail and, in connection with the correspondence between it and the various Governments concerned, should give full details to explain its attitude.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) likewise considered that, in order to safeguard against possible insinuation to the effect that the Commission had abandoned its conciliatory role for that of an arbiter, it would be desirable to indicate in the report the reasons for which the Commission had considered it preferable not to transmit the proposals of one party directly to the other.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY thought that the fact should be stressed that in communicating one party's proposal to the other, the Commission engaged its own responsibility, since the Commission was not a transmitting agency but an organ of conciliation obliged to use great discernment in the execution of its task.

The CHAIRMAN drew the conclusion that since the Commission was unanimous in considering it necessary for the progress report to the Secretary-General to supply full details in explanation of its attitude, the Secretariat might be requested to elaborate those points in the report it was engaged in drafting.

5. Analysis of paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the General Assembly Resolution of 11 December 1948

The CHAIRMAN drew the members' attention to Document COM.GEN/16 prepared by the General Committee and containing an analysis of paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the General Assembly Resolution of 11 December 1948.

After an exchange of views, the members of the Commission recognised that the document was of real value and might be considered as constituting in some manner, the official interpretation given by the Commission to paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the Resolution of 11 December 1948.

6. Rules of Procedure for the Mixed Committees (document W/49.Rev.1)

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the document in question, which was otherwise a very satisfactory one, was, at that juncture, of purely academic interest. He thought that it might be kept in the Commission's archives for use in the event of circumstances later making it possible for the establishment of mixed committees to be contemplated afresh.

7. Blocked Arab Accounts

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY recalled the fact that for the operation of making advances to refugees to be carried out successfully, in accordance with the procedure accepted by both Israel and the Arab States, it was essential for a trustee to be found with whom the funds released by Israel for payment to the Arab refugees could be deposited.

The Secretariat had undertaken steps to find such a trustee and, to that end, had approached the Bank for International Settlements. The latter had however just notified the Economic Adviser to the Commission that, during the last General Meeting, the central banks had raised objections of principle to the activity concerning which the Bank had been approached on the ground that they considered certain aspects of that intervention to be more political than technical.

That refusal, in his opinion, placed the Commission in a difficult situation since without a body assuming the rôle of despositary for the Palestinian pounds released by Israel, it would be difficult to carry out the operation in the form in which it had been accepted by both parties.

The negotiations and correspondence between the Secretariat and the Bank for International Settlements had been of an informal nature and could not therefore be referred to in the progress report to the Secretary-General. Since, however, the question was worthy of mention in the report, he proposed that the Commission send the Bank for International Settlements an official letter which would call for an official reply which might figure in the progress report.

With regard to the main problem, he was not in a position to make any concrete proposal. It might perhaps be possible to endeavour to explore the possibilities in another direction, by approaching, for example, each of the banks of issue of the Arab States in whose territory were refugees who stood to benefit by the agreement between Israel and the Arab States on the subject of frozen assets. It might in that way be possible to reach a positive result, by dividing up the problem.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the new approach was the only one likely to lead to a result and that it would be a good idea to undertake steps in that direction. He likewise considered that the Commission, through the medium of its Secretariat, should send an official request to the Bank for International Settlements in order to obtain a reply which might figure in the progress report.

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Mr. PALMER (United States of America) shared the Chairman's point of view both on the question of the new direction to be given to their endeavours to find a trustee and on that of the official step to be taken with regard to the Bank for International Settlements.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) pointed out that at the last meeting of the General Committee, he had suggested that the Ottoman Bank, from whom so far only an evasive reply had been obtained, should be officially approached. However, the suggestion of the Principal Secretary to approach each of the banks of issue of the different Arab States separately seemed to him to be, in fact, a more practical proposal.

It was agreed that the Commission should take steps on the lines suggested by the Principal Secretary.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.