



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION
Lake Success, New York, Thursday, 15 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. Byron Price	(Acting Secretary-General)
	Mr. Sobolev	(Assistant Secretary-General)
	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)

1. Relations with the Press

The SECRETARY stated that some members of the press had asked to be admitted to the meeting. He added that Mr. Shertok had been approached and had explained that if the Commission should make inquiry of him on the matter, he would state that he had no objection to making his statement in public. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that it would be more satisfactory to hear Mr. Shertok in a closed meeting and to release the substance of his statement to the press after the meeting.

2. Consultation with the Representative of the Jewish Agency

Mr. M. Shertok, together with Mr. A. Eban, who had come at the invitation of the Commission as representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, entered the meeting room and were invited by the Chairman to take seats at the table. Mr. Shertok's statement and his answers to questions put by Members on points arising from his statement are reproduced *in extenso*, as follows:

CHAIRMAN: I welcome Mr. Shertok, the political head of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, to our midst. I understand that he wishes to make a statement about the present situation in Palestine. I think this information will be of a precious character because he has just returned from Palestine, less than a week ago.

MR. SHERTOK: (Jewish Agency for Palestine): The privilege which has been afforded to me to address this Commission at so early a stage in its labours is one which I deeply appreciate. I should like to take this opportunity to extend the good wishes of the organization I represent, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, and the community for which I am privileged to speak, the Palestine Jewish community, to this Commission, the appointment of which we welcome as a most important landmark on the road along which our problem is travelling towards its solution.

Actually, the solution has been decided upon by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and, today, we are in the stages of its implementation.

I shall gladly comply with the Chairman's indication to give a brief survey of the position which I found in Palestine during my very brief visit there. I was there six days altogether. However, I hope I may be permitted, first of all, to say a few words about the nature of the solution with which we are now dealing. I say so at the risk of abusing the patience of the Chairman, not as Chairman I hope but as the one who has now dealt with this problem for many months, and who is very intimately familiar with all its aspects, both by virtue of his experience as a member of UNSCOP and as a representative of his government in the Ad Hoc Committee and in the Sub-Committee of the last session of the General Assembly. I nevertheless claim this opportunity because not all the members of the Commission have been present through all these stages, and I think it is important for me to stress the fact that the solution which the United Nations in their wisdom, and I would say in their courage, have decided upon is to us a compromise solution. It by no means gives us what we believe we are historically entitled to or what we could take advantage of properly and legitimately in order to ensure a better future for the Jewish people in its historic homeland.

There have been a number of solutions propounded in recent years, particularly by the British Government, which were accepted neither by the Jews nor by the Arabs. The fact that today the world has initiated a solution which has met with Jewish acceptance but with rejection on the Arab side should not signify that it gives the Jews one hundred per cent of what they want or feel entitled to. It entails a very painful sacrifice for the Jewish people in that it takes away from them, maybe for all future time, certain very important parts of the country which, through the centuries past, they came to regard as their past and future national patrimony.

The Jewish people as represented by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, has declared itself willing to co-operate in the implementation of this compromise solution because it made an effort to approach the problem in a realistic spirit, to understand the difficulties which the world is today confronted with, and also to understand and admit the legitimate rights and interests of the other section of the population of Palestine; namely, the Arabs of Palestine. Today, we are engaged in a new chapter of strife, but we firmly hope and believe that beyond that period of strife -- which we hope will not be of too long a duration -- there will lie a long period of future history which will witness closer and closer collaboration between us and our Arab neighbours. Even today, while on the surface there is nothing but opposition, and all the ordinary reader of newspapers reads about are incidents of attacks, of clashes, of victims claimed by these clashes, beneath that boiling and bubbling surface, there are very deep and stable layers of desire for peace, of determination to preserve peace and friendly relations among the Arab population with regard to us. I have found a widespread readiness among the Arab population to acquiesce in this decision. I have found widespread reluctance to engage in trouble at present.

Quite naturally, not all people have the courage of their convictions under the stress of such an acute political crisis, and it is permissible and logical for many Arabs, for the time being, to adopt the attitude of wait and see. If they see that the militant wing is victorious and that the United Nations retreat from their policy, they will certainly not oppose a solution which is more in favour of the Arabs and less in favour of the Jews. But if they find that this attempt to subvert by force an

authoritative international decision fails, an attempt in which they themselves have no particular desire to take part, they will settle down and accept what has been decreed and make the best of it.

We believe that firmness is as essential, therefore, as benevolence if the prospects of lasting peace are to be assured. The position today is one of a rather unstable equilibrium. It is a very delicate state of things – delicate politically and delicate psychologically. Many, many Arabs, and many Jews for that matter, are very keenly watching the organs of the United Nations as to what line they will take and to what extent the decision of the United Nations can be taken as something irrevocably established and meant to be implemented. In this connection, I should like to say that from all I heard and overheard, I found that immediately after the [decision](#) was taken on 29 November, it was generally assumed in Palestine by Jews and Arabs alike that the first thing that would happen next would be the arrival of this Commission in Palestine. I should like the Commission to believe that I say this in no spirit of criticism whatsoever. There may have been inevitable delays in the formation of this Commission. Once the Commission has been formed, it is the master of its own destiny and it is for it to decide what course its work will take. However, it is my duty to report on the impressions that I have found in Palestine.

It was taken for granted that the very first thing and the immediate thing that will follow upon the [decision](#) of the General Assembly would be the arrival of the Commission in Palestine. I hope you will permit me to say that this is a fact which must be taken into account in the appraisal of the general situation, the fact that the delay has had its psychological effects which have not been quite favourable. Now, I know the attitude taken by the United Kingdom Government. It was openly stated in the debate in the House of Commons that the early arrival of the Commission in Palestine would or might lead to a conflict of authority. I should like to report that this is not the feeling of our people in Palestine. They fully realize that so long as the mandate stands and so long as the British administration is responsible for law and order and for the running of the services, there can be no rival authority by their side.

It is not the question of rival United Nations authority to compete with the United Kingdom authority which is being raised by our people. What is disturbing to them is the fact that no effective preparation for the setting up of new regime may be accomplished unless there is an organ of the United Nations operating on the spot and making itself responsible for these preparations. They may be wrong, but it is my duty to report their view. After all, there is a great deal that must be observed and studied on the spot, there are a host of problems to be faced, the importance of or priority of which it is extremely difficult to judge from a distance. I will refer to some specific problems arising in this connection. However, I would say in a general way that the people cannot conceive of a new regime being born other than after a certain period of pregnancy, if I may use the term. A new regime must develop within the womb of the old. In addition, the people find it extremely difficult to imagine that overnight, the new regime will come into being. They are very much baffled and bewildered by the uncertainty of the prospect of the Commission's arrival.

When people are nervous and sensitive, they begin to impute all sorts of motives. They try to probe the hidden designs behind it, and they feel generally discouraged and shaken in their confidence in the validity of the decision. This, as I have pointed out, has a most unsalutary effect both on the Arabs and on the Jews. I need not point to the implications of this general proposition I trust that they are clear.

Of course, the paramount question which agitates people's minds in Palestine is that of public security. Actually, speaking for the Jews, I would say that we could not wait for any new arrangement to be sanctioned by the Commission or by the Security Council in Palestine. We were forced by the course of events to take a hand and to take a very determined action. We found our security, the personal safety of large numbers of Jews and the subsequent security of Jewish towns and villages and whole parts of the country inhabited by the Jews, not properly safeguarded. As the Jewish community has always been an organized community with people at the top feeling responsible for its well-being and elected to discharge that responsibility, quite naturally they had to fend for themselves, and they had to assume direct responsibility for their own safety within the very limited means at their disposal; so that actually, today, we already have a kind of a Jewish national authority operating as a security authority.

Now, it might be said that there is a rival authority to the British administration. In a sense, it is so but it just could not be helped. The position has been aggravated by the position taken by the United Kingdom administration. I say aggravated because it was also serious in the past when no such far-reaching political conflict between us and the United Kingdom administration arose. Even in the past years when waves of disturbances swept over Palestine, we very largely were left to our own devices in taking steps for our own protection, although the British forces did a great deal with that and in view, but never enough. It is quite natural. A military machine cannot be here, there and everywhere at every minute of the twenty-four hours of the day, and people who are on the spot must do what they can to protect themselves. But I say in the present crisis which we are experiencing, the position has been particularly aggravated by the political attitude of the United Kingdom administration.

In our estimation, the United Kingdom administration, acting under instructions from the United Kingdom Government in London, is, in a way, attempting to square a circle or to reconcile two irreconcilables. What are the two fundamental positions which they have taken? One fundamental position is that so long as they are there as mandatory, they are responsible for law and order. That is unassailable and is most welcome. That is a very affirmative stand. But in the very same breath, they have taken the attitude that they are not responsible for the implementation of the United Nations policy; not only that they are not responsible for its implementation, but they do not regard themselves under obligation to co-operate with this policy. This has led to a very confusing psychological situation in the midst of the United Kingdom administration itself.

The attacks that now take place are not attacks directed against the lives and property of certain individuals. They are attacks directed against a certain policy, against the United Nations policy. To maintain law and order means to resist those attacks and to put them down. In putting down those attacks you find yourself defending actually United Nations policy. If you are not wholeheartedly prepared to defend United Nations policy, you find yourself at every stage doubting, hesitating whether you should take a certain measure which, on pure security grounds, is the most effective one lest by the too spectacular character of the measure, you would implicate yourself in enforcing United Nations policy. You would appear as if you were taking that policy under your defence.

Now, I would submit that it is extremely difficult – it is impossible to defend the victims of the present attacks without defending United Nations policy; and unless you are prepared to do the latter, you cannot effectively do the former. We find the unfortunate results of this inner conflict at every step. It is true that in certain extreme cases, British troops have intervened and intervened effectively. However, their effective intervention has been restricted to the most extreme cases.

Therefore, it has always been a little late in the day. In the meantime, things got out of hand, and unnecessary victims have been claimed.

There is today no comprehensive concerted plan of defence in Palestine, and no comprehensive concerted system of measures taken to ensure the safety of the threatened community in Palestine. This is not, the case in regard to the British, nor is it the case in regard to ourselves. Today there are two agencies operating in Palestine which are interested in the protection of life and property – the Jews as a community, the organized community, and the United Kingdom administration. Neither of these two agencies enjoys complete freedom of action, complete freedom of decision, and the implementation of that decision. With regard to the Jews, I would say that our freedom to act is crippled from without because we are not the authority. I will explain what I mean a little later. With regard to the United Kingdom administration, their freedom to act is paralyzed from within because they do not feel responsible for the present policy. They do not feel under an obligation to pay the price of it in terms of sacrifice and exertion. They are hamstrung by the political position that they have taken and the result is that many things which normally would have been done and done in time are either not done at all or due too late. This circumstance aggravates the present crisis.

The British troops intervene when things go beyond certain point. Until events come up to that point, the troops devote a great deal of their time and energy to carrying out searches among Jews, and to disarming Jews. Now, the two things naturally do not go very well together. I do not weary to worry the Commission with a very detailed enumeration of the incidents. If necessary, they could be submitted in writing, and those members who are particularly interested in this aspect could study the material. However, this has been happening time and again. If it is a question of escorting Jewish bus convoys along the road, the United Kingdom authorities are extremely reluctant to appear in the role of protecting Jewish convoys because that identifies them with the Jews in the eyes of the Arab population. It means that they are there to defend the policy that is supposed to be in favour of the Jews. Not only has that escort as often as not not been forthcoming, but when the Jews provide their own escort, as often as not it has been searched by the British patrols, and, if arms are found, they are taken away. The usual pattern is that the convoy starts, it is accosted by a British patrol, it is searched, arms are taken away, and then it proceeds along the road. It is attacked by the Arabs. It fights back with such firearms as are left. It beats off the attack. It proceeds further, again it is accosted by a British patrol, again some arms are taken away, and so forth. This does not happen in every case but that is the general pattern of what has been occurring.

Today, we have an internal communal defence organization usually described as the Hagana. It lacks completely the elementary freedom of action in order to provide for really effective defence. It cannot deploy; it cannot trade openly; it cannot send reinforcements from place to place; it cannot take under control certain parts of the country, and plan for territorial defence. There is a feeling of frustration, a feeling of inability to do what they would have been able to do if given the freedom. That feeling of frustration leads to the quest of rather dangerous outlets for the feeling that accumulates. It leads to unnecessary retaliation, and to blind acts of

revenge. People say, "Well, what we cannot do by day, let us do under the cover of darkness."

The position is completely abnormal. People keep asking themselves, "What will happen a fortnight from now, a month from now, two months from now if the position becomes aggravated in the event that the British forces are evacuated? Are we going to be ready for the day? Will we be given a chance to be ready for the day in the measure we can be?"

Now, this brings me to the question of the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and the protection of life and property in the coming months. This is the question which is uppermost in our people's minds. Our people know that two ideas generally have been broached as a solution to the problem. These ideas are not mutually exclusive. One is the idea of an international force, and the other is the idea of a militia. With regard to the idea of a militia, it is more than an idea. There is a very clear resolution in that regard. With regard to the international force, this has also come up for reference on various occasions during the session of the General Assembly but there is no clear resolution on it.

I would sum up the feeling of our people and the attitude of the Jewish Agency for Palestine briefly by saying that we generally regard the establishment of an international force as being most essential, most necessary, and most eminently desirable. It is not for us, needless to say, to bring about the formation of such a force. It is not even for us to say whether it is internationally practicable or not. In this regard, we must defer to the judgment and action of the competent organs of the United Nations. All I think the Commission should know is that not only do we not reject that possibility but we definitely take it into account in our thinking and consider it most eminently desirable. We should be most happy to co-operate with whatever international force might be formed. I say "co-operate" with it because in no circumstance do we envisage a position where we would not be called upon to play a part in the protection of our own lives and our own possessions in our own territory. We may share the burden with an international force but we would not expect people to volunteer or to be conscripted in other parts of the world to stand between us and danger. We would prefer to stand shoulder to shoulder with them, and even to be first in facing the danger and have them more in the rear behind us as reinforcements in case of need.

Even if there is an international force, we shall still require certain measures of assistance to be able to discharge our responsibility; much more if there is no international force. If the United Nations finds that this is impracticable, we shall not retreat from the responsibility which the adoption of this [resolution](#) entails for us. We shall be prepared to accept the full measure of the responsibility which would then presumably devolve upon us alone. However, then, our claim for assistance will be more insistent.

The world knows generally that Jews in Palestine are armed. Those who are far away from the scene are prone to exaggerate things, and that is quite natural. Even certain people nearer to us exaggerate the actual state of our armed strength. Now, I would not say that we have absolutely nothing with which to defend ourselves, but we by no means have enough. Even in the kind of arms that we do possess, there are insufficient quantities of them. There are kinds of arms which we feel we must have in order to be able to set face against the dangers that are threatening, arms of which we have practically nothing, or quite absolutely nothing. Today, a large part of our manpower is already engaged in day-to-day defence duties. If proper militia is to be formed, it has to be properly trained, it has to be properly equipped, it has to be put into uniform. We have no uniforms at all today.

CHAIRMAN: Does Hagata have any uniforms?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): No uniforms at all. It is the community, part of which is armed when the need arises.

CHAIRMAN: Do they have distinctive badges or something like that?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Not necessarily, no; nothing distinctive at all. The question of badges could be solved quite easily but the question of proper uniforms and general equipment is a more difficult problem.

We would then have to mobilize a large number of people, not to do day-to-day defence duties but to be trained as the members of the future militia. This would entail a heavy burden on our manpower. We would be prepared to cope with that additional call on our manpower but what we would definitely then require would be assistance in terms of equipment and funds, financial assistance. Today, the Jewish community and Zionist funds are already bearing an increased cost of security. For that, we do not ask for any contribution. But in order to build up a militia and put it properly on its feet, we consider that we are entitled to some assistance during the transitional period to tide us over it. If we envisage the state of things in the future when the Jewish State is a going concern and it has its militia, its armed force, quite naturally the State will have to cover the budget of that militia without resorting to any outside help. But the trouble is that we have to be ready for the day and we have to make our preparations during a period when the sources of governmental revenue in Palestine are not at our disposal. Today, we continue to pay taxes to the United Kingdom administration, direct and indirect. The taxes do not go into our till. They go into the till of the government. We shall be extremely hard put to finance from our own funds obtained by voluntary contributions what is essentially a state function – the preparation of its armed forces. Therefore, for that specific purpose, we believe that we are entitled to financial assistance. It may be a grant, it may be a loan to be repaid by the Jewish State. We would very much appreciate a recommendation to that effect by this Commission.

Now, the other question which will arise will be military advice. Although we have in our midst people with good fighting experience both of guerilla warfare in Palestine and of regular fighting in the last war, people who were soldiers, NCO's and officers of the Jewish Brigade, people who saw service in other units of the British army on land, on sea and in the air; and also people who, while residents of Palestine, saw service with other armies, people who fought with the Americans, the French and with the Czechs – I do not think there was an army in the world, not only with which Jews did not fight with which Palestinian Jews did not fight in view of the various implications that arose during the war. However, I would be immodest enough to admit that we need do with higher military talent if we want our defences to be really put on a proper basis, and the question of competent military advice will certainly arise.

Then, there is the question of equipment. The forces that we are up against, and to which I shall yet have to refer before I close, have State machinery to help them. For the time being, I am taking it as proved that the machinery of the Arab States in the neighbourhood of Palestine is there to help not those in Palestine who are ready to acquiesce and eventually to co-operate with this solution, but to help, in the first instance; those who are out to defy it by force of arms. They can buy arms in the markets of the world. Certain governments appear to be under a contractual obligation to continue delivering arms to these Arab States, and deliveries are taking place. These Arab States can easily devote a part of their arms to help the guerillas in Palestine.

We have no such facilities: We believe that this abnormal state of affairs calls for a clear United Nations policy. We must leave it to the Commission to judge the appropriateness of it, and also the method by which this might be secured. I do not know whether the Security Council ought not to be addressed on the subject.

The policy which we think is the only right one in the circumstances is that it should in fact be incumbent upon governments who are in a position to deliver arms, to help the deliveries of arms to that party or those parties ready to co-operate with the United Nations in the implementation of their [decision](#), and, because of that, are exposed to danger. Conversely, arms should be withheld from those out to defy the United Nations [decision](#). I would be realistic enough to add that I do not think that even such a [decision](#), firmly adopted and firmly applied would completely solve the issue because there are such things as contraband arms. However, it would go a long way toward alleviating the position. On the affirmative side, I would not restrict this policy as regards delivery of arms to the Jews alone. If, tomorrow, an Arab group were formed in Palestine ready to play its part in the implementation of this [decision](#) and entertained or alleged fears of Jewish aggression, let me say that that group too should be entitled to be helped to form its militia in exactly the same manner as the Jewish side, both as regards arms and as regards equipment. If, tomorrow, any Arab ruler or any Arab government declared itself ready to co-operate, it should come under the affirmative part of that policy. This policy should be comprehensive, but it should be something that would, in the first instance, enable us to get a little more help than we are now getting. Actually, we get nothing today by way of preparation.

In regard to this, of course, there is great nervousness in Palestine because people feel that time is of the utmost essence. They know the calendar adopted by the United Nations, and they know that the days are numbered. If they are to be ready to assume complete military responsibility by a certain date, they proceed to figure out how much sooner they must start getting ready for it. If they do not see anything yet happening to [help them to](#) be ready, naturally they become very nervous and apprehensive. However, underlying all this, there is a feeling of deep-seated confidence in our people in their ultimate future. They have dug themselves in in Palestine. They have struck very deep roots in Palestine, and they are determined to defend to the utmost the parts of the territory now assigned to them.

While plans of defence are going on, at the same time, plans are going on to strengthen our position in the colonization sense. There are areas where the network of our settlements is not as close as we would wish it to be. There are plans now going ahead to make it closer. I know there are plans to put up quite a number of new settlements, for instance, in the Negev, in order to make our network closer and in order to provide for better protection of the settlements and of the pipeline which we have laid there. The same is true of other parts of the country.

The people are also ready for sacrifice, except that they feel it is not quite fair to expect them to put up with an undue burden of sacrifice, with an undue number of

casualties. They feel in them the capacity to organize their defence much more rationally and the capacity to use prevention in many cases where the cure is a little too painful; and to be much stronger, and thus instill greater respect in their neighbourhood.

As I have said, for the time being, the large mass of the Arab population is extremely averse to becoming implicated in this trouble. There have been some very fierce attacks but they have not been as widespread as on past occasions. Of the 300 settlements in Palestine today, I do not think more than ten or twelve have so far been attacked. The large bulk of our settlements have so far not suffered any attack, and there have been protestations of friendship on the part of their immediate neighbours.

CHAIRMAN: In what part of the country are these ten settlements which have been attacked? Are they dispersed?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency on Palestine): Yes, but they are largely concentrated in the extremities, more than in the central part. Perhaps there are four or five in the south, three or four in the north and only two or three in the central part.

Before I leave the security topic, I must say a few words about what we hear is going on in the neighbouring countries. This is ground on which one must tread very warily particularly in my position as a representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. I cannot lay claim to knowledge of all the secrets that may be interesting in that regard. One thing is clear. In one form or another, the governments of the neighbouring states are implicated in direct military preparations for action in Palestine against us and against the decision of the United Nations. I say "in one form or another". By that, I intend to exclude the eventuality of direct military aggression on the part of some of these governments. I would not exclude it on the part of all. However, in all these governments, funds are being voted, arms are being assigned, and recruiting of volunteers is in progress with the direct sanction of the government concerned. This incursion from Syria, of which there were rumours while I was in Palestine and for which our people were on the *oui-vive* all the time, which actually happened, assumed smaller dimensions in effect than rumoured. According to the reports that we had, this incursion was intended as a *ballon d'essai* to try out the United Nations to see how it would react, to see whether it would take this incursion seriously or whether it would minimize its importance, or simply show reluctance to engage in a conflict with the established governments. To us, this is a very serious situation which we believe calls for some reaction, some proper, effective and authoritative reaction. I need not offer advice as to how that reaction should be secured, but it seems to us that if the Security Council could be brought into operation, it would administer a very salutary check to certain adventurous trends which are operating, and against which there is no lack of wiser councils. It would mean strengthening wiser councils and weakening those out for trouble. It would be a great service, I am sure, done not only to us but also to the Arab States in the long run if a proper warning could be administered in time, and if it could be effectively backed up.

Now, with all its paramount importance, the security problem is not the only one that agitates the minds of our people. What is equally important to them is the whole future of the scheme with regard to the transfer of authority and the effective establishment of the state; in particular, with regard to future Jewish immigration, I am sure that even such brief study as the members of the Commission have been able to devote to our problem has already convinced them that immigration is the crux of the whole problem. It has been the crux of it for years past, and it has been behind every political crisis that we had to go through. Actually, it is perhaps the immigration crisis, more than any other aspect of our problem that has forced the submission of it to the United Nations. Immigration has been the chief topic of every investigation that has been carried out. The problem came to a head on the one hand through the fact that in 1939, the United Kingdom government adopted an extremely restrictive policy in regard to immigration, which policy, in effect though not quite in form, it is pursuing today by allowing 1500 people to enter Palestine each month; on the other hand, by unprecedented aggravation of the need for immigration to Palestine from Europe as a result of the war and its aftermath. I need not go into it in any detail. The disparity between the need and the opportunity has produced the crisis. It is that disparity that has plunged people in Europe into despair and has led them to take desperate means in order to try to effect an entry into Palestine. It has led to the movement of the so-called illegal or unauthorized immigration. Scores of boats have until now crossed the Mediterranean, mostly in the vain attempt to reach the shores of Palestine, mostly diverted from the shores of Palestine to Cyprus, and on one occasion even back to Germany. As the result of this, there are 32,000 people waiting in Cyprus now as a result of this boats are still crossing the sea now or may be crossing any day.

There is a very clear recommendation in this regard. My people have asked me how is it that the recommendation of UNSCOP with regard to 6,250 persons in connection with immigration has not come in for any reference in the resolution of the General Assembly. I had to explain to them that if that resolution had been endorsed, the question would have arisen as to whether the United Kingdom Government would have been ready to implement it. It was thought by the Sub-Committee that it would be better not to charge the United Kingdom Government with implementing something which it would probably refuse to do, but to open the way for the Jews themselves to be responsible for their own immigration. As a result of this, instead of reiterating the recommendation of UNSCOP with regard to the immigration of 6,250 people a month, what the General Assembly decided on was to recommend that by 1 February, a port should be freed to enable immigration of substantial dimensions. I hope I am not misquoting the resolution. The words are substantially there, and the date of 1 February is there.

People said to me, "Yes, but what is 1 February? UNSCOP promised us the start of the immigration from 1 September." "Well," I said, "If this recommendation is implemented, we shall perhaps be able to make up for lost time." Today we are faced with the cumulative pressure for the need for immigration facilities to Palestine which come from four different territorial quarters. First of all, there is Cyprus. That is nearest to Palestine and the people are not there to stay. There is no question of their being absorbed in Cyprus. Even if they tried they are very jealously watched by the Cyprus population, and at times, there was great tension around these camps lest this be a wedge for starting Jewish immigration into Cyprus. The people of Cyprus saw that these people stayed in camp and did not venture outside of camp. So they are acquiescent. There is no question, to some of us — I am sure to our Chairman — that it is axiomatic that Cyprus is not the place for them, but there are gentlemen who are not acquainted with this. I should like to stress this. The Jews in Cyprus are spending their time in a bivouac, in a half-way house. They set sail for Palestine, they were thrown back to Cyprus, dumped there into internment camps and they are waiting there. They cannot start their family life; they cannot educate their children; they cannot work; they spend their time in enforced idleness. You can imagine what amount of physical and moral deterioration this involves. We hope they are not beyond repair. We have a mission operating there. We try to establish trade workshops, improvised schools for children, and all sorts of other things. However, there are 31,000 or 32,000 people waiting there.

We next come to the camps in Europe. Some members of UNSCOP visited those camps. Various figures were given. There are figures of 200,000 and 250,000 according to who is and who is not considered a displaced person within the strict interpretation of the term. Anyhow, there are tens of thousands of people, between 200,000 and 250,000 people. This is the second category. Again, these are people who are living in a state of suspense who cannot yet start to rebuild their lives in the proper manner; they cannot be absorbed in any economy; and they are already waiting for the fourth winter after the war. Then, there are distressed Jewish communities in certain parts of Europe not in camps. There is great distress prevalent among the Jews of Rumania for certain peculiar reasons due to the peculiarity of the Jewish economic structure; and due, of course, to the ravages of war, to the ravages of Hitler and his satellites. However, it is also due to the fact that in the face of the new regime in Rumania, the Jewish community, which is ninety-five per cent middlemen, finds it extremely difficult to adjust itself. It is not the case with the Rumanian population as a whole which is seventy per cent peasant. There are no Jewish peasants in Rumania, and there is very little by way of an urban Jewish proletariat among the Jews. They are mostly middlemen and they are very hard hit by the transition of Rumania from one form to another form. This is not intended as any reflection on the Government of Rumania in its treatment of the Jews in that country. The Rumanian Government stands between the Jews and the very deep seated anti-semitism in certain sections of the country. But economically, they just can't help it. They agree and the Jews agree that a large number of the Jews must get out if they want to have a chance at economic rehabilitation.

The fourth contingent is the oriental Jewish communities, many of which have always lived in a state of poverty, most of whom have always been treated as second-rate and third-rate citizens, and against whom we very seriously fear the hatred of the Arabs may now be vented on account of the partition of Palestine. We are very anxious to save as many of them as possible in time, for their own sake and for the sake of Palestine, by bringing them to Palestine.

All this depends on whether the very clear recommendation of the United Nations will be implemented. If it is implemented, if there is a certainty of implementing it, then people can wait and we are strengthened in our efforts in advising and counselling people not to take the law into their own hands, not to start on this hazardous voyage, but to wait for their turn and then come in properly and legitimately. If we have no such certainty, if we merely give very vague promises with regard to the indefinite future, then the effectiveness of our warnings and of our admonitions must be very heavily discounted. I am putting the position before you exactly as it is.

The country is very tensely awaiting what will happen on the first of February. The country, Jews and Arabs alike, regard this as a crucial test. It so happens that this

is the first date; there is a series of dates. There is a date of 1 February; there is a date of 15 May now operating; there is a date of 1 August, and I think there is a date of 1 October. I believe I have mentioned all the dates. It just so happens that the immigration date is the earliest of the dates. Therefore, not merely on account of immigration, which is a burning issue in itself, but because that is the first date it has particular importance, crucial importance, critical importance attached to it. It will either be honoured or it will not. Both the Jews and the Arabs from converse points of view will regard this as a test of the seriousness of the United Nations decision, as an earnest indication of good faith, whether it will be implemented or not. A great deal will depend on that.

I should say there will be a direct nexus, for instance, between undesirable forms of Jewish retaliation and immigration. If there is immigration people will say: "Well, we have achieved something; now we can take many blows calmly, without reacting. If this is not to come we have been left in the lurch and let down by the United Nations. Therefore, let us take the law into our hands." With regard to the Arabs it will also have a profound psychological effect as to the seriousness of the decision and as to the futility of trying to oppose it by force if this is done. If it is not done, it will be a tremendous encouragement to those who say that by force they can do anything. They will say, "Here we have shot and bombed and burned, and the United Nations has taken the hint. There is no immigration on the first of February."

I am afraid I have taken up too much of the Commission's time, and therefore I should like to close my statement. I should like to say that we are entirely at the disposal of the Commission for any information it wants us to supply. We shall certainly seek an early opportunity of presenting perhaps a more coherent and also a more formal summary of our proposals and requests of you.

I should like to close with a reference to one aspect of the problem of the presentation of our case to you in the coming days or weeks. I need not say that it is not we who are holding you here. We would be ready to make our representations to you wherever you would wish, and we would be more than happy to be able to do so in Jerusalem or wherever else in Palestine you may decide. We ask your earliest possible arrival in Palestine in order to see what is going on and to get the feel of things in order to get adjusted to the situation and in order to take in hand the practical preparation which is most essential to us. For instance, it is most essential concerning the question of a militia. Perhaps a few military advisers in whom you would place confidence should go out and see on the spot what is necessary. We would be ready to sit down with your military advisers and discuss the problem of a militia. To us this is most vital, considering that no time should be lost, that it should not be too late, that we should not be unprepared for every contingency as it arises.

But assuming that discussions will have to take place, whether here or in Palestine, there is of course the most vital problem of the ideas that will be brought before you by the representatives of the United Kingdom Government as the mandatory. We are not officially in direct contact with them, and we understood from them that they prefer to be in direct contact with the Commission and for us to be in direct contact with the Commission rather than that we should come in direct contact with them.

Now it would be most important for us to know what their proposals are. We consider ourselves entitled to know what their proposals are in order to know what is in store for us and what difficulties, and let us hope also what facilities we may expect and must prepare for.

We saw in the press that in appearing yesterday Sir Alexander Cadogan, for whom personally I have the deepest respect, made it clear that he would have to stipulate that certain things he stated to you would remain secret. I quite appreciate that point of view and I have nothing in principle to say against it, except that we do not think that these things which must be kept secret in the interest of the public will, in the interest of policy, that they need necessarily be kept secret from us. We do not think they should be kept secret from us because they most vitally and directly affect the well-being and the very life of our people and our whole future in Palestine. We may have to say something about those matters. We may be in a position to help. We may find it necessary to warn against certain things.

It is up to the Commission, of course, to decide ultimately what is to be secret. All we can do is to pledge full compliance with the directives of the Commission in that regard, and to observe the strictest secrecy in regard to certain provisions if the Commission finds that they must be kept secret or if that would be the absolute condition of the British Government.

After all, we ourselves one day may have to say something which we regard as secret, and may have to ask you to keep it secret for our sake. We do not dispute in the least the right of the British Government to ask that certain things be kept secret. What we do dispute is the right to withhold that information from the party most vitally and directly concerned in these negotiations.

I do not, myself, regard anything that I have said here to you as being secret. We have no desire or interest to rush it to publicity, but on the other hand we do not mind your making arrangements for informing the press of the gist of my submissions to you today. If the need should arise for withholding something from the press in our humble opinion, we shall say so. If any communique is given to the press, I should then permit myself to suggest that my reference to the Arab side of the problem should be not too detailed and should be rather general in order not to arouse unnecessary hostile reactions.

In general I have made a clean breast of what I had to say, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time given me. If the Secretariat finds it necessary to issue some communique to the press, we would not object.

CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Commission wish to thank Mr. Shertok for his very valuable information concerning the views of the Jewish community in the present situation in Palestine.

Before going further, may I be allowed as a former member of UNSCOP to take slight exception to what was advanced by Mr. Shertok when he stated that UNSCOP had promised a certain system of Jewish immigration.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I meant to say "recommended".

CHAIRMAN: Of course, UNSCOP could not promise anything. UNSCOP formulated the recommendation to the General Assembly and the General Assembly was quite free to decide it in its own way. I think that the expression by Mr. Shertok went slightly beyond his own thoughts.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): If I used the word "promised" I am sorry. I meant to say "recommended", and I thought I did say "recommended", but I rely on the memory of the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN: You said "promise". Having been a member of UNSCOP I am a bit sensitive about these points.

Perhaps my colleagues wish to ask Mr. Shertok some questions in direct connection with his statement.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): I should like to ask Mr. Shertok if he is of the opinion that there is a greater number of troops guarding the frontiers between the Arab states in Palestine or if there is a greater number of troops in the rural zones or populated districts?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I really could not say. I have no exact knowledge of the British military dispositions today, and I am under the impression that there is a constant shifting and movement of troops in accordance with the changes in the security situation.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): I had been given to understand that in Tel Aviv the legal order and the public order, which on one side means the juridical order and on the other side it refers to actual force such as the police, et cetera, are in the hands of the Jews is that correct?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is correct in the following sense. Internal security in the Tel Aviv area, and that comprises two other towns adjoining Tel Aviv with the suburbs, is now in Jewish hands. But it is not in Jewish hands in the sense that there is a Jewish authority there independent of the British authority. It is still under the general responsibility and the orders of the central British administration, except that only Jewish police plus an auxiliary force of Jewish guards are now provided in Tel Aviv on local security duties.

CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us more specifically how is that arranged? Is that special Jewish force.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): First there is the personnel of the regular police.

CHAIRMAN: Is that of the municipal police?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is made up of Palestine police, but the personnel is only Jewish. That is to say, the British and Arab police have been withdrawn from that area and their places have been taken by Jewish police posted from other districts.

CHAIRMAN: But it is still the ordinary Palestinian police?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is still the ordinary police, and they are under the orders of the British Inspector General of Jerusalem. In addition, the Jewish Agency has been given permission to recruit a force of five hundred men as guards to be armed with arms to be provided by the Jewish Agency, for which arms the British authority is issuing licenses now. We tried to insist that the arms be issued from British Government armories, but we failed to obtain that. The British said, "As you have arms you should provide your own arms." There was even an argument -- and I request that this matter should not be published -- about whether this police force should be armed with rifles or with Sten guns.

CHAIRMAN: You are now referring to the supplementary police?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes. It so happens that we are a little short of rifles, and a rifle is a more effective instrument on the highroad or in the protection of out-lying settlements because of its longer range than a Sten gun. We said that as we are relatively better supplied with Sten guns than with rifles may we not use Sten guns for stationary security duty inside the area where, if something happens, it is a street fight and you have no range for firing at a great distance, thereby not tying up five hundred precious rifles which we would have to withdraw from outlying settlements. But they insisted. I do not say because of any

vindictiveness; a rifle is a standard weapon of the police in Palestine – on our providing rifles, and we had to provide rifles. We prefer to use Sten guns for this duty because we could put rifles to a better use in the rural districts.

MR. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark): But were you not short of rifles?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I used the term “short” relatively. We may have more rifles than Sten guns, but in relation to the need for rifles we are less well-supplied with rifles than with Sten guns.

CHAIRMAN: If I understand you correctly, this supplementary police force means in practice limited recognition, a legalization of Hagana in this restricted area?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes; subject to two limitations: within that number and within that area. Definitely so.

CHAIRMAN: Did this passing of the powers to the Jews in Tel Aviv have any other effects, such as on the customs control?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): That is under the British administration. There is no change at all. In no other respect has there been any transfer of authority.

CHAIRMAN: What about the administration of justice?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is definitely the same. It may be a Jewish judge who is sitting, but he is still a Palestinian judge; it may be a Jewish district officer or commissioner who is directly responsible for the administration of Tel Aviv, but he is a British official, an official of the British administration.

CHAIRMAN: Or of the Palestinian administration?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes. This cannot be regarded as the creation of a nucleus of an independent Jewish authority. It is not that.

Theoretically, yes, insofar as has been the measure with regard to the legalization of Hagana.

CHAIRMAN: And it cannot be regarded as a sort of evacuation of the British from the area? Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes, it can be. They have taken out all of the military personnel from the area.

CHAIRMAN: But not their regime?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes, it is still their regime.

CHAIRMAN: The mandatory’s regime continues in force in Tel Aviv and in that area.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Precisely. For instance, it does not affect the question of immigration. The transfer of internal security in the Tel Aviv area does not mean the freeing of the Tel Aviv Port for immigration. They are two different things.

CHAIRMAN: That is a very important point.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): I should like to ask if there have been many difficulties in the functioning of the civil government and its various organs in Palestine.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): There have been very serious difficulties for two reasons. One is for purely technical security reasons and the other, I should say, is for psychological and organizational reasons. I hope I shall not be accused of an exaggeration, and I speak subject to a certain mental reservation because I was there for only six days and I cannot rely only on my own direct impressions. I must rely on what I heard from my friends and reports that I received. I make that reservation quite frankly.

There is a phenomenon of disintegration of authority. There is a phenomenon of internal moral deterioration within the ranks of the administration. For instance, if the Chief Secretary assures my colleague who represents us in Jerusalem once and twice and three times that very strict orders will be issued not to search Jewish convoys or Jewish settlements for arms, and if the next thing that happens in each case is that there is such a search, then the feeling of my friend who is the recipient of that declaration is not that the Chief Secretary is guilty of double-dealing. She – it is a lady in this case – Mrs. Meyerson honestly believes the Secretary was quite sincere and quite factual in his statement that he had actually signed that instruction or saw such an instruction signed by the High Commissioner. Yet if such searches continually happen the only conclusion to which we are driven is that the Government is unable to enforce its authority, and that locally people do what they like in some respects.

CHAIRMAN: What do you mean by the term “people” in the military units?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): The military police.

CHAIRMAN: Because it is even done by the police.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes. On one occasion it was very serious. Having received such an assurance, Mrs. Meyerson happened to go down town to Tel Aviv – actually she came down to Tel Aviv to meet me upon my arrival – and on the way the convoy in which she was travelling was searched. She asked the military officer who carried out the search under whose authority he was acting. He stated that he was covered by the police sergeant. She asked the Sergeant and he said that it was the military who decided to search and he was simply standing by. She could not obtain any clarity. She then went back to Jerusalem and I do not know what explanation was then offered. She had no doubt in her mind that the order to which Sir Henry Gurney had referred had actually been issued and was meant to be executed.

CHAIRMAN: I think the difficulty is that the Chief Secretary is authorized to give orders only to the police but not to the military units.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): The statement that he had made to her was that it was agreed to by the military. They know very well that they have the military to deal with in Palestine.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): I should like to ask if among civil servants or public employees there have been any strikes, and if so, approximately on what dates.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): There have been strikes, though not recently. There have been occasion when some people have failed to turn up for duty because they thought their lives were not properly protected. I do not know if you would call that a strike. Post office employees in certain cases did not report for duty because they thought they would be in danger and they would not be sufficiently protected.

If Dr. Morgan refers to strikes in the past, that is a different story. There have been strikes of government employees in the past purely on economic grounds, such as striking for better pay or for better conditions of work.

CHAIRMAN: I believe Dr. Morgan referred to employees not reporting for duty.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Such cases have been occurring.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): For more or less how long did this situation continue? That is to say that the employees did not turn up to work due to the fact they were afraid?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): For several days at a stretch, and then it was remedied.

CHAIRMAN: Does this apply particularly to Jerusalem or does it apply to the whole of Palestine?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): This applies to Jerusalem. However, I would not guarantee that it did not happen at various places elsewhere. But it applies particularly to Jerusalem.

There is a feeling among the population of being completely out of touch with the government on most important issues, for instance regarding the disposal of government property, the fate of the government archives. These are very important departments, needless to say. Take the Department of Survey which is an enormous treasure of most valuable material. There is no knowledge of what is going to happen to it. Rumours are rife. The rumour is that in some cases such files and records will be destroyed, that certain parts will be turned over to the immediately available local authority, to some municipality, for instance. The Service Department, which is a particularly important asset of the country, is the only department of the government situated in a Jewish town, in Tel Aviv.

CHAIRMAN: For the whole of Palestine?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes. Otherwise the government departments are situated either in Arab towns or in mixed towns, Jerusalem and Haifa. But here is a central government department situated in Tel Aviv. The rumour is that on withdrawal this department will be transferred to Ramie. Why to Ramie? Is Ramie such a progressive town as to be able to take charge of the whole archive department? That is the rumour; I cannot vouch for its accuracy. In the absence of any clear and official information, of course rumours spread.

One of the problems which interests us very much and in more than one sense is the fate of the equipment of the Palestine police and the Transjordan frontier force. The Palestine police is a well-equipped force. It has over one hundred and fifty armoured cars, most of them armed with guns. This is a very important asset. This is the asset of the Palestinian taxpayer; it is the property of the country.

CHAIRMAN: These armoured cars were not loaned by the army, but are the property of the police?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): That is correct; they are the property of the police. There are also large stores of arms, ammunition and uniforms, et cetera. We hear that certain things may be removed, and that what cannot be removed will be destroyed. Whether it is true or not we do not know. But we would take a very serious view of that property being destroyed. It is the property of Palestine.

CHAIRMAN: I think that in the [plan](#) of the General Assembly that is provided for.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes. It would be proper to say that one half of it should go to the Jews and one half should go to the Arabs. So long as the Arab authority is not ready to take over it should be stored away somewhere waiting for that day. We are terribly badly in need of armoured cars for our protection, and to say that armoured cars will be destroyed is, as my friend here (Mr. Eban) has said like destroying food in a state of hunger.

There is the question of the Transjordan Frontier Force. It is a British force; its recruits swear allegiance to His Britannic Majesty. It is an Arab force as regards its personnel -- almost completely Arab. There are very few Jews, and some British Officers. By and large it is an Arab force. We were told by the British Government in London that the intention is to disband this force, liquidate it in the process of the British withdrawal. Naturally British units will be sent elsewhere. Where can they send the Transjordan Frontier Force? It will be disbanded.

Now two questions arise: What will happen to the equipment of the Transjordan Frontier Force?

CHAIRMAN: Is this force recruited exclusively from the inhabitants of Palestine?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): From Palestine and from Transjordan too. It is a sort of mixed force. Its maintenance is largely a charge on the Palestinian Exchequer. The British Exchequer pays the share of Transjordan, and Palestine pays its share.

The question of the equipment of that force interests us from two points of view: affirmatively, whether we shall be able to make use of it, and also the Arab Government, if it comes into being negatively, whether in the process of disbandment and the process of disintegration, particularly if it comes very late in the day toward the very end, a situation may not arise in which the Arab personnel of the Transjordan Frontier Force may not decamp with the equipment -- with the rifles and machine-guns, and even with the armoured cars, and turn them against us and against the United Nations. British troops will not do it. Anyhow, they will be evacuated. British equipment we assume will not be there to fall into the hands of undesirable people. But the Transjordan Frontier Force is a local force and there the danger is very real.

I should like to say what I ascribe to general disintegration of authority is also the fact that there are increasing train robberies by Arabs. On one occasion there was a train robbery and the official communique was careful to point out that troops arrived and fired over the heads of the marauders. Here they were caught redhanded robbing a train and the troops were considerate enough to fire over their heads, and that was published as a deterrent, I assume, to others so that they should know that bullets will fly over their heads if they try to rob a train.

There have been cases of theft of articles and ammunition. In one case a whole store of four hundred rifles with ammunition was stolen by Arabs from a British store. In another case forty cases of ammunition were stolen, which were intended for Greece, from the harbour of Haifa. Now I shall be perfectly frank; I mean what I say -- I mean every letter what I say. I do not accuse any British Officer of deliberately looking aside in order to enable the Arabs to steal. But it definitely means to me there is a relaxation of general vigilance and a relaxation of discipline -- people not caring about their duty, people being very lax. It may be human and perhaps it may be perfectly explicable. They know that they are nearing the end; they do not care any more. If a man has a term of service to run he is anxious to do his duty; he is anxious to be on the good conduct sheet. If he knows that he will quit sooner or later and his pension rights are guaranteed, he does not care. The whole thing deteriorates and that is a very dangerous situation if it continues. I am sure that an "eye" of the United Nations on the spot will help a lot to prevent that demoralization.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): I should like to ask if the Jewish Agency has taken any measures to defend the patrimony of the Jewish state. I will not mention the Arab state because naturally the Arabs have people who will speak for them.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): What the Jewish Agency is now trying to do is to defend all Jewish towns and settlements. The Jewish Agency has not assumed and cannot assume responsibility for the territorial defence in its broadest sense.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): Then I take it that in such cities where law and order are in the hands of the Jewish Agency for Palestine there are no organizations of any kind that have in their care the defence of any such goods, material, equipment, armoured cars, et cetera, to which Mr. Shertok has referred.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Certainly not, and actually the question does not arise. The only area where we are responsible for the defence of the whole area is the Tel Aviv-Ramat Gan-Petah Tiqva area. It is a large Jewish urban area. It is small in area but it is large in population.

CHAIRMAN: That is only on a municipal level?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is local, yes. There is no such equipment there. Such equipment is concentrated in the central store at headquarters or in the police stations up and down the country which are not under our control.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): Are these military movements or attacks which have been carried out sporadic or if does Mr. Shertok feel that they are carried out on planted and specific dates.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): May I say that it is neither the one nor the other without, I hope giving offence. According to our information the position is as follows. Today there are in various districts commanders appointed by the Mufti from outside, either from among Palestinians who are loyal to him or people who are sent in from outside to takeover command. They operate in various areas and they have a general standing order to make trouble.

CHAIRMAN: In any way?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): In every way possible. It is within the discretion of the local commander. If he thinks it is safer to attack a particular settlement than to attack another if he thinks it is better to concentrate on convoys along the road, he can do as he pleases. If he thinks it is better to concentrate on a mixed urban area he can send a few people there and collect a few more from the young people of the town and start trouble there. The idea is to keep the country in a state of unrest in order, first, to get the Arabs accustomed to it, that this is the road of valour, so to speak, and encourage them to join; secondly, in order to frighten the Jews; thirdly, in order to exert pressure on the United Nations; fourthly, in order to drag such elements in the Arab League as may not be quite enthusiastic about military intervention into it by creating a state of affairs as follows: "here the Arabs are fighting and being killed and you are not coming to their help; you must come to their help," by creating a feeling of *noblesse oblige*. That is the purpose of the present phase of the campaign.

It is, therefore, both organized and sporadic at one and the same time as regards the actual operations that have been carried out.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): The [resolution](#) of the United Nations on partition refers to democratic organizations to participate in the government council. Does Mr. Shertok know of such organizations, and what is the attitude they have assumed?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): There are quite a number of democratic organizations within the Jewish community, that is to say, organizations consisting of a certain membership and conducting their internal affairs democratically by election. Moreover, the Jewish community as a whole is democratically organized on a permanent basis. The organization is recognized in Palestine law. There are elections held based on universal suffrage, and there is an elected assembly which results from such elections which in its turn elects a national council. That is as far as the Palestine Jews are concerned. They have their permanently-authorized mouthpiece to speak for them elected democratically.

There is addition and above that the Jewish Agency for Palestine; which is also a democratically-elected body but not by the Jews of Palestine alone but by large numbers of Jews throughout the world who adhere to the Palestine idea. Actually, when the particular provision to which Mr. Morgan has just referred was under discussion, I requested to speak and stated that in the case of the Jews a more appropriate formula to our mind would be to say that the provisional council of government would be appointed by the Commission upon the recommendation of the representative Jewish institutions. That is to say that we should prefer the representative Jewish institutions which normally through the years speak for the Jewish community and the Jewish interests, to submit a list of candidates for the approval of this body rather than to have this body engage in negotiations with a hundred and one parties and organizations. The number one hundred and one is not a literary exaggeration. But it was explained to me at the stage that this formula was meant to meet the conditions of both communities, Jewish and Arab. As the Arab community is not democratically organized in its entirety, but has various party organizations, this middle formula was adopted and we did not press the point.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark): I should like to go back to Mr. Shertok's answer to the former question of Mr. Morgan. When you described the trouble making on the part of certain Arab organizations, I understood that this trouble took two forms, first the form of direct attacks to create confusion and also, to some extent, provocations. Which is the major form of that activity?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): The direct attempt to create confusion is the main form.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark): Is the other incidental or of some magnitude?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): To judge by the press of today in that particular spot it is of considerable magnitude. It is a spot where there is a small cluster of only four young settlements not very strong and otherwise isolated. If there is an attack in which hundreds of Arabs take part, that is fairly substantial. Also, in all centres trouble broke out as a result of Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Haifa. In the course of the development of the trouble there have been acts of retaliation on the part of the Jews some of which I should not hesitate to describe as a most unfortunate and most damaging. They in turn may have called forth further acts of retaliation. Up in Galilee is a part of the country where I should wish any community in the world to possess such a stable and responsible element of settlers as are located in that particular corner of Palestine. There has been no provocation in that part, but this was a deliberate attack because it was easier to reach

them from outside the country, namely, from Syria.

Mr. MEDINA (Bolivia): There is one statement of Mr. Shertok that I think requires some clarification for the record, namely the one referring to the first date on our calendar. He very emphatically declared that if by 1 February a port had not been opened for substantial immigration the Jewish community and even the Arabs would interpret that as a failure of the United Nations and that they would lose faith in this Organization. I think that is not quite accurate because that part of the [resolution](#) is specifically addressed to the mandatory power and it states that the mandatory power shall use...et cetera. If there is any blame it should fall on the mandatory power and should not involve the prestige of this Commission.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): All I can say, sir, is first that I do hope by 1 February a port is free; and secondly, I do hope that if a port is not free the blame will not be laid at the door of the United Nations but as you suggest. That is my hope, I also have my fears.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shertok has stated what are the views of the Jews of Palestine. He has not stated whether those views are correct or not, but that is the factual situation from his point of view.

I have just been informed that Mr. Shertok has a pressing appointment, and I am afraid unless Mr. Francisco's questions are very brief we should not detain Mr. Shertok any longer.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine) I am terribly sorry. The last thing I should wish is to appear disrespectful. I was under the impression that I would only make a statement at this meeting, and I must fly to Washington in about half an hour from now. If I could be excused at this time and return any day that may be wanted I shall be only too happy to do so.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shertok will now be accused, and the questioning will be resumed at a later date at which time Mr. Francisco can present his questions.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

At this point Mr. Shertok and Mr. Eban left the meeting, and discussion on this subject ended.

3. Continuation of the general discussion on the statement by Sir Alexander Cadogan with a view to the preparation of a list of questions to be put to him.

The CHAIRMAN invited comments on Section II of the provisional list of questions prepared by the Secretariat dealing with the problem of immigration.

The opinion was expressed that many of the questions might be redrafted and couched in more diplomatic language.

It was proposed that the Commission should ask whether the Mandatory Power intended to give priority to the detainees in Cyprus in its immigration policy. It was further observed that the Provisional Councils of Government were to be granted authority over matters of immigration.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that such an authority could be exercised only after the establishment of the Provisional Councils and their successful institution of effective control in the areas concerned.

The following questions on immigration were provisionally adopted, after a brief discussion.

"What are the plans of the Mandatory Power regarding immigration prior to the termination of the Mandate and particularly with respect to the present quota of 1,500 Jewish immigrants per month?"

"What are the plans of the Mandatory Power with regard to the recommendation in paragraph A.2 of Part I of the Assembly's resolution which reads as follows:

"The Mandatory Power shall use its best endeavours to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and in any event not later than 1 February 1948."

"Would ships carrying unauthorized Jewish immigrants be prevented from going to Tel Aviv in the period between 1 February 1948 and the termination of the Mandate?"

"Does the Mandatory Power intend to transfer all Jewish immigrants presently detained in Cyprus to Palestine? If so, when and under what conditions? (Within the existing quota or otherwise? If within the quota in what proportion?"

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Commission proceed to examine Section I of the list of questions submitted by the Secretariat, dealing with security problems.

Draft questions 1 and 2 were deleted.

Draft questions 3 and 4 were merged to read as follows:

"Has the United Kingdom Government any proposals to make to the Commission with regard to that transfer of the Palestine Police Force, its stores and equipment?"

Draft questions 5 and 6 were merged to read as follows:

"In what manner does the United Kingdom Government propose to consult with the Commission as to the time and nature of its evacuation of each locality in each area prior to such evacuation? Does the United Kingdom Government intend that an area occupied by British armed forces should mean the actual locality in *physical occupation*?"

The words; "to what extent and subject to what conditions, if any" were deleted from draft question 7. Question 7 was thus modified to read as follows:

"What measures is the Mandatory Power, as the sole authority in Palestine until the termination of the Mandate, prepared to take with regard to the security of the Palestine Commission upon its arrival in Palestine?"

Draft question 8 was modified to read as follows:

"What are the plans of the United Kingdom Government with regard to the withdrawal of the Arab Legion, the Transjordan Frontier Force, and British personnel of the Palestine Police Force? What disposition is to be made and when, of the arms, equipment, stores, etc., of the Transjordan Frontier Force and the Palestine Police Force?"

The words "in any way" were deleted from draft question 9, which was thus modified to read as follows:

"Will the Mandatory Power, prior to the termination of the Mandate, be prepared to facilitate the work of the Commission respecting the measures it may take to establish the armed militia for each State?" On draft question 10 it was observed that the Mandatory Power had already refused to permit measures envisaged in that question to be taken before the termination of the Mandate.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the provision in paragraph 8, Section B of Part I of the Assembly Resolution, which referred to security measures, had been intended not to be operated before the termination of the Mandate.

The question was raised as to whether it was not the intention of the provision to permit the progressive assumption of responsibility by the Commission at the various stages of the withdrawal of the Mandatory Power.

It was proposed that the Commission should ask what the position of the Mandatory Power was with regard to paragraph 3, Section B of Part I of the [Resolution](#) of the General Assembly.

After a brief discussion, draft question 10 was modified to read as follows:

"What is the position of the United Kingdom Government with regard to paragraph 8 of Section B of Part I of the Assembly's [resolution](#), which reads as follows:

"The Provisional Council of Government of each State shall, within the shortest time possible, recruit an armed militia from the residents of that State, sufficient in number to maintain internal order and to prevent frontier clashes.

"This armed militia in each State shall, for operational purposes, be under the command of Jewish or Arab officers resident in that State, but general political and military control, including the choice of the militia's High Command, shall be exercised by the Commission."

Following a brief discussion on draft questions 11, 12 and 13, it was agreed to postpone their consideration to a later stage.

It was suggested that the Commission should ask whether the Mandatory Power would be prepared to enter into consultation with the Commission at an early date on the security requirements of the country in the light of the experience of the Mandatory Power.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the position of the United Kingdom Government in relation to the problem raised by draft question 14 was not clear. He proposed that the Commission should ask whether the Mandatory Power would remain responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the essential services in the areas which it might not evacuate immediately on the termination of the Mandate.

Draft question 14 was modified to read as follows:

“Will the Mandatory Power continue to accept responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and essential public services in areas from which its forces have been evacuated prior to the termination of the Mandate?”

The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.

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