



UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-EIGHTH MEETING
held in Beirut on Thursday, 25 January 1951, at 11 a.m.

Present:	Mr. de Boisanger Mr. Aras Mr. Palmer Mr. de Azcarate	(France) (Turkey) (United States)	Chairman Principal Secretary
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The CHAIRMAN, before opening discussion on the questions listed in the agenda, informed the members of the Commission that a meeting would be held with the Relief and Works Agency the following day, Friday, 26 January, at 3.30 p.m. He felt it might be useful to have an exchange of views in order to clarify the position of the Commission concerning the different matters that would be raised in the course of that meeting.

1. Establishment of the Refugee Office called for in paragraph 2 of the [resolution of 14 December 1950](#) (A/1754)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the provisions of paragraph 2 of the General Assembly [resolution of 14 December 1950](#), directing the Commission to establish a Refugee Office, and observed that the Commission should abide by that directive by taking a purely formal decision to that effect.

Consequently, it was *decided* to establish, in implementation of paragraph 2 of the General Assembly [resolution of 14 December 1950](#), a Refugee Office which, under the direction of the Commission, should perform the tasks laid down in subparagraphs a, b and c of paragraph 2 of that [resolution](#).

2. Consideration of candidates for the post of Director of the Refugee Office.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Principal Secretary to report on the measures he had undertaken in order to fill the post of Director of the Refugee Office.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY explained that, following the decision taken by the Commission in New York, he had examined with the Secretariat the measures to be taken in order to find a competent Director for the Office for repatriation and compensation. In the course of those conversations, the name of Mr. Holger Andersen was mentioned particularly, as his qualifications and experience seemed well suited to the tasks which would be required of him. Mr. Andersen had, therefore, been approached and Mr. Cordier had informed the Principal Secretary by cable, the text of which had been circulated to the members of the Commission, that Mr. Andersen would give a final answer as soon as he knew when he would be free to put himself at the disposal of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN asked the members of the Commission for their opinion concerning the nomination of Mr. Andersen who, he thought, seemed to meet the requisite conditions. He also recalled that the Commission, before adjourning in New York, had agreed that each of its members would enquire about possible nominations; he had, consequently, made certain contacts and could, if need be, put forward the name of a candidate recommended by his Government. However, it seemed that the Commission should not come to any immediate decision regarding that nomination. The Commission might inform Mr. Cordier that it had taken note of Mr. Andersen's nomination and that it had decided to postpone its decision until Mr. Andersen supplied further information as to his availability.

Mr. PALMER (United States) agreed with the Chairman that it would be preferable to defer a decision until it was known whether or not Mr. Andersen could place himself at the disposal of the Commission. A cable to that effect could be sent to Mr. Cordier indicating that if Mr. Andersen gave an affirmative answer, the Commission would be ready to appoint him to the post of Director and that it would then like to see him take up his functions in Jerusalem at the earliest possible date.

For his own part, Mr. Palmer had not thought it necessary to investigate candidates. He had been led to understand that Mr. Andersen, when approached regarding the appointment, would be immediately available.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) fully agreed with the statements of the Chairman and Mr. Palmer, and *it was decided* to send a cable to Mr. Cordier along the lines indicated.

3. Collaboration with the Relief and Works Agency

(a) Relations between the Relief and Works Agency and the Conciliation Commission: Analysis of the relevant texts of the resolutions of the General Assembly (W/57)

Mr. PALMER (United States) pointed out that as this question was of the utmost importance in the future activities both of the Commission and of the Relief and Works Agency, it would be necessary to study it thoroughly. But he did not think he could contribute profitably to that study before having had an exchange of views with Mr. Blandford in order to take up the items of a memorandum, among which was included the conditional offer of Israel.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) indicated that in the conversation he had had the previous day with the Turkish representative to the Relief and Works Agency, he had felt certain that both General Bélé and himself hold identical views regarding the relationship between the two organizations.

The CHAIRMAN stressed the delicate nature of the problem to be discussed at the meeting with the Relief and Works Agency. It was to be expected that on certain items, at least, there might not be absolute agreement; in order to avoid an inconclusive debate, therefore, it might be advisable to undertake a preliminary study. For instance, the members of the Commission might meet the representatives of their respective governments to the Relief and Works Agency and also meet between themselves, in order to study the different aspects of the problem.

The opinion had been expressed that it was not necessary for the moment to clarify the situation, and that a definition of the respective mandates could be taken up later. The Chairman did not agree with that opinion. Indeed, the Arab Governments and the Government of Israel would certainly question the Commission concerning its plans and intentions, and the Commission ought to be able to reply. At the forthcoming meeting, the Commission and the Relief and Works Agency could take up the problem on a general level, without going into questions of detail which could be studied in the course of further meetings or in private

conversations.

Mr. PALMER (United States) agreed that, in view of the importance and complexity of the problem, it could not be settled hastily. There might seem to be differences of opinion between the two organizations concerning the interpretation of their respective functions in the light of the pertinent resolutions, and these opinions must be carefully compared. That is why he hoped for good results from his conversation with Mr. Blandford and from the private conversations among the members of the Commission.

He pointed out that heretofore, the meetings held by the Commission with the Relief and Works Agency could be considered as having been of an informative nature, but that now both organizations would have to come to a common decision, on which the effectiveness of their respective efforts would depend.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) agreed with the Chairman and with Mr. Palmer that because of its complexity the problem called for a thorough study. The conversations he had had with General Bélé had led both of them to conclude that there was no contradiction between the resolutions of the General Assembly, [the most recent](#), of which seemed to them to be the logical conclusion of those adopted previously. On the other hand they both believed that, even though the task of the Relief and Works Agency belonged by its very nature to the political field, the Agency should avoid any political activity. Therein lay the subtlety of the General Assembly's [resolution](#).

Both bodies — whose spheres of action were in fact complementary — should maintain their autonomy of action, although working in close collaboration in order to carry out their common task.

Mr. PALMER (United States) observed that there seemed to be agreement as to the necessity, on the one hand, of maintaining the autonomy of both organizations and, on the other, of establishing a close collaboration between them. That state of mind promised well for successful collaboration.

It seemed that in general the members of the Relief and Works Agency felt that their activities should take place outside the political field. The question would then arise as to when an action ceased to be of a technical nature and became political. Clarification of that point was essential so that the Relief and Works Agency would be able to decide when to call upon the Commission if a problem that it was discussing with the competent authorities of a given government were to leave the technical sphere. The Commission would in turn enter into negotiations with that government on the political level, so that the Office could then follow up its own action in the technical field.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the exchange of views had served to define the problem very clearly. The members of the Commission were agreed that it was necessary first of all to define the political field on the one hand, and the technical field on the other. He thought that in this connexion it might be advisable to obtain the views of the governments concerned, which might differ from those of the Commission. Up to the present time, efforts had been made to settle the refugee problem on the level of principle. In the practical sphere, it would be essential for the Commission to keep the Relief and Works Agency fully informed of its activities and for the Agency, on its part, to inform the Commission of its own activities.

To facilitate the exchange of views to take place the following day, the Chairman believed that it would be advisable to have in writing a certain main ideas for the Commission's guidance, and that a document — W/57, for instance — might be taken as a basis of work. That document had been prepared by the Secretariat and the ideas it contained seemed at first glance, to be correct. The document could perhaps be communicated to the members of the Advisory Commission with a request that they, in turn, forward to the members of the Commission a document setting forth their views.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) felt that work of a practical nature should be undertaken and that theoretical definitions, which almost inevitably gave rise to varying interpretations, should be avoided. He believed that it was less important to take a decision of a general nature than to take the practical decision called for by each specific case.

Mr. PALMER (United States) noted with interest the view expressed by Mr. Aras but thought that before contemplating any decisions of a practical nature it would be advisable for both organizations to define, in mutual agreement, their respective fields of competence as expressed in the resolutions of the General Assembly. He also believed that it would be advisable to dispel the anxiety shown by the members of the Relief and Works Agency in connexion with those resolutions, and to emphasize that the latest resolution of the Assembly did not contradict the preceding resolution but was, in fact, its logical outcome. He agreed with the suggestion of the Chairman to take as basis for discussion a working document which could be communicated to the members of the Relief and Works Agency.

After an exchange of views, *it was decided* to communicate document W/57 to the members of the Relief and Works Agency at the meeting to be held the following day, and to ask them to forward to the Conciliation Commission, if they saw fit, a working paper expressing their own viewpoint; and further, to suggest that the substance of the problem of collaboration be taken up in the course of a meeting which could be held on Monday, 29 January 1951.

(b) Conditional offer of the Government of Israel to the relief and reintegration programme for Palestine refugees (Letter with annex from the Secretary of the Negotiating Committee on Contributions to Programmes of Relief and Rehabilitation)

On the suggestion of the Chairman, *it was decided* to postpone the study of this item until a later meeting.

4. Future activities of the Commission. (W/55)

5. Compensation (W/56)

6. After an exchange of views *it was decided* to postpone consideration of these items until a later meeting since it was felt that to discuss them immediately would be premature.

6. Relations with the Press

The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Commission to the memorandum which had been prepared by the Press Officer.

With reference to the last paragraph of the memorandum, Mr. PALMER (United States) observed that the Commission did not hold public meetings and that it was therefore impossible to give an affirmative answer to the request of the Israeli press representatives.

After an exchange of views, the members of the Commission agreed that it would not be advisable for them individually to make statements to the press, but that if it was unavoidable they would inform the Press Officer of the substance of their statements. The Commission then discussed the advisability of issuing a press communiqué at the conclusion of the Beirut meetings.

It was decided to publish a press release, stating that the Conciliation Commission had met with the Relief and Works Agency for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the two organizations.

Mr. PALMER (United States) added that the memorandum of the Press Officer was extremely interesting in that it gave a very clear summary of the general policy to be followed by the Commission in its dealings with the press.

The CHAIRMAN and Mr. ARAS both expressed their interest in the memorandum of the Press Officer, and it was agreed that the Press Officer would, as in the past, be free to issue brief press releases at the conclusion of all the meetings of the Commission and also, when appropriate, to issue press communiqués, the terms of which would have been agreed upon by the Commission.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.