

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

RESTRICTED
Com. Gen./SR 45
12 September 1949
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE GENERAL COMMITTEE AND THE
DELEGATIONS OF THE ARAB STATES

held in Lausanne on Monday,
12 September 1949, at 3.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. de la Tour du Pin (France) - Chairman
Mr. Yenisey (Turkey)
Mr. Rockwell (U.S.A.)
Dr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
Mr. Abdel Chafi El Labbane - Representative of
Egypt
Mr. Edmond Roch - Representative of
the Hashemite Jordan
Kingdom
Mr. Mohamed Ali Hamade - Representative of
Lebanon
Mr. Ahmad Choukairi - Representative of
Syria

Israeli reply to proposal concerning a mixed working group
on Arab orange groves

The CHAIRMAN regretted to have to inform the Arab delegations that the Israeli Government had refused to endorse the Committee's proposal, on the ground that no outside body could do more toward the preservation of the orange groves than the Custodian of enemy property was at present doing. The Israeli refusal would therefore prevent the establishment of the mixed working group.

Mr. LABBANE (Egypt) affirmed that the refusal did not come as a surprise to the Arab delegations, but merely as further evidence of the lack of good faith of the Israeli Government. The terms of reference prepared by the General Committee were excellent and clear; the reasons advanced by the Israeli Government for its refusal were arbitrary and unfounded. He therefore, in the name of his delegation, requested that the refusal should be clearly noted in the Commission's fourth progress report.

Mr. CHOUKAIRI (Syria) considered it unfortunate that at their last meeting with the Committee the Arab delegations should be left with the feeling that the Jewish delegation

still maintained unchanged the position it had held since the beginning of the talks. The Jews in this matter had acted against the decisions of the General Assembly and the appeals of the Commission, as well as against international etiquette; he held that their conduct was unworthy of a member of the family of nations. nevertheless, the Arab delegations were grateful to the General Committee for its efforts in the matter, which had helped to ease the tension in their minds.

Mr. ROCH (Hashemite Jordan Kingdom) recalled that from the beginning of the Lausanne conference the Arab delegations had continually requested the repatriation of the owners and workers of the groves. The Technical Committee had, moreover, stated in its report that some of the groves could still be saved if emergency measures were taken. Since the Custodian of enemy property was said to be the only proper authority to supervise the groves, it was therefore his duty to see that they were preserved. The Israeli refusal to accept the establishment of the mixed working group proved once more that Israel was carrying out a systematic campaign to destroy Arab property. Mr. Roch asked that the Commission should again take note of the Israeli delegation's refusal to cooperate, and should call attention in its forthcoming report to the rejection of the mixed working group.

Mr. HAMADE (Lebanon) endorsed the views of his colleagues and requested that it be noted in the record that the Arab delegations, having been informed of the refusal of the Israelis to accept the mixed working group, considered that the responsibility for loss of the groves lay entirely with the Israeli Government.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Committee had several times attempted to promote emergency measures for the preservation of the groves; it was therefore the first to deplore the refusal of the Israeli Government. He could assure the Arab delegations that the fact would be noted in the Commission's report, in whatever terms the Commission might deem desirable. He proposed, moreover, that the Committee should request the Principal Secretary, upon his arrival in Jerusalem, to contact Mr. Clapp, Chairman of the Economic Mission, on the subject of the condition of the groves, and communicate to him all information on the matter which was in the possession of the Committee.

Mr. ROCH (Hashemite Jordan Kingdom) expressed the respect of his delegation for the Economic Mission and its personnel, but doubted whether they would be able to estimate the damage

to the groves for purposes of compensation; he felt that without such an estimate the Mission's report would again be a superficial one.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that although the General Committee would suspend its meetings for the period of the Commission's recess, its work would be carried on in Jerusalem during that time by the Principal Secretary, who would continue to follow up the questions of the orange groves, the repatriation of members of separated families, and the unblocking of Arab accounts.

Mr. LABBANE (Egypt) expressed approval of the plans outlined by the Chairman. He felt, however, that although the Jews often agreed in principle to a proposal, they subsequently created conditions which made implementation of the proposal impossible, while placing the responsibility for inaction upon the Arabs. He feared that this policy would continue to operate with regard to the questions of the blocked accounts and separated families. In that connection he noted that the Mixed Committee of Experts on Blocked Accounts would be forced to meet without the presence of an Israeli expert, and pointed out that the expert originally provided by the Israeli delegation had not been a financial adviser but simply a commercial attaché. The Arab delegations could at any time have secured the services of a similar attaché from a nearby consulate, but had preferred to request from Cairo the highly qualified expert who had now arrived.

With regard to the question of the separated families, he recalled that the Arab delegations had accepted the present procedure even though it placed their Governments in an inferior position. The Jews, however, continued to maneuver and to do nothing. The situation had become intolerable, and he felt that the only solution lay in the creation of a mixed committee to supervise the repatriation programme.

Mr. HAMADE (Lebanon) supported the statements of the Egyptian representative and his other colleagues.