

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE**

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING (PRIVATE)**

Held at the Y.M.C.A. Building, Jerusalem,  
Friday, 27 June 1947, at 3.00 p.m.

**Present:**

Chairman:	Mr. Sandstrom	(Sweden)
	Mr. Hood	(Australia)
	Mr. Rand	(Canada)
	Mr. Lisicky	(Czechoslovakia)
	Mr. Garcia Granados	(Guatemala)
	Sir Abdur Rahman	(India)
	Mr. Antezam	(Iran)
	Mr. Blom	(Netherlands)
	Mr. Garcia Salazar	(Peru)
	Mr. Fabregat	(Uruguay)
	Mr. Simic	(Yugoslavia)

Secretariat: Mr. Hoo (Assistant Secretary General)  
Mr. Garcia Robles (Secretary)

The CHAIRMAN called the meeting to order at 3.25 p.m.

Before discussion of items on the agenda, the SECRETARY announced that the administrative staff desired to know how many members of each delegation intended to (a) make the 3-day tour to Galilee, and (b) the trip to Geneva.

Adoption of the Agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

Publicity.

On a point of order Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) asked why the meeting was not being held in public. He did not consider it good policy to continue meeting in private for the reasons that (a) secrecy was always liable to misinterpretation; (b) newspapermen should at least be permitted to hear the deliberations of the Committee; (c) publicity would enforce a greater sense of duty on members of the Committee; (d) it was the policy of the United Nations to hold all meetings in public except for special reasons; (e) it was a rule of procedure of the Committee

that its meetings would be public unless the Committee decided otherwise.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the meeting was private since that had been the practice when the Committee met to discuss matters relating to its work. Experience had shown that it would not be appropriate to depart from that principle. He had so interpreted the view of the Committee regarding the present meeting.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) insisted that a decision be made by the Committee. He moved, as a point of order, that when private meetings were held the Press should be given a full communique, including the results of any roll call vote.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) and Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) said it was not a point of order but a proposal, and Mr. ENTEZAM felt that no decision should be made at present.

The CHAIRMAN gave a brief resume of the questions to be discussed at the meeting.

Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) said he could not agree with the delegate for Guatemala that all matters should be discussed in public. The question of deciding which organisations and persons should or should not appear must be decided in private.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) stated he would vote in favour of the proposal put forward by the delegate for Guatemala since at all meetings of the General Assembly and its Committees the Palestine question had been discussed in public.

Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) pointed out that the question of principle involved had already been decided in the Committee's rules of procedure. But if all meetings were to be public, too many sub-committees would have to be established to permit the discussion in private of some delicate matters before the Committee. Public decisions as to who should be heard would

undoubtedly cause embarrassment. He felt the need for publicity should not take precedence over the success of the Committee's work as a whole.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) supported this view, suggesting that persons who had requested hearings would not like the rejection of their requests discussed in open session.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) then moved the closure of debate.

At the request of the delegate for Guatemala, the CHAIRMAN put the question as to whether the meeting should be held in public to a vote by roll call.

DECISION:

The proposal was rejected: four votes in favour (Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Uruguay, Yugoslavia); and seven against (Australia, Canada, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden).

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) asked that the question of holding public meetings should be placed on the agenda of the next meeting, and the Chairman agreed the matter should be discussed further at the end of the meeting.

Consideration of the Report<sup>x</sup> of Sub-Committee Two.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands), as Chairman of the Sub-Committee, gave the general lines along which the Sub-Committee had worked, and the CHAIRMAN suggested that the Report be discussed paragraph by paragraph.

I. Criteria by which the granting of hearings shall be determined.

After discussion as to the drafting of paragraphs A and B, Mr. HOOD (Australia) moved the adoption of section 1, subject to the understanding that the operative phrase under C was "for the problem under investigation".

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) inquired as to the meaning of the phrase under A: "representative of considerable groups

of the population of Palestine".

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) indicated that the meaning of the phrase was determined mainly by the numerical strength of the organisations concerned. It also implied that organisations with a view point of particular interest should be heard.

DECISION:

After further discussion, A and B were approved with the following amendments:

- A: "Political and other organisations, representative of considerable groups of the population of Palestine";
- B: "Other political organisations or organisations of a non-political character representing viewpoints of particular interest for the problem under investigation."

Proposals C and D were approved without change.

II. Recommendations regarding Applications for Hearings.

A. Organisations and individuals to be invited to submit oral evidence.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) read out the proposed list and discussion centered on the application<sup>x</sup> of the Intercamp Committee, Cyprus.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) asked whether, if the intention were to make any investigation in Cyprus, it would be necessary to hear representatives of the Intercamp Committee in Jerusalem.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) referred to page 3 of the Report (last sentence) indicating that the Sub-Committee had left open the question as to whether a hearing should be held in Jerusalem or Cyprus.

Mr. RAND (Canada) expressed the opinion that visits to the Cyprus camps were not relevant to the real issue before the Committee. While he appreciated the humanitarian aspect of the question, he felt that the Committee should not take a position

x Document A/AC.13/26, page 3.

which would in any way reflect adversely on the administration of the law in Palestine and thereby invite a rebuke which he was afraid the Committee had already invited.

Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) agreed with the delegate for Canada and suggested that the Intercamp Committee, if composed of men who had been interned for violating the law, could not properly be considered a Committee.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) explained that the letter from the Intercamp Committee gave the impression that it was a group representing eleven or twelve thousand illegal immigrants who had been refused entry into Palestine and were now awaiting entry under the quota. Since immigration was an important part of the problem to be investigated, the Sub-Committee had thought it would be helpful for the Committee to hear representatives of the Intercamp Committee.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) said that during the recent special Session of the General Assembly in New York his delegation had introduced a resolution which gave the Committee permission to go anywhere it chose and this had been approved by the Assembly. Since representatives from the Cyprus camps could not be brought to Jerusalem, the Committee should make its investigations in Cyprus.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the decision to visit D.P. camps either in Germany or in Cyprus could be made when the Committee was in Geneva, but other members of the Committee thought it would be less difficult to visit Cyprus from Jerusalem.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) considered that the question of visiting the D.P. camps in Europe should be held over. The immediate issue was the application from the Intercamp Committee in Cyprus. He thought it improper and liable to give false

impressions if a hearing were to be granted.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) considered that, since the General Assembly had given the Committee wide powers to obtain all relevant information, and since immigration was a fundamental part of the problem before the Committee, the Committee should go to Cyprus.

Mr. GARCIA SALAZAR (Peru) said it should be established, first, that the Committee, when it was concerned as at present with the problem of immigration, should study the question carefully and bear in mind that if it went to Cyprus, its visit would probably be interpreted as a decision on the question of immigration. He stressed that it should also be understood that the Committee would not go to Cyprus to pass judgment on the administration of the camps or intervene in any way with matters which were the concern of the Government of Palestine. Only if these points were clearly established would he vote in favour of a visit to Cyprus.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Intercamp Committee should be deleted from category A and included under C, since the question was really whether the Committee was to visit Cyprus or not, and he felt this required further consideration.

DECISION:

It was decided, without vote, that the Intercamp Committee be deleted from A and inserted under C, i.e. that a decision be deferred.

B. Organisations or individuals whose applications should be rejected.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia), referring to the Palestine Communist Union, asked how the Sub-Committee could have known in advance that "no viewpoint of particular interest could be expected from this party".<sup>x</sup>

Mr. BLOK (Netherlands) commented that the party was a

<sup>x</sup> See page 5, document A/AC.13/26

break-away group of the Communist Party of Palestine (listed in A).

The CHAIRMAN further explained that the Palestine Communist Union was a small group representing some two hundred people and that it held a substantially similar attitude towards Zionism as other Zionist organisations. By contrast, the Communist Party of Palestine was anti-Zionist and would be given a hearing.

DECISION:

It was agreed, without vote, to approve section B of the Report.

C. Cases in which it is recommended that a decision be deferred.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala) moved the adoption of the proposal of Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) that the Committee hear Mrs. Rahel Ber (Haifa)<sup>x</sup> and Mrs. Deborah Pantofaru (Haifa)<sup>xx</sup> on the grounds that the Committee should investigate all facts bearing on the manner in which the Mandatory Power had carried out the terms of the Mandate.

The SECRETARY read out the text of the letter of Mrs. Rahel Ber which alleged that her husband had been arrested by the C.I.D. without charge and deported without trial to Kenya. The letter asked for a hearing with a view to securing the release of Mrs. Ber's husband. The letter from Mrs. Pantofaru was along similar lines.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) urged that the applicants be heard on humanitarian grounds and within the terms of the General Assembly's resolution (Document A/309 Resolution II).

Mr. GARCIA SALAZAR (Peru) pointed out that the Mandatory Power was responsible for law and order in Palestine, and the Committee should avoid giving the impression that they were

criticising the Palestine Administration. He would therefore oppose a hearing being granted.

DECISION:

It was agreed, without vote, that a decision on the question should be deferred.

Applications submitting insufficient information.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) referred to the suggestion<sup>x</sup> that a member of the Secretariat should communicate with these applicants with a view to making some preliminary investigations.

DECISION:

After some discussion it was decided to accept the paragraph subject to a change of wording in the last sentence. The text as amended read:

"He will then report to the Sub-Committee on the result of this preliminary investigation, and the sub-Committee will make recommendations to the Committee on the advisability of inviting these persons to testify before the full Committee."

III. Date of Hearings.

It was suggested by Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) that the proposed opening date of 4 July should be altered so as to give the Committee more time to settle down to work after the three-day tour in Galilee.

DECISION:

After discussion it was agreed that the matter should be referred to Sub-Committee two.

IV. Requests of Applicants regarding Hearings.

After the suggestion of Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) it was agreed that this matter should be left to Sub-Committee Two to arrange.

V. Organisations and Individuals having testified before the Anglo-American Committee.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) proposed elimination of the words ".... and asks them not to repeat the testimonies already presented in March 1946" appearing in the last paragraph.<sup>xx</sup>

x Doc. A/AC.13/26, page 7, parag. 2

xx Doc. A/AC.13/26, page 8



Sir ABDUR RAHMAN (India) asked that witnesses be requested to provide the Committee with advance copies of their statements in writing.

DECISION:

It was agreed that no reference would be made to the Anglo-American Committee hearings but that those testifying would be asked to furnish written statements in advance, wherever possible.

Communications from IRGUN ZVAI LEUMI b'ERETZ ISRAEL.

The CHAIRMAN indicated that since the Sub-Committee's report correspondence had been received signed by the Irgun Zvai Leumi b'Eretz Israel.

The SECRETARY explained that two letters had been received of which typewritten copies had been circulated to the Committee:

- (1) Letter of 22 June, in which it was asked that the persons condemned to death by the Military Court of Jerusalem on 10 June "be called as witnesses before the Committee".
- (2) Letter of 23 June (accompanied by a memorandum which had also been circulated) in which it was stated that "we are now prepared to add further information orally".

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) proposed that the letters be referred to Sub-Committee Two for a report to the Committee.

Mr. HOO (Assistant Secretary General) pointed out that a request for a hearing had already been referred to the Sub-Committee and that in its opinion the question was highly political and therefore not within its competence.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) asked what proof of authenticity the letters had, since they were unsigned, and whether the Committee was competent to take any action regarding them.

Mr. Garcia GRAMADOS (Guatemala) thought that a hearing should not be granted on the grounds that the letters had not been signed and that the persons proposed as witnesses in the Irgun's letter of 22 June had already been sentenced. He

believed that the Committee was not therefore legally entitled to take evidence from them.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) formally proposed that the letters be not considered.

DECISION:

It was decided, without vote, that the letters be not considered.

Itinerary of three-day tour of Galilee.

The SECRETARY drew the attention of the Committee to the proposed itinerary.

DECISION:

The suggested itinerary was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN read the text of the statement on the itinerary for release to the press, indicating that the Committee would have favoured more formal visits to Arab communities had circumstances beyond its control made this possible.

DECISION:

The text of the press release was adopted.

Consideration of letter<sup>x</sup> received from the Chief Secretary of the Palestine Government.

Sir ABDUR RAHMAN said that he did not accept the contention in the second paragraph of Sir Henry Gurney's letter that the matter was still sub judice and therefore not able to be talked about. However he considered that no useful purpose would be served by discussing the question further and he therefore moved that no further action be taken.

Mr. HOOD (Australia) agreed with the delegate of India.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the letter had been formally acknowledged with the advice that it had been circulated to members of the Committee.

DECISION:

The proposal to take no further action was accepted without vote.

The SECRETARY asked whether the Summary Records\* of Committee meetings dealing with the question of the death sentences should continue to be regarded as confidential.

DECISION:

The Committee agreed that the previous decision\*\* to treat the Records of the ninth and tenth meetings as confidential should apply to the eleventh and twelfth meetings also.

Public Meetings

There was further discussion on the question of public meetings.

Mr. GARCIA GRANADOS (Guatemala) proposed that the next meeting should be held in public and asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. RAND (Canada) said the question could not be decided until one knew which matters were to be discussed at any given meeting.

Several members suggested that Mr. Garcia Granados' proposal in effect meant that certain special items, in particular the next Report of Sub-Committee Two, should be discussed in public session.

DECISION:

The proposal was rejected: three votes in favour (Guatemala, Uruguay, Yugoslavia) and eight against (Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden).

Press Release.

Mr. SYMONIDES (Press Officer) read out the draft text of the press release regarding the meeting.

DECISION:

After discussion and slight amendment the text of the press communique was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6.50 p.m.

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\* Documents A/C.13/SR.9 to 12 inclusive  
\*\* Document A/C.13/SR.10, pages 10 to 11