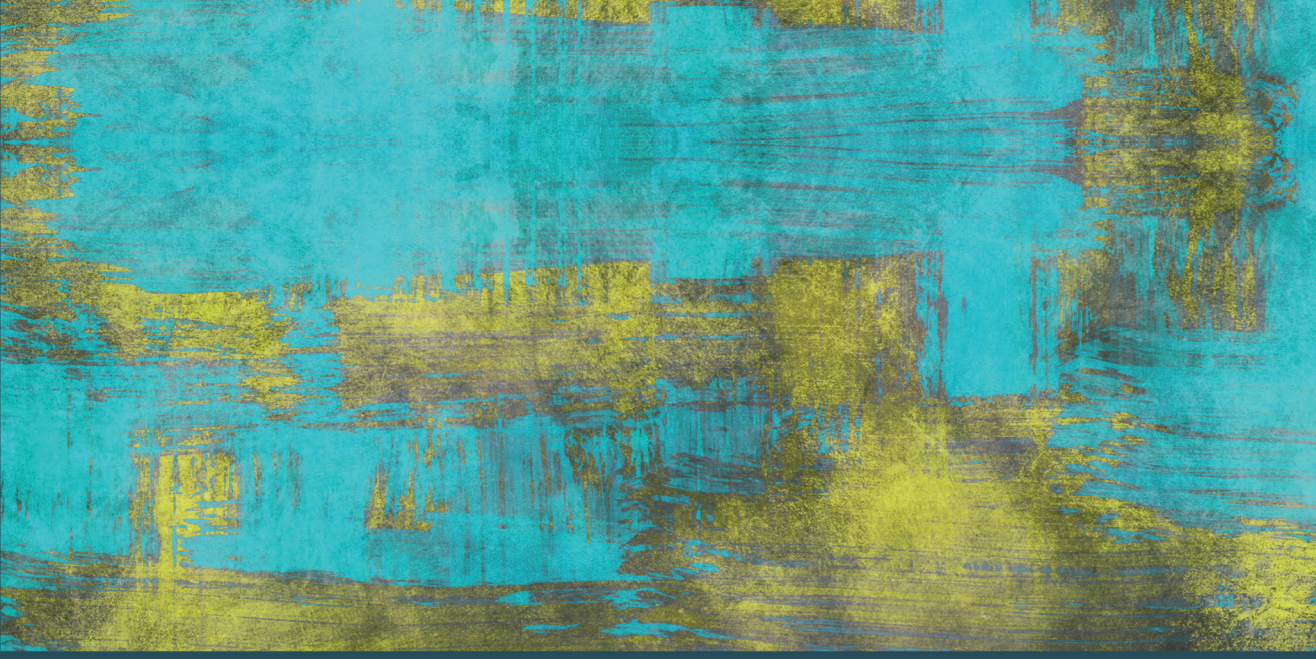


Israeli History, Politics and Society

UNSCOP AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

THE ROAD TO PARTITION

Elad Ben-Dror

Translated by
Haim Watzman



ROUTLEDGE

"Elad Ben-Dror's book is a masterpiece of movement from macrohistory to the fascinating micro case of an international committee that was sent into the eye of a storm and managed to avoid sinking. A small group of men who had not known each other previously found the extraordinary internal dynamic required to formulate the geopolitical plan that put an end to the British mandate in Palestine and led to the establishment of Israel. Ben-Dror is an outstanding scholar but also an excellent storyteller. The two do not always go together, but here they certainly do. It is impossible to understand the Arab-Israeli conflict without this book."

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"This is a fine, well-documented, well-argued history of the pivotal United Nations committee that laid the basis for the General Assembly's resolution of November 1947, which triggered the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948. The committee's proposed compromise, of a two-state solution, remains the core idea for any future resolution of the conflict."

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"UNSCOP and the Arab-Israeli Conflict is grounded in meticulous archival research and deep awareness of the interpersonal dynamics as well as geopolitical aspects of UNSCOP's activity. The book's representation of contingency in group decision making, the limited influence of Zionist or Arab lobbying, and the structural dilemma embodied in Zionist and Palestinian claims to the land, make it essential reading for anyone interested in the origins and course of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

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UNSCOP and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

This book provides the first comprehensive account of the work of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), constituted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1947 to study the situation in Palestine at the end of the British Mandate and make recommendations about its political future.

Utilizing a wealth of archival documentation, some of it never before studied, Elad Ben-Dror explores the various aspects of UNSCOP's activity to understand how it came to determine the fate of the country's inhabitants. The book analyzes the methods and motivations of the various members, with special attention given to the personal viewpoint of each member of the committee. Through this Ben-Dror shows that the partition recommendation emerged after a long process of study, debate, and compromise that was very much dependent on the characters and circumstances of the individual members of the committee.

UNSCOP and the Arab-Israeli Conflict will be a key text in understanding the role of UNSCOP in shaping the modern Middle East. It will be appropriate for scholars and students of political science, Palestine and Israeli history, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the UN and diplomacy, and conflict resolution.

Elad Ben-Dror is an Associate Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. His research focuses on various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, chiefly the UN's involvement in the late 1940s and the establishment of the state of Israel.

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UNSCOP and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Road to Partition

Elad Ben-Dror

Translated by Haim Watzman

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Translated by Haim Watzman

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This study was written while I was working at the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, which I chaired until recently. I wish to thank my colleagues and friends, the faculty members with whom I shared the ideas presented in this book, and the department's dedicated clerical staff, for whom I have only the highest praise. Last of all, I thank those dearest to me, the members of my family—my wife Efrat, our children Hadas, Tamir, Arnon, Noam Shai, and Adva, as well as my son-in-law Eliah and my daughter-in-law Halel. This book is lovingly dedicated to my parents, Yossi and Esti, and to my eldest grandson Raz.



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Introduction

A delegation of eleven men representing eleven different countries arrived in Palestine in the summer of 1947. They were members of UNSCOP—the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine—and had been sent by the UN to study the Palestine question and draw up recommendations for its political future. From Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Holland, India, Iran, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia, they spent less than forty days on their mission, but their work radically changed the course of history for the Jewish nation and for the Jewish and Arab inhabitants of Palestine.

Quite a few committees of inquiry visited Palestine while it was under the British Mandate. UNSCOP differed from the rest in that it was an international committee set up by the United Nations after Britain asked the international organization for its assistance. Following an intensive inquiry, a majority of UNSCOP's members recommended an end to the Mandate and the partition of the country into two sovereign independent states: a Jewish state that would comprise most of the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, and an Arab state. These two states and the city of Jerusalem, which was to remain under the rule of the United Nations, would be linked by an economic union. The recommendations served as the basis for the deliberations of the Second United Nations General Assembly, which adopted them, with only minor revisions, on November 29, 1947.

UNSCOP's brief life should not be taken lightly in a historical perspective. It took the Palestine question from the British and placed the Jewish-Arab conflict in the hands of the United Nations, where it remained for many years thereafter. Furthermore, in diverting the conflict into this new channel, it gave clear priority to the Zionist demand for the establishment of a viable Jewish state on most of Palestine's territory. A majority of UNSCOP's members decided that the greater part of the area between the Jordan and the sea—almost two-thirds of it—would be assigned to the Jewish state, and this at a time when, demographically, the balance was the opposite. Palestine was then home to about 1.2 million Arabs and somewhat over 600,000 Jews, that is two-thirds Arab and one-third Jewish. UNSCOP thus adopted not only Zionism's demand for a sovereign state, but also its demand that that state should be able to take in the survivors of the Holocaust (the Displaced Persons, or DPs).

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For this reason it assigned the Jewish state territory to enable it to settle these immigrants and develop the country. The committee's members concluded that Palestine's demography would undergo rapid change, and that the Zionist movement's hopes for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, which it had promoted since the Balfour Declaration, could thus finally be realized. At the time, UNSCOP's recommendations were seen as eminently pro-Zionist, given that they mandated a sovereign Jewish state, free immigration, and a territorial disposition auspicious to the Jews, even though it did not include Jerusalem or the western Galilee. They set the partition idea in motion and set the parameters for its borders. While the UN General Assembly trimmed the territory of the Jewish state a bit, UNSCOP's pro-Zionist recommendations were the basis for the deliberations. A majority of the member states rallied around them, led by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Despite their importance, no one has yet produced an in-depth study of UNSCOP, one answering a fundamental question—what led most of the committee's members to adopt Zionism's central demand and recommend the establishment of a Jewish state in most of Palestine? Over the years, two answers have been offered to that question. Arab writers have claimed that UNSCOP was a stratagem designed to enable the British and Americans to achieve their goal of granting the Jews a state in Palestine while making sure that they could plausibly deny being involved in the decision. The Arabs maintained that the recommendations had been determined in advance and that UNSCOP's inquiry was a sham. Most of the committee's members had been pro-Zionist before arriving in Palestine, these writers have claimed, so their recommendations came as no surprise. The Arabs said as much during the inquiry, and that position has been widely echoed in Arab and Palestinian historiography. Zionist historiography, basing itself on the memoirs of the figures involved, painted an entirely different picture. It portrayed UNSCOP as an objective panel, made up of men who were enthralled by the Zionist project. The misery and predicament of the Jewish DPs in Europe moved them, leading them to adopt the Zionist narrative that served as a basis for their decisions. The *Exodus*, a ship carrying 4,500 Jewish immigrants from Europe to Palestine, most of them without immigration permits, became part of the myth. The *Exodus* arrived on Palestine's shores while UNSCOP was conducting its inquiry, and the British refusal to grant it entry and insistence on sending its passengers back to Europe was, according to this narrative, a decisive influence on the committee's recommendations.

As archives in Israel and the West have made previously classified sources available, a number of scholars have produced studies of the period in which UNSCOP operated, but none of these studies has been devoted to it exclusively. In fact, despite the extensive and varied work on the period, UNSCOP itself has remained obscure. Nearly all the studies have disregarded the Arab claim that most of its members were pro-Zionist from the start, and that

this biased their inquiry. Furthermore, these studies have adopted the myth that the *Exodus* affair was hugely influential, or at the very least have cited that claim without critically examining its truth. All in all, these studies have accepted the Zionist interpretation. Only a small number of them have made use of archival material from the United Nations.[1] Furthermore, most have surveyed a much broader period in the history of Palestine-Israel, focusing on the Jewish-Arab-British triangle and the American aspects of the subject. They have been based largely on British and American documents, as well as on those of the Jewish state-in-the-making. Their accounts have reflected the British, American, and Zionist perspectives, rather than that of the actual producers of the recommendations—UNSCOP's members.

Another research genre that developed as the archives opened up has examined the activity of different countries in the United Nations at the time the state of Israel was established. Studies of this sort exist for a few of the countries that sent members to UNSCOP.[2] They cover a longer period, and while they have made important contributions, they do not seek to tell the entire story, but rather to focus on a single point of view.

My goal is to offer a comprehensive account of UNSCOP in all its aspects. The point of view will be that of the members of the committee, who arrived independently in a land they did not know. I will offer an account of the committee's work from the moment it was constituted to the submission of its recommendations, the goal being to evaluate how UNSCOP reached its conclusions and what processes and motives led it to that point. This book will make a contribution to other related historical topics, such as British policy at the end of the Mandate period, and the causal connection between the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel.

My fundamental starting assumption was that a full account of UNSCOP's work would require shifting the archival center of gravity toward the documents produced by the committee itself, which are located in the United Nations Archive in New York. A large and varied set of sources are stored there, and have not before been fully exploited by researchers. It includes the minutes of the committee's closed sessions, as well as those of the subcommittees it established to address specific issues. It also contains letters, proposals, and memoranda that were sent to the committee regarding the solution of the Palestine problem. Further files of interest are those relating to the committee's secretariat, in particular those of Ralph Bunche, special assistant to the secretary-general of the United Nations. They include documentation of informal meetings held to record testimonies, and internal documents written during the time the committee was formulating its recommendations.

Nevertheless, the material at the UN is not sufficient. While UNSCOP made an effort to preserve an image of objectivity, in reality the situation was quite different. In fact, some of the members came to the task with preconceptions about the Jews, Arabs, or British, or received orders that dictated that they work in the interests of the country they represented. In order to produce a truer account, I have sought to characterize each committee member. The key

question was the measure of independence enjoyed by each member, and the motivations that guided him in making his decisions.

This effort included a search for documents produced by committee members in their own countries. I found material of great interest, some of which had not been studied before. This material helped me understand the mechanisms of UNSCOP's operations. The archive of Emil Sandström of Sweden offers the most complete collection of all the material submitted to the committee; as chairman of the committee, there was material that reached him alone. Notably, the collection does not include even a single report sent by him to his own government. Sandström operated entirely independently of the country that sent him, and his correspondence with the Swedish leadership was limited to technical matters and includes no expression of his personal opinions. The general rule is that the less independent the committee member, the more inside information he sent to his government. Canada's representative, who was independent, shared little information about the committee's work with his country's Foreign Ministry. In contrast, the archives of Australia, Holland, Czechoslovakia, and India contain detailed reports sent by those countries' delegates, as they acted at the bidding of their Foreign Ministries.

Another important source of information about UNSCOP's members is their diaries and memoirs. The best-known memoir is that of the Guatemalan delegate, Jorge Garcia Granados.[3] Further sources are a personal account by the Uruguayan member, in Spanish[4] and another by the alternate Swedish representative, in Swedish;[5] an article published in a Swedish journal by Sandström close to the time of the events;[6] as well as Bunche's unpublished diary, housed in his personal archive at UCLA.

The objects of UNSCOP's inquiry—the British, the Jews, and the Arabs—reacted differently to the committee and its work and directly affected the results. Documents from the British National Archives, which are key to nearly all study of the period in question, did not offer as much help as I anticipated in documenting what happened within the committee itself. The information sent to London about the committee turned out, in many cases, to be imprecise. Furthermore, the relations between the British and UNSCOP were complex and tortuous. British documents do not offer a clear picture of the country's policy on the committee. They sometimes reveal a lack of agreement among British policy makers.

The Jewish state-in-the-making, in contrast, produced documents that testify to the clear and unified approach that its leadership took toward the committee, and the considerable energy characteristic of Zionist activity in its regard. It offers a large quantity of information on the members of the committee.[7] Another important source of material is the intelligence reports produced by Shai, the intelligence service of the Haganah, the Jewish paramilitary force. Shai agents used a variety of means to keep tabs on the members

of the committee and, on a daily basis, offered many scraps of information. These proved to be of great value for this study. Other important sources for my work were the memoirs written by the liaison officers that the Jewish Agency attached to the committee, David Horowitz and Aubrey (later Abba) Eban, which reliably reflect the Zionist view of the episode.[8]

While the Arab position as I present it does not stand on a comparable archival foundation, I have nevertheless been able to document it comprehensively. Many of the Arab statesmen and diplomats who were involved in the UNSCOP episode wrote memoirs or have been the subject of biographies, and these offer a sharp picture of the Arab attitude toward the committee. These sources are of great value, in particular the memoirs of the committee's Arab secretary, Ḥussayn Fakhrī al-Khālidī, published in 2014.[9] Supplemented by the daily Arab press, the documents of the Arab Higher Committee (some of which can be found in the Israel State Archives and others of which are published in the works of Arab scholars) and the range of other sources that reported on events from different directions, I believe that I have been able to accurately report the Arab point of view.

I also examine the positions of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, in particular with regard to the extent of their involvement in and influence on the committee. The colorful reports of the American consul-general in Jerusalem were based on good sources of information, and reports he received from American legations throughout the Middle East often served to buttress and confirm information that British sources provide on the Arab world.[10] But the most important new source of information I discovered was the documents in the files of the American delegation to the United Nations, which include notes of conversations conducted a short time after the inquiry between members of the American delegation and key UNSCOP figures, who spoke to them with great candor. I was permitted to see only a portion of the relevant Soviet documents. Experts on Soviet documents who have addressed the issue claim that the published collection of these documents casts considerable light on the USSR's role,[11] and that its role in the UNSCOP affair is now largely clear.

Beyond the archival material that is the foundation of this study, I made use of many other studies of the period that touch on aspects of the events recorded here. Also useful were transcripts of oral interviews conducted with some of the actors, kept at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the UN library in New York. The contemporary daily press also covered UNSCOP intensively, and often helps fill in gaps left by other sources.

The unique nature of my subject, which required collecting material from a relatively large number of archives, dictated a method that would enable me to cope with studying the committee as a group, but also each of its individual members. Most of this book addresses UNSCOP as a body; the individual members are considered at three points along the way. I first sketch a

personal profile of each of them, with the goal of answering two questions—first, what degree of freedom did each member have to act as he thought best; second, what was his position on the issue at the start of his mission. At a later point, I again focus on the individual members; then, at the end of the book, I devote a full chapter to a rigorous account of each member, with the purpose of discovering how his opinion was shaped. I have tried to consider all the factors that influenced the members, including, possibly, the superpowers. A separate chapter is devoted to the superpowers themselves.

Abba Eban, who served as a liaison between UNSCOP and the Jewish Agency, remarked at the end of an interview he once gave:

> I have a general comment: the historical consciousness of the Israeli nation does not give enough weight to UNSCOP, because the subject of the [General] Assembly is very dramatic—spotlights and microphones from all over the world and huge reverberations—but we would not have succeeded on November 29, 1947 had we failed with UNSCOP, because what did we depend on [at the General Assembly]? On the [report of] the committee's majority, and the Americans and also the Soviets also depended on it. Yet UNSCOP itself was a relatively quiet affair—after all, Geneva [where the committee met to make its decisions] is not the center of the world and is not like an assembly with the participation of the great people of the world. The fact is that the turning point was UNSCOP and not the [General] Assembly … as such, something is lacking in our historical consciousness, which short-changes … the standing of UNSCOP, which [worked] quietly, without making a big fuss.[12]

I hope that this book will remedy the historical injustice and give UNSCOP the place it deserves, as the real engine of the UN partition resolution.

In recent years the United Nations has once again taken a place at the center of the stage on which the Arab-Israeli conflict plays out, serving as an arena for the Palestinians' efforts to establish a state of their own. The United Nations General Assembly, which convenes in the autumn of every year, has for some years made headlines thanks to its attention to Israel and the Palestinians. The parameters of the story, as described in this book, have of course changed radically in the intervening years, but the two contending nations, the main characters in this book, continue to fight their battles on the stage of the United Nations. Despite the surface similarities between the current battle and the one I portray in this book, my goal has been to write a historical study without making comparisons to current events and without drawing from it political lessons for the current age. Furthermore, I have tried not to be influenced by my knowledge of how the conflict has played out over the last seven decades. In other words, I have sought to avoid what is sometimes called the writing of history backwards. It is not

easy for anyone writing on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict to do, all the more so for a scholar for whom the conflict is an inseparable part of his own life story.

Notes

1 Two studies that should be mentioned are Yehoshua Freundlich, *Mi-Ḥurban le-Tekumah: Ha-Mediniyut ha-Tziyonit mi-Tom Milḥemet ha-'Olam ha-Sheniyah ve-'ad Hakamat Medinat Yisra'el*, Tel Aviv: 1994; Martin Jones, *Failure in Palestine: British and United States Policy after the Second World War*, London: 1986. Both these studies cover UNSCOP extensively, and their authors conducted pioneering work in the UN Archives.

2 Much has been written about Canada's involvement in the UN decision to establish the state of Israel. Two of the most notable are David Bercuson, *Canada and the Birth of Israel: A Study in Canadian Foreign Policy*, Toronto: 1985; and Eliezer Tauber, *Personal Policy Making: Canada's Role in the Adoption of the Palestine Partition Resolution*, Westport, CT: 2002. The work of Canada's representative on UNSCOP has also been recounted in articles in the Canadian Jewish press, in particular by Howard Adelman on the website of the Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). Other countries whose positions have been investigated on the basis of primary materials are Australia, India, and Czechoslovakia. The most notable study on Australia is Daniel Mandel, *H.V. Evatt and the Establishment of Israel: The Undercover Zionist*, London: 2004. There are two studies about India: Rami Ginat, "India and the Palestine Question: The Emergence of the Asio-Arab Bloc and India's Quest for Hegemony in the Post-Colonial Third World," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40:6 (2004), pp. 187–216; P. R. Kumaraswamy, *India's Israel Policy*, New York: 2010. Czechoslovakia's position is examined in a master's thesis: Tomáš Habermann, "Československo a Izrael 1947–1949: Léta přátelství." ("Czechoslovakia and Israel: A Period of Friendship"), M.A. thesis, Prague University, 2011.

3 Jorge Garcia Granados, *The Birth of Israel: The Drama as I Saw It*, New York: Jorge Garcia Granados, online at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005185734;view=1up;seq=9.

4 Enrique Fabregat, *Sion, rebelión y cumplimiento: dos capítulos del manuscrito inédito*, Jerusalén: 1992.

5 Paul Mohn, *Krumulur i tidens marginal*, Stockholm: 1961. The book is based on a manuscript of Mohn's that was found in the library of Uppsala University in Sweden.

6 Emil Sandström, 'Palestinafrågan: Sambandet Mellan Delningsbeslutets Materiella Innehåll och Sättet för dess Verkställande," *Svensk Tidskrift*, Dec. 1949, pp. 25–37.

7 Many documents of this type can be found in Nana Sagi, ed., *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, Vol. 2 (January–November 1947), Jerusalem: 1998.

8 David Horowitz, *State in the Making*, New York: Knopf, 1953; Abba Eban, *Abba Eban: An Autobiography*, New York: Random House, 1977.

9 Ḥussayn Fakhrī al-Khālidī, *Wa-Maḍā ʿahd al-Majāmalāt: Mudhakarāt al-Duktūr Ḥussayn Fakhrī al-Khālidī*, Amman: 2014.

10 Some of these documents can be found in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (*FRUS*), Vol. 5 (1947).

11 *Documents on Israeli–Soviet Relations 1941–1953*, London: 2000. Dov Yaroshevsky examined, on my behalf, all the Soviet documents then open for examination that were relevant to my study. There has been no free access to all Soviet documents in recent years. I am grateful to Boris Morozov for his assistance.

12 Rosa Perla Reicher interview with Abba Eban, 1993, OHD 71(155). Reicher conducted all the interviews housed in OHD that are cited in this book.

1 "Without Recommendations"

Handing the Palestine Question Over to the United Nations

Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, the symbol of British rule in Palestine after the Second World War, announced on February 18, 1947 that the British government had decided to refer the issue of Palestine to the United Nations. The announcement, which did not advocate any specific resolution of the problem, or any commitment on Britain's part to comply with whatever decisions the UN might make, marked a turning point in its policy.

Bevin was largely the architect of the move. He was frustrated by the failure of his policy over the twenty months since he had been appointed to his post. Time was not on Britain's side. While it had emerged from the war as a victorious power, the country was focused on the economic crisis that the war had brought on. Its overseas military and other commitments threatened to wreck its economy, so they needed to be reduced. The United States, to which Britain had appealed in its plight, was helping with a fixed-term loan, but the USA was also seeking to establish its place as a superpower, which sometimes involved seeking to dictate British policy. Palestine was one of the most pressing issues for the British. On the one hand, its hegemony in the Middle East was declining as it acceded to the Arab states' demand for the evacuation of foreign troops, adding to Palestine's importance. On the other hand, Palestine was making trouble.[1]

The escalating confrontation between the Zionist movement and the Arabs made it harder for Britain to maintain forces in Palestine, and required the country to conduct a complex approach that would take into account the Arab countries' interests. Doing so mandated a pro-Arab policy. That fitted in with the fundamental British view that the Middle East was essential to its empire, manifested in the treaties that permitted it to maintain bases in some of the Arab states. The bases required the British to keep up their reputation among the Arabs. On the other hand, Britain had to take the Americans into account. The USA sought to dictate pro-Zionist steps, most importantly accession to the Zionist demand to open Palestine to the immigration of 100,000 Jewish displaced persons (DPs) from Europe, which President Harry Truman had endorsed in the summer of 1945. Britain found it increasingly difficult to maneuver between the Arabs and the Americans, at the same time that its military and economic commitments in Palestine burgeoned.

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Furthermore, its policy in Palestine, which seemed increasingly hopeless, was being conducted while British policy makers were advocating decolonization. The end of British rule in India at just this point was the first major consequence of this policy, and set in motion the British Empire's divestment from most of its overseas possessions.

The situation in Palestine was growing progressively worse for the British. They were under attack from two dissident Jewish underground militia, Etzel (the National Military Organization, which the British called the Irgun) and Lehi (Freedom Fighters of Israel, which the British called the Stern Gang). In the meantime, the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine, was growing as a result of an influx of immigrants that Britain was trying, with only partial success, to limit and their settlement in the country. These efforts were led by the Haganah, which was an arm of the official Jewish autonomous institutions. Appalled by the enormity of the Holocaust and by Britain's refusal to allow its survivors to settle in Palestine without restriction, the Jewish Agency, the body that formally represented and led the Yishuv, was working actively to promote a Jewish state. At the Biltmore Conference, in May 1942, the Zionist movement had implicitly demanded Jewish rule in all of Palestine, but in July 1946 the Jewish Agency Executive, meeting in Paris, set aside territorial maximalism and expressed its willingness to discuss the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a viable state on a part of it.

The Zionists saw that as a compromise. But the Arabs categorically rejected any sort of Jewish national home of the type Britain had promised in the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Their position disregarded the dramatic expansion of the Yishuv under the British Mandate, and refused to recognize that a Jewish national home was, in practice, already largely in place. The Arab position was fixed by two bodies—the Arab League, which united all the Arab countries, and the Arab Higher Committee, the main political body of the Arabs of Palestine. The process by which the Arab states were drawn into involvement in the Palestine question was a long and gradual one. But by the time the Arab League was founded in 1945, such involvement was an established fact. Its seven members—Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Yemen—generally followed the rejectionist lead of Hajj Amin al-Ḥussaynī, the grand mufti of Jerusalem and the virtually unchallenged leader of the Arab Higher Committee and the Palestinian Arab public. The common front displayed by these two organizations prevented the British from adopting a policy that might respond, at least in part, to the pressure exerted by the Zionists and Americans.

Under the circumstances, the British preferred not to confront the Arab position head on. As such, Bevin, with the full support of Prime Minister Clement Attlee, put all his efforts into convincing the USA to get involved. The British goal was to get the United States to accept joint responsibility for whatever policy was pursued in Palestine. Ideally, they wanted the USA to share the burden of carrying that policy out; alternatively, they hoped, bringing the Americans in would dissipate the American pressure to allow

the Jewish DPs in Europe to enter Palestine. The strategy led to the establishment of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in the autumn of 1945, and later to the Committee of Experts, composed of representatives of both countries, charged with implementing the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee. In the summer of 1946, these experts produced the Morrison-Grady Plan. It was a proposal based on provincial self-rule, under which Jewish and Arab regions or cantons would enjoy autonomy under British supervision. But the efforts to reach an agreement between the British and Americans came to naught, their only accomplishment being to aggravate relations between the two countries. President Truman refused to be dragged into the role the British had assigned him, preferring to pursue an independent policy, which at certain junctures stepped back from the outlines of the agreement that had nearly been signed. The final straw for the British was Truman's declaration, on October 4, 1946 (the eve of Yom Kippur), calling on the British to immediately allow a large number of Jewish refugees to enter Palestine. Truman also expressed cautious support for the establishment of a Jewish state as part of a partition plan. The British wager on the Americans was an utter failure.

When the American option turned out to lead nowhere, the British made one last effort to find a compromise between the aspirations of the Jews and the demands of the Arabs. This involved two rounds of talks called the London Conference, in September 1946 and January–February 1947. It was doomed from the start. The Morrision-Grady Plan was rejected in the first round. The second round did the same with the Bevin Plan, also based on the idea of provincial autonomy, but which took one more step toward the Arabs by proposing that Palestine would become a single state with an absolute Arab majority following five more years of the British Mandate regime. Both plans were rejected by both sides to the conflict. The British wanted to convince the Arabs to agree to their initiative, but growing extremism on that side made that hopeless. Under the proposals, immigration to the Jewish cantons would continue, subject to a quota, but that was unacceptable to the Arabs. Furthermore, they maintained that any plan involving autonomy was simply partition in disguise. On the last day of the talks, February 14, 1947, the British Cabinet resolved to submit the problem to the United Nations.

In fact, the talks had been intended from the start to prepare the ground for taking the Palestine issue to the UN. The British presumed there would be no breakthrough, and made it clear, to the Americans in particular, that the next step would be to send the issue to the UN, without recommendations. The stress was on the last two words, which indicated that, counter to expectations at the international organization, Britain would not ask the UN to reconfirm the Mandate it had originally received from the now-defunct League of Nations, or to ask for changes to that Mandate. The British were not denying that the UN, as the League's successor organization, needed to reconfirm the mandate. Indeed, in April 1946, at the meeting where the League was liquidated, a British representative had declared that his country intended to

continue to retain the Mandate for Palestine when the UN reaffirmed it. The process was put off because of the work of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, but the Foreign Office's lawyers maintained that any proposed solution would require UN approval, and the government adopted their position. But turning the issue over to the UN without recommending what the disposition of Palestine should be was something entirely different from the formal act of reaffirmation that the British had previously signaled they would seek. They were now placing the Mandate in the hands of the UN without stating whether Britain wished to continue to administer Palestine, or whether it intended to hand the Mandate over to the UN and end its role in the territory.

Scholars have long debated what caused the British to decide to punt the Palestine issue to the UN without recommendations. Some have argued that the British leadership was frustrated and realized that it had reached a dead end on Palestine. In this view, the British wanted to divest themselves of responsibility. On the opposite side are those who claim that it was a tactical move meant to achieve the opposite, to impel the UN to reaffirm British rule of Palestine out of fear that it would pull out, or because the international organization would try to achieve a solution, fail, and realize that there was no alternative to extending the British Mandate.[2] The prevailing scholarly opinion today is that, in placing Palestine before the UN, Britain in effect decided to pull out.[3] Without going into the question in depth,[4] it seems to have been meant at first as a threat. Bevin told the Cabinet that, despite his announcement to that effect, he intended to continue his efforts to reach a settlement.[5] In the six weeks leading up to the official submission to the UN, he indeed conducted talks on the subject, largely with the Arabs and Americans. With regard to the Americans, the new policy caused special discord. On February 25, when Bevin presented the decision to go to the UN to the House of Commons, he devoted most of his speech to a fierce attack on Truman, whom he accused of thwarting the British efforts. Immediately following his speech, however, he told the British ambassador in Washington that he had still not given up hope of reaching an accommodation without the UN.[6]

The USA saw the application to the UN as a threat. Up to that point it had enjoyed the status of a judge, making demands of the British but unprepared to help carry them out. Now that the British had made Palestine an international issue, the USA realized that it would be the obvious country for the UN to turn to and ask for help in bearing the burden of Palestine. The USA also had another good reason to be apprehensive—the Soviets. At the time, the USA and Soviet Union were facing off in what would, in April 1947, be named the Cold War. In March, the USA would promulgate the Truman Doctrine, aimed at countering Soviet geopolitical expansion. Part of the policy involved the USA taking over the British role in places under heavy Soviet pressure, such as Turkey and Greece. The USA also agreed to bear responsibility for protecting Western interests in the Middle East. It now feared that the Soviets

would seek to gain a foothold in the Middle East through Palestine, especially as the British had not submitted any recommendations about the territory's future.[7]

The British were also anxious about the Soviets, of course, and it was hard to believe that they would easily risk allowing the Russian bear into Palestine. An exchange of cables between the Americans and British commenced, with each trying to read the mind of the other. The Americans made several attempts to induce the British to give the UN some indication of the sort of solution they thought best. Beyond that, the Americans wanted to gain a proper understanding of the British position.[8] But they were unable to discover what lay behind the British appeal to the UN. Diplomatic channels produced nothing, and the British government's public statements posed more questions than they answered. On February 25, for example, Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones explained in Parliament that "We are not going to the United Nations to surrender the Mandate. We are going to the United Nations setting out the problem and asking for their advice as to how the Mandate can be administered. If the Mandate cannot be administered in its present form we are asking how it can be amended."[9] Such a statement did not make it sound as if the British really wanted to give up their role in Palestine.

The British attempts to divine the American position were no more successful. Bevin had hopes for a personal meeting with the new secretary of state, George Marshall, at a foreign ministers' summit in mid-March. He hoped that he could achieve a settlement that would avert the application to the UN, but he was unsuccessful.[10] The fact was that the British announcement that it was referring the issue to the United Nations came at an inconvenient time for the State Department, because the two key figures who had dealt with the Palestine issue, Secretary of State James Byrnes and Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, had almost simultaneously left their posts. Marshall, who succeeded Byrnes, and Robert A. Lovett, Acheson's replacement, lacked knowledge of the issue. Other urgent business, in particular the situation in Europe and the Cold War, kept them from formulating a position on Palestine. Furthermore, following the departure of Acheson, who had been the administration's leading expert on the question and an advocate of partition, almost every member of the State Department staff preferred not to take a stand. In fact, they opposed partition on the grounds that it would be detrimental to American relations with the Arab world. They were thus in conflict with Truman's approach, which was influenced by internal political considerations and pressure from the Jewish community. The British application to the UN thus offered the Americans a respite from having to resolve the conflict within the administration.[11]

Those who thought that involving the UN would put pressure on the Americans soon saw that the opposite happened. The official American response, which Marshall cabled to Bevin, made it clear that the USA did not think the move would make the situation "any less complicated or difficult,"

but also said that the USA would not comment on it publicly, so as not to sabotage the British effort.[12]

In 1947, the United Nations Organization was still an unfulfilled promise. Founded in 1945 against the background of the trauma of the Second World War, its goal was to further a common international endeavor, by its fifty-four member states, to maintain world peace. The organization sought to learn the lessons of the League of Nations' failure, but it soon became clear that its hope to shape a postwar order had been overly ambitious. The Security Council, the body which was meant to impose the UN's authority for the resolution of international disputes, turned into another front in the Cold War, where the Soviet Union and the Western countries sparred incessantly. The General Assembly, where every member state was represented, managed to conduct more productive discussions, but it lacked power and the ability to enforce its recommendations. This powerlessness was the young organization's central shortcoming.[13] The Palestine issue, by all accounts the weightiest problem placed before the organization up to that point, was thus a major test.

First, the British, Americans, and UN staff had to address precedential issues and as-yet untried procedures laid out in the UN Charter. If the British thought that they could easily navigate through such a foggy situation, they were wrong. From the moment the Palestine issue came before the UN, the British were compelled to surrender the influence they thought they would have over the process. The first issue they faced was which forum to go to. The Security Council, which had the most power, was rejected because it would grant the Soviet Union, which was one of that body's five permanent members, major influence. The Americans suggested the Trusteeship Council, but that was also problematic. This body was largely invested with the authority over the mandates assigned by the League of Nations, but did not receive authority over individual mandates automatically. For the Council to take up Palestine, the British would have had to formally place their Mandate under the purview of this body, which was still in its earliest stages of organization and entirely without experience. It seemed likely to lead to unnecessary complications. That left the General Assembly.[14]

But applying to the General Assembly was also a matter for concern. That body was liable to go in unanticipated directions, over which Britain would have only limited control. Despite these anxieties, the British, under Bevin's direction, pursued this option with the Americans and UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie of Norway, seeking the best way to accomplish it in practice. The General Assembly was not scheduled to convene until the autumn, but Bevin did not want to wait that long. Palestine was growing increasingly unstable, and the application to the UN was liable to make the situation worse. Policies needed to be put in place, firstly, the issue of immigration.[15] As the British had already decided not to make any recommendations about the future of Palestine, they proposed that a special session of the General Assembly be convened to appoint a committee of inquiry to produce a report that

would serve as a basis for the deliberations of the regular session to begin in September 1947.[16]

Lie opposed a special session, which would involve considerable cost. He proposed instead to appoint a committee with the approval of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The USA also preferred not to convene a special session, because they would have to take a stand at such a meeting. It also rejected Lie's request that they offer its views on the composition of the committee of inquiry. The British, for their part, were willing to accept either Lie's recommendations, or any other the Americans might put forth.[17]

On further consideration, the USA realized that appointing a committee of inquiry might not be in accord with official UN procedures. Senior officials in the UN Secretariat also had opposed the idea, for a variety of reasons. Lie was not deterred, however. In addition to the arguments he offered in favor of the idea, he was also taking advantage of the issue to augment the power of the post he held at a time when the authority of the secretary-general was not entirely clear.[18] The talks between these three parties showed that they were all confused and unprepared. Bevin pressed the British delegation to the UN to move ahead without carefully considering the implications of the procedures under consideration; the Americans thought that they could continue to exert influence behind the scenes; Lie, for his part, was naïve. At first he was unaware of the sensitivity of the Palestine issue. He tried to achieve an agreement between the Americans and the British over the composition of the committee and its terms of reference, which would lay out the goals of inquiry and how the committee would operate.[19] But he and they had to undergo a painful process of facing up to reality. They realized that they would have much less room for maneuver in the diplomatic arena than they had thought. The process was instigated by the Arab states. The Iraqi foreign minister, Muḥammad Fāḍil al-Jamali, sent an angry cable to Lie, reacting to press reports that the UN was preparing to establish a commission to examine the Palestine issue. He attacked the idea of setting up a committee of inquiry, maintaining that doing so in the manner that the secretary-general had proposed would cause the Arabs to lose confidence in the UN.[20] When Lie consulted with the representatives of the Arab states that belonged to the UN, he encountered the same attitude. Beyond rejecting the establishment of a committee of inquiry, the Arab delegations charged that such a body, chosen in a process in which they had not been involved, would enable pro-Zionist American elements to dictate its character.[21]

The Arab reaction impelled the USA to press for a special session. Lie was also convinced that one was necessary to provide the as-yet unborn committee with the full authority it required, and to enable all members of the UN to take part in establishing it. Procedurally, the British needed to officially ask the secretary-general to call a special session of the General Assembly. Following a brief delay and further hesitation, on April 2 the British sent Lie an official request.[22]

Lie quickly obtained the approval of a majority of the UN membership, setting the stage for the General Assembly's first-ever special session. Britain's intentions were clear. It wanted to restrict the session to passing a decision to establish a committee of inquiry, and then, subsequently, to decide what countries would participate and what its purview would be. It was meant be "short and businesslike," as Bevin put it.[23] Britain's envoy to the UN, Alexander Cadogan, did all he could to ensure that so it would be. He put together a list of recommendations for the top posts in the General Assembly and voiced his hope that the session would be productive. The unequivocal instructions he received from Bevin give the impression that the foreign secretary remained optimistic that the deliberations would proceed favorably.[24] Britain wanted to remain in the background and let others lead, as the American ambassador in London conveyed the message he had received. By "others," they meant the Americans, but the latter had no intention of changing their policy.[25]

While the British and Americans hoped to play a passive role at the session (or at least to be seen as doing so), the Zionists and the Arabs clearly wanted the opposite. Both sides had already tried to raise the Palestine question at the UN's founding conference, in San Francisco in the spring of 1945. The Arab countries tried to annul the commitments on Palestine made by the League of Nations in the spirit of the Balfour Declaration, while the Zionists fought back and demanded that an official Zionist delegation be allowed to participate in the conference. Both demands were rejected under concerted British and American pressure, which kept the Palestine issue off the conference agenda.[26] Now the British themselves were bringing the issue to the UN.

The Zionists had a bit of a problem adapting themselves to the new forum, but when it became clear that the special session was going to take place, they quickly prepared themselves for the diplomatic battle. The Jewish Agency's American Branch, located in New York, became the body that, under these new circumstances, conducted Zionist foreign policy. Jewish Agency officials met for intensive discussions about how to get the most out of the new situation. They considered the best ways to influence the proceedings, and how the Jewish Agency would be represented there. Despite their intensive work, their starting point was that, in general, the UN forum would be to Zionism's detriment and that the results would not be good from its point of view.[27] An exception was Abba Hillel Silver, the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive in the United States. From the first, he maintained that the upcoming struggle in the UN offered an opportunity that should not be missed to turn the hopes for a Jewish state into an obtainable goal.[28]

The Arabs were up in arms. Even though the Arab states had resolved, at the Arab League summit in June 1946, to refer the Palestine issue to the UN, they were angry and apprehensive that the British had done just that. During meetings of League institutions where it came up for discussion, it became clear that there were sharp differences among the Arabs about what line to take. Egypt led a moderate approach, which sought to allow the British room for maneuver. The presumption was that the British would protect Arab

interests. The opposite side was led by Iraq, which argued that the Arabs should demand that Britain and the USA immediately recognize Palestine's independence. The two powers should be warned that if they did not do so, they would be jeopardizing their political and economic relations with the Arab world. It was hard to tell, in the heat of the debate, what the spokesmen for the different states were really aiming to do—look after the narrow interests of each state, or look after the interests of the Palestinian Arabs. For its part, the Arab Higher Committee, like Iraq, spurred the Arab countries to make threats. The belligerent approach won out for the most part. The Arabs vociferously opposed the establishment of a committee of inquiry. They demanded that the UN end the British Mandate and grant Palestine independence forthwith.[29]

In parallel with Trygve Lie's intensive preparations for the special session, he also initiated the creation of a data base and information on the Palestine question. On February 20, 1947, two days after the British announced their intention to refer the issue to the UN, Lie convened a preliminary meeting in his office to start making the necessary arrangements. As the subject was a new one for the UN, he proposed establishing a special fact-finding committee under the Secretariat. His suggestion was accepted, and Ralph Bunche, then head of the Trusteeship Department, was appointed to head it.[30]

Bunche put together a "small and informal" working group to perform the necessary work on the Palestine question. UN departments were asked to name only their best staff members to the team. Each member was to be knowledgeable about Palestine, and to be strictly objective on the issue.[31] Serving on the fact-finding committee would change the career trajectories and lives of some of them. It was only natural for members of this preparatory group to later take up key positions on the UNSCOP staff, meaning that they would spend many years working on issues relating to Palestine, Israel, and the escalating Israel-Arab conflict.

The team's central task was to collect and organize, scrutinize, and analyze all the available material on Palestine in general and on the political issue in particular. Strict rules were imposed to ensure, as the secretary-general insisted, that the team perform its work in absolute secrecy.[32] Nothing of it leaked outside the UN itself, precluding any outside attempt to influence it.

The Special Session: The Agenda Fight and Public Deliberations

The General Assembly's special session convened on April 28. The purpose of the session, according to the British, was to establish and instruct a special committee that would prepare a proposal for debate in the General Assembly's regular session. The British reached an agreement with the Americans that this would be the only item on the agenda, and the latter indeed made every effort that debate not expand beyond that.[33] The British also spoke with Arab diplomats and statesmen in an effort to deter them from seeking to amend the proposed agenda, which would plunge the session into a futile debate. Some

of them acknowledged, in private conversations, that in their view there was no point in trying to sabotage the session's work.[34]

But British hopes for a brief and dispassionate session were quickly dashed. They discovered that the arena they had chosen left them with little room to maneuver. The session was chaired by Osvaldo Aranha of Brazil. The British and Americans had designated the head of the Dutch delegation for that post, whom they recommended to Lie and the UN Secretariat, but the Latin American countries chose their own candidate.[35]

Nor did the Arab states accede to Britain's requests and American advice. At the start of the session, five Arab delegations asked for the addition of another item to the agenda, a proposal to skip the investigative stage and immediately to take up their proposal to end the British Mandate and establish an independent Arab state in Palestine. Procedurally, such a change required approval by a majority, which the Arabs achieved.[36] According to a report from the Australian delegation, most of the countries actually preferred not to add the proposal to the agenda, but gave in because they did not want to get into a fight with the Arab delegations.[37]

Another issue was that several parties, most prominently the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee, wished to address the special session. According to UN regulations, these were non-government organizations and thus ineligible to speak before the plenum, a rule that, prior to the session, the British and Americans had agreed would be observed. But once again they discovered that they were not in control. The announcement by US ambassador to the United Nations, Warren Austin, that his country opposed allowing non-governmental bodies from appearing before the Assembly, was met by booing from the public galleries and set off a campaign against the position inside and outside the building where the session was meeting. The Americans justified their position on legal and procedural grounds, and made a point of speaking of "bodies" in a general way. At the same time, the American delegation persuaded a number of American groups, mostly anti-Zionist ones, to submit requests to speak, to ensure that the "bodies" would be as numerous and as varied as possible.[38]

Cadogan estimated that the response to the requests from the Jewish Agency and Arab Higher Committee would be negative.[39] But when the session took up the question, it became clear that the Americans would not have an easy time. The representatives of Uruguay, Poland, and Czechoslovakia attacked the American position, arguing that it was undemocratic. They rejected the use of the amorphous term "bodies," and focused on the Jewish Agency, arguing that the Jews were not represented, whereas the Arab states would stand by the Palestinian Arabs. The Jewish Agency should thus be permitted to present the position of the Jewish people.[40]

Another supporter of the Jewish Agency request was the Soviet delegate, Andrei Gromyko. His unqualified backing surprised everyone, given that the Soviets categorically rejected Zionism on ideological grounds. Indeed, the Soviets had asserted that position when, at the opening of the session, they

endorsed the Arab demand for the immediate establishment of an Arab state in Palestine. The Soviet stance put Britain and the USA in an uncomfortable position. The State Department was the target of a wave of popular protest, creating pressure that impelled President Truman to step out of the corner he had painted himself into and, to the chagrin of the British, support the right of the Jewish Agency to present its case to the General Assembly's First Committee, then called the Political Committee.[41]

The impending public debate did not bode well for Britain, but what really troubled its delegation was that they would need to make a statement of their intentions, something they had hoped to avoid. More and more voices at the session were wondering how the British would treat the decision on Palestine that the UN would make. Were they prepared to accept whatever decision the UN would impose on them, or would they, in the end, repudiate any obligation to do so? Some policy makers advocated the former, others the latter, making it difficult to decide. The Cabinet resolved that the British would make their position explicit only if heavy pressure was exerted on the British delegate to the UN. For his part, Cadogan had no illusions that things would be different, and his speech underwent many revisions.[42]

"It is not certain that we shall obtain a majority for the appointment of the fact-finding committee," acknowledged a member of the British delegation in a melancholy letter to one of his colleagues. He cited a number of questions facing the British delegation, and called the instructions he had received from London about the extent to which the government was prepared to carry out the Assembly's recommendations "a great embarrassment." He argued that the British had lost their ability to shape the outcome of the coming session.[43]

Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia did all they could to force a different agenda on the session and to stymie the efforts to establish a committee of inquiry. Their representatives staged a noisy performance, taking advantage of the agenda question to offer long surveys of the history of the Jewish–Arab conflict. Most of the speakers sought to buttress the claim that an inquiry was superfluous and that all of Palestine should be handed over to the Arabs forthwith. They combined their arguments with a two-pronged attack on the British and the Jews. Sharply condemning the policy Britain was pursuing in Palestine, they declared that the Mandate's starting point, as reflected in the Balfour Declaration and the commitment to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, was fundamentally anti-democratic in that it was aimed against the country's original inhabitants. Opposing the Jewish demand for an independent state, they denied the claim that the Jews had any connection to Palestine.[44] But their speeches made no difference. In the end, a large majority rejected their demand to remove the establishment of a committee of inquiry from the agenda and to proceed directly into a debate over the future of Palestine. On May 3, the General Assembly voted to accept the British proposal to establish a committee of inquiry. The Arab demand to vote on creating an independent Arab state within Palestine was an effort to offer an immediate

solution to a complex problem, at a time when the great powers and most of the member states had yet to formulate their positions. The furious Arab campaign simply reinforced the impression that the General Assembly did not yet have the tools it needed to commence deliberations over what should be done in Palestine.[45]

After that barrier was removed, the General Assembly instructed its Political Committee to form a special panel to study the Palestine issue and present its findings to the Assembly's next regular session. At this point, no one thought that the issue would be dealt with quickly or easily. At the start of the debate, the Political Committee approved the requests of the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee to speak at the session. On May 8, ten days after the session opened and when the formation of a committee of inquiry was no longer in doubt, the delegates heard the cases made by the Jews and Arabs of Palestine. Within the framework of the special session, a new chapter began, one that the British, Americans, and the UN's own rules had been unable to prevent.[46]

Speaking for the Jewish Agency before the Political Committee were Abba Hillel Silver, Moshe Shertok, and David Ben-Gurion. As chairman of the Jewish Agency, Ben-Gurion was the most senior of the three. He spoke harshly against the British and stressed the Jews' aspiration for their own state in Palestine. In contrast, Silver struck a moderate tone. He offered a systematic analysis of the Mandate, to show that Britain had not lived up to its historic pledge to the Jewish people. The UN inquiry should focus, he maintained, on why the national home had not yet come into being. Shertok spoke of the tragedy and dimensions of the Holocaust, arguing that its lesson was that no place other than Palestine could guarantee Jewish security. All three men spoke of the frustration and disappointment felt by the Jews, and the great hopes that their people now placed in the United Nations. All three demanded that the committee of inquiry consider the condition of the displaced Jews of Europe. Following their statements, they responded to a large number of questions put to them by the committee members, in particular representatives of countries less familiar with the Palestine issue, such as those of Latin America and Scandinavia. Some of the questions reflected a lack of information, or even ignorance. The general impression of the Zionist delegation was that the platform had served them well, and allowed them to present the issue as they wished. The American press covered the Zionist speeches positively.[47]

The Arab Higher Committee was represented by Henry Catan and Emil al-Ghūrī. For the most part, they reiterated what had already been said by the representatives of the Arab states, rejecting the legitimacy of the Mandate and demanding to hand rule of the country over to its Arab inhabitants without an inquiry. Catan, a jurist by training, spoke in the terms of international law. He argued that, given that the League of Nations was no longer extant, the British Mandate was void, and that the Jewish immigration that was taking place as part of it should cease immediately.[48]

The speeches were accompanied by minor controversies and odd decisions, which would turn out to be characteristic of the way the Arabs did things. At the time, the Arab Higher Committee was riven with serious sharp internal divisions, and had fraught relations with the Arab countries. As a result, the Palestinian Arab delegation arrived in New York with a sense that they were in an inferior position to the Zionists, and had difficulty making decisions.[49] The Arab states, as allies, should ostensibly have given the Palestinian Arabs more power at the UN, but that did not happen. The Palestinian Arab delegation was very much dependent on the Arab states. But some of the latter did not want the Arab Higher Committee to represent itself at the UN, whether because of the breach between them and Mufti al-Hussayni, or because some of the Arab delegations did not want to set a precedent that would allow other non-state actors to make appearances in the international organization.[50]

During the special session, the Arab Higher Committee delegation also had to deal with an American Zionist campaign that highlighted the actions of some of its leaders, most notably the mufti, in support of the Nazis during the Second World War. Freda Kirchwey, the editor of *The Nation*, got hold of a confidential American government report that recounted what the mufti and his associates had done during the war. The report, which included photographs of these figures with Hitler and Himmler, was widely covered by the press; the Jewish Agency sent each and every delegation at the UN a detailed memorandum on the subject.[51]

Shertok also portrayed the mufti in the worst terms, calling him an active partner in the annihilation of European Jewry by the Nazis. Al-Ghūrī angrily denied the accusations, showering the mufti with praise and admiration. Al-Ghūrī's response showed that the campaign for Palestine would be dictated by the mufti's extremist line; some Arab diplomats expected that this would play into the hands of the Jews.[52] In his memoirs, the mufti termed the Palestinian testimony at the special session as a great achievement for the Arab Higher Committee; the official report of the Palestinian delegation also called it a success. "The whole world heard us," the report maintained, lauding in particular its "defense of [the mufti's] honor."[53]

Neither the Arab Higher Committee nor the Jewish Agency had any doubts about the importance of their appearances. Both gained international recognition as the official representatives of their peoples in the coming engagement, a position that was not at all obvious they would achieve. It placed the Arab Higher Committee in center stage and shunted the Arab states off to the margins.

The British, vilified by both sides, made no response. As far as they were concerned, the high point of the session was the speech made by Cadogan, which addressed Britain's obligations with regard to the results of the inquiry. He declared that if the UN were to come up with a "just solution which would be accepted by both parties, it can hardly be expected that we would not welcome" it. But, he made clear, if the outcome was otherwise, Britain would not take responsibility for imposing a solution that "we cannot reconcile with

our good conscience." This portentous declaration was the position of the Cabinet, which warned against Britain committing itself in advance to implement any solution that the UN issued. The Cabinet majority preferred that Britain exit Palestine, where it had paid such a high price for standing between the Jews and the Arabs.[54] Despite this clear statement, the British position was misinterpreted by nearly everyone. They suspected that the proceedings at the UN were a British plot, and that Cadogan's speech was meant to obfuscate Britain's true intentions, which they believed was to extend the Mandate in collusion with the UN.[55]

This way of thinking added a large measure of opacity to a situation that was in any case muddled. Whatever the case, the speeches and declarations were now done. The session was set to establish a committee of inquiry, and what remained was to shape its nature and character. What was clear was that the great powers did not control the General Assembly's decisions about Palestine, nor could they dictate who would sit on the committee of inquiry and how it would operate. That would be decided only together with all the member states.

The Special Session: The Composition of the Committee of Inquiry and Its Terms of Reference

The process of deciding what countries would be represented on the committee was long and grueling. While it was discussed and decided on by the Political Committee near the end of the session, the issue was already a live one from the moment the idea of appointing a committee of inquiry came to the fore. Discussions of the issue took place mostly behind the scenes. Unsurprisingly, almost everyone involved had something to say about the way to constitute the committee—the great powers, the UN staff, the Jews, the Arabs, and any number of countries seeking to promote a welter of positions, values, and interests.

There were several general tendencies. Britain and the USA, which discussed the issue prior to the official request to convene a special session, agreed between them that countries represented on the Security Council should not be represented on the committee, which would prevent the Soviet Union from exerting influence. It also had the benefit of exempting them from serving on the committee, which would have required them to play a central role in directing its work and to take positions on the issues. During their preliminary discussions, they raised a number of suggestions regarding the size of the committee, largely at two extremes. The British proposed a large body of no fewer than twenty-six members, which would grant it more gravitas and allow a comprehensive inquiry. The Americans, however, preferred to place the stress on neutrality, and thus favored a smaller panel made up of representatives of neutral states.[56]

The Americans were aided by an ingenuous proposal by the secretary-general. Lie accepted the idea of twenty-six members, but wanted to include

among them representatives of all five permanent members of the Security Council and of each regional group, including one of the Arab countries. To deal with the problem of involving countries with vested interests in the issue, he proposed a subcommittee made up of neutral countries, which would alone have a vote in determining the recommendations.[57] Lie preferred a committee led by the great powers, which would provide the body with the cachet it needed when it submitted its report to the General Assembly, and which might also increase the commitment of the participants, including the permanent members, to implementing the recommendations.

But his idea was cumbersome and would have almost certainly led to conflict between the powers. Furthermore, the clear advantage it gave to the Arab states raised eyebrows. Moreover, given the vociferous Arab reaction to the British decision to refer the Palestine issue to the UN, granting them a seat on the committee of inquiry looked absurd. The Arab League Council discussed how to stymie the appointment of the committee, but also resolved that, if the committee were nevertheless formed, it would demand to be represented. Arab envoys also pressured Britain and the USA to support this demand, even as they conducted a pitched battle against the very idea of an inquiry. Under the circumstances, the USA decided to adhere to their proposal for a small and neutral committee, as opposed to a larger one that might find it difficult to pursue constructive deliberations. For their part, the British were happy to leave the matter to the Americans.[58]

When the real battle began in the Political Committee, the Americans submitted a list of seven countries to be represented on the fact-finding panel: Canada, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, India, Peru, Sweden, and Uruguay. The Soviets, unaware of the previous talks on the subject, acted just as was expected of them—they proposed an eleven-member committee including representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.[59] Even though it was clear that the Soviet Union was seeking to gain a foothold in Palestine and to control the inquiry, the proposal to include the five permanent members garnered the support of many who had good reason to be apprehensive about it. A few Western countries argued that the idea of not including the great powers was an evasion of responsibility and would ensure a weak committee that would produce a report that would not be accepted. During a discussion held by the Dutch delegation, for example, its leader argued that a committee devoid of the powers would produce "an academic report of marginal importance." The Americans heard something similar from Shertok, who presented the Jewish Agency's position to Secretary of State Marshall. The Jewish Agency strongly preferred a committee with great power representation.[60]

Gromyko, speaking in the Security Council, took the other side. The chief of the Soviet delegation said that his country was prepared to accept responsibly and had a duty to intervene in Palestine. Such explicit language confirmed the fears of those who were worried that the Soviets were seeking an entry. Under the circumstances, the envoys of many countries allied themselves

with the American position that the committee should be a neutral one. The Americans maintained that only neutral states without previous biases could provide the UN with impartial recommendations. Many small countries, especially those of Latin America, were attracted by this position. Seeing an opportunity to play a role that would gain them international respect, they peppered their speeches with references to the UN's great aspirations, and to the fact that interested parties could not offer justice. As such, Argentina, one of the leaders of the group, withdrew its proposal for a committee that would include representatives of the five great powers. This paved the way for the appointment of a neutral panel.[61]

The next question was who qualified as neutral. Was it neutral with regard to the Jews and Arabs, or with regard to us, the British delegation asked in a cable it sent to the Foreign Office? They received a number of answers, which showed that handing the task over to small countries would require careful consideration of each candidate country, so as to flush out any hidden biases. The Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden, all of which had been asked by the USA to send representatives, did all they could to sidestep the assignment, but they found it increasingly difficult to do so as time went on. Once the great powers were ruled out, midsized countries which had no history of involvement in the Palestine issue found themselves sought after. Having displayed a balanced approach at the session, and reluctant to turn down the Americans, they emerged as obvious envoys of the groups to which they belonged.[62]

But American power was limited. Australia, which very much wanted to be on the committee, proposed to abandon the idea of a small committee of seven that the Americans had proposed and to set the number of members at eleven. This expansion would make it possible to give the British Commonwealth nations, of which Australia was one, another representative, but it also meant adding other members that were less to the liking of the USA and Britain, most notably another member of the eastern bloc. The British were leery of a third representative for the Latin American group, given that some of the countries were antagonistic to it, but did nothing to prevent the move. According to the instructions provided to the British delegation, the most important factor was preserving Britain's image of neutrality. The members of the delegation preferred to approach some of the countries that were named to the committee in an effort to intervene in the appointment of a representative to the committee, rather than to voice open opposition to the countries themselves. But, beyond not wanting to object, Britain had no real power to stymie the move. Australia, which made every effort to gain a place on the committee, kept Cadogan in the dark as they bypassed him. The British were also taken by surprise by the American delegate, who disregarded the earlier agreement to insist on a seven-member committee and supported the Australian proposal. With such things going on behind their back, the British were thus unable to know in advance which additional countries would be named.[63]

In the end, the Australian proposal gained a majority in the Political Committee. It was now official: the great powers and the Arab countries would

not be represented. The states chosen were Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, India, Iran, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia. "The composition of the fact-finding committee is not ideal, but is not as bad as it might have been," wrote a British official who closely followed the proceedings. He remarked that Yugoslavia and Guatemala were problematic for the British; time would prove him right.[64] Yugoslavia was considered a loyal Soviet puppet, unlike Czechoslovakia, which the Americans had wanted as the only representative of the Eastern bloc. The latter was the Eastern European country least close to the Soviet Union, and had pursued an independent pro-Zionist policy in the General Assembly. Guatemala was also not the choice of the USA, which strove for a panel that was both balanced and, as far as possible, neutral. This Central American country was at odds with the British over the fate of the British-held territory adjacent to it, and had evinced a clear anti-British and pro-Zionist position. Uruguay was similar. On the other hand, the Arabs and their sympathizers could not claim that the expansion of the committee had been to their detriment. India, which had taken a resolutely pro-Arab position, was joined by Iran, which left no doubt as to its position on Palestine.

The countries that were chosen were thus not the first choices of either Britain or the USA. The Zionists were divided on the issue, with the leading view favoring representation for the great powers. But they had no role in determining the committee's composition.[65] The committee's terms of reference was no less important than its membership, but the British made even less of an effort to shape it. Neither did the USA evince any particular interest. As such, the Russians and smaller countries played the most important roles. The British position was vague, in keeping with the haziness they displayed in the special session. They clearly preferred that the committee restrict itself to fact-finding rather than to offering recommendations.[66]

But it had been clear to everyone involved, from the start of the special session, that the purpose of the fact-finding committee would not be simply to research the subject but also to submit recommendations. That was no longer open to debate.[67] Having failed to prevent the formation of the committee, the Arabs now tried, unsuccessfully, to insert into the terms of reference a clause instructing it to consider the option of granting Palestine independence immediately. That the committee's stance should be neutral had by this point garnered many supporters, and they sought to apply that to the terms of reference as well. It should not, in this view, dictate any particular final recommendations.[68] In the end, the terms instructed that "The Special Committee shall prepare a report to the General Assembly and shall submit such proposals as it may consider appropriate for the solution of the problem of Palestine."[69] In other words, the panel was instructed and authorized to submit recommendations, but no particular parameters for those recommendations were laid out in advance.

Another issue was the geographical purview of the inquiry. The Zionists wanted the committee to address the DP camps in Europe, while the Arabs

vehemently opposed any wording that would link world Jewry to the Palestine problem. The latter insisted that the terms of reference explicitly confine the committee's work to Palestine itself. Over the course of a long and strident debate, Poland, Norway, and South Africa submitted wording that would require the committee to examine the DP camps in Europe and Cyprus. In the end, the version that won overwhelming support was offered by Guatemala and Panama, which permitted the committee to conduct its inquiry "in Palestine and wherever it may deem convenient."[70] The Zionists were satisfied and the Arabs furious. For the latter, the special session had been an utter failure.

On May 14, the day the special session adjourned, it looked as if there could be no more surprises. The UN staff commenced with the practical arrangements for setting up the committee, asking the chosen countries to nominate representatives of "high morals" and "recognized competence." The terms of reference gave the committee its official name, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, UNSCOP.[71] When the Soviet representative asked for the floor, however, he offered not formal concluding remarks but rather a bombshell. Gromyko set aside the traditional Soviet line, which categorically rejected Zionism, and gave the shocked delegates an essentially pro-Zionist speech that evoked the suffering endured by the Jewish people during the Second World War and their right to a state of their own.

The speech was meant for UNSCOP, and addressed what, up to this point, the great powers had avoided touching on—the solution. Gromyko rejected the establishment of an independent Arab state in all of Palestine, on the grounds that such a move would be "without consideration for the legitimate rights of the Jewish people." He also rejected making all of Palestine a Jewish state. He offered two other options. The first, which he said would be preferable, was a single independent state in which Jews and Arabs would enjoy equal rights. The second, which he said should be considered only if it turned out that the relations between the two peoples were such that meant living together impossible, was the establishment of two separate independent states in Palestine.[72] The deliberate timing of the speech, on the verge of adjournment, left the representatives of other countries with no time to respond or to attempt to find out what had brought about this surprising change in the Soviet position.

It would later transpire that the speech marked a strategic move by the Soviet Union, but in real time most of the people involved found it difficult to accept at face value.[73] The USA was impressed by Russia's tactics, which enabled it, at the special session, to gain the support of both the Jews and the Arabs, even though it had not in fact changed its policy. The Soviets, the USA maintained, still rejected the establishment of a Jewish state and was merely trying to make gains.[74] The Zionist leadership was happy about the Soviet reversal, but wary as well. The Arabs did not even bother denouncing it. While

an Arabic daily newspaper termed it the "Soviet Balfour Declaration,"[75] Arab leaders treated the declaration much as their Western counterparts did, as not indicating any fundamental change of policy.[76]

More than anything else, the Soviet declaration led to confusion. It was hard for anyone to believe that a new wind was blowing from Moscow, and everyone waited to see what the Soviets would do. Until the fog was dispelled, when the regular session of the General Assembly convened, the Russian gambit epitomized a session that had been full of surprises. Gromyko's speech did not steer UNSCOP toward a particular solution, but, when they assumed their positions, the members of the committee could understand from it that they were taking up a mission at a critical time of historical change around the world that would lead to a new era in Palestine.

The Jewish Agency emerged hopeful from its ordeal on the world stage at the special session. The prospect of UN involvement in Palestine seemed less menacing now. The Arabs left New York in anger. The delegates of the Arab states returned to their capitals and sent fierce protests to the foreign envoys in their countries. The Arab Higher Committee delegation went even further. Immediately after the session adjourned, it declared that it would boycott the fact-finding committee.[77] In his memoirs, Mufti al-Ḥussaynī defended the boycott position, for which he was responsible. He wrote of a meticulous examination of the events and results of the session, which found that, under the guise of neutrality that the British and Americans sought to project, a broad effort to bring about the partition of Palestine. He also claimed that the campaign against the biased committee was doomed from the start.[78] With the wisdom of hindsight, al-Ḥussaynī knew how the campaign would turn out and sought to portray UNSCOP as prejudiced, but there is no factual support for the claim. Not only did the British and the Americans not promote a partition plan, they did not even have any control over the outcome of the session. The small countries put paid to all the best-laid plans of the great powers, and the committee that emerged from the process was a chimera produced by the political jockeying between different countries and blocs of countries. While it is true that the Americans and British coordinated their positions before and during the session, the manner in which events proceeded showed that they were not masters in this house.

Notes

1 With the exception of specific sources that I reference, this general survey is based on Michael J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917–1948*, London and New York: 2014; Motti Golani, *Palestine between Politics and Terror 1945–1947*, Waltham, MA: 2013; William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945–1951*, Oxford: 1984; Nachmani, Amikam, *Great Power Discord in Palestine: The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the Problem of European Jewry and Palestine 1945–1946*, London: 1987; B. J. C. McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, London: 2017.

2 See, for example, the perspectives in Michael J. Cohen and Amitzur Ilan, "Ha-Haḥlatah 'al Yetzi'at ha-Britim mi-Eretz-Yisra'el," *Cathedra* 15 (April 1980), pp. 139–193.
3 Motti Golani, *Ha-Netziv ha-Aḥaron: Ha-General Sir Alan Gordon Cunningham, 1945–1948*, Tel Aviv: 2011, p. 183; Michael J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment*, pp. 457–458.
4 Some British policy makers—in particular the staff of the Colonial Office—viewed the transfer of the Palestine issue to the UN as a sincere step, while others viewed it as a tactical or partially tactical step, as did senior figures in the Foreign Office. See Chapter 5 of this book.
5 TNA Cabinet Office files (CAB) 128/9/22, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet," February 14, 1947.
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10 Ilan, "Matai Heḥelitu ha-Britim Latzet?", pp. 129–131.
11 Eliahu Elath, *Ha-Ma'avak 'al ha-Medinah, 1945–1948*, Tel Aviv: 1979.
12 Secretary of State (hereafter: S/S) to Bevin, February 21, 1947, *FRUS* 5 (1947), pp. 1054–1055.
13 Anthony Parsons, *From Cold War to the Hot Peace*, London: 1995, p. 6.
14 Gavriel Cohen, "Mediniyut Britaniyah 'Erev Milḥemet ha-'Atzma'ut." In Jehuda Wallach, ed., *Hayinu ke-Ḥolmim: Kovetz 'al Milḥemet ha-Komemiyut*, Givatayim: 1985, p. 28.
15 TNA CO 537/2335, Cunningham to CO, April 4, 1947; FO to New York, February 21, 1947.
16 TNA CO 537/2335, "Submission of Palestine Problem to United Nations, Situation as at 31.3.47."
17 TNA CO 537/2335, New York to FO, February 26, 1947; Inverchapel to FO, March 20, 1947; CO to Palestine, March 10, 1947.
18 James Barros, *Trygve Lie and the Cold War*, Dekalb: 1989, pp. 171–175.
19 Austin to S/S, March 3, 1947, *FRUS* 5 (1947), p. 1060; see also the correspondence on this subject in TNA CO 537/2335.
20 UNA S-504-9, Jamali to Trygve Lie, March 11, 1947.
21 TNA CO 537/2335, Cadogan to FO, March 24, 1947; NA RG 84, Box 57, "Telephone Conversation between Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rusk," March 26, 1947.
22 TNA CO 537/2335, Washington to FO, March 28, 1947; Inverchapel to FO, March 28, 1947; Cadogan to FO, March 21, 1947.
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54 Jones, *Failure in Palestine*, p. 255.
55 Freundlich, *Mi-Ḥurban le-Tekumah*, p. 82.
56 TNA CO 537/2335, Minute by Martin, April 14, 1947; NA 501.BB Palestine/4-1747, "United Nations on Palestine," April 17, 1947; S/S to Truman, April 17, 1947, and Acheson to Henderson, April 17, 1947, *FRUS* 5 (1947), pp. 1070–1073.
57 TNA CO 537/2335, New York to FO, February 26, 1947; FO to New York, March 3, 1947.
58 TNA FO 371/61773, Cunningham to CO, 11 April 1947; FO 371/61771, Inverchapel to FO, 4 April 1947; FO to Moscow, April 9, 1947; CO 537/2336, Houstoun-Boswall to FO, April 19, 1947.
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71 Ibid., pp. 9–11.
72 United Nations, *Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly*, Vol. I, pp. 127–134.
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78 al-Ḥussaynī, *Mudhakarāt*, p. 311.

2 UNSCOP
First Steps

"A Strange Assortment": The Committee's Eleven Members

The diplomatic maneuvering at the special session produced a list of countries, chosen according to political and geographic criteria, that would be represented on the committee. The great powers, who recused themselves, and the Arab bloc, which was disqualified, were not included, but otherwise the eleven nations reflected the composition of the General Assembly.

The Swedish government appointed Justice Emil Sandström, a taciturn, dispassionate, cautious, and level-headed man, whose demeanor and decorum imbued him with an aura of propriety. This, along with his service as a Supreme Court justice in his own country and a judge on the British-Egyptian Mixed Courts, made him the obvious choice for chairman of the committee. Sandström's character helped him perform the task—he was utterly independent in his thinking and action, and was powerfully motivated to succeed at the tasks he set himself. He came to the inquiry with little prior knowledge of the subject, but with manifold connections to the British officer corps, from the time of his service in Egypt.[1]

Sandström's Swedish alternate was Paul Mohn, an experienced diplomat and envoy on many missions, some of them in the Middle East. Mohn was a lone wolf, a somewhat odd, mysterious, and silent man; he played a much more important role than his title of alternate would indicate. His sharp mind and the brutal realism of his thinking frightened the Zionists.[2] Mohn tenaciously kept his opinions to himself. But he recorded them in his diary, which reveals that this seemingly withdrawn and heartless man had firm opinions even before he set foot on "the soil of the Holy Land," as he referred to Palestine in his journal. His father, a Protestant minister, had been profoundly shocked by the Dreyfus trial and the injustices committed against the Jews. In his memoir, Mohn wrote of his awareness of the Jewish people's tragic history, and said that he had assisted Jews during the Second World War. In contrast, he displayed little sympathy for the national aspirations of the Arabs, whom he knew from his service in the region.[3]

But Mohn wanted to decide his position for himself and aspired to "absolute objectivity."[4] As such, he made a point of reading up on Arab

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nationalism. One reason for his considerable influence on the committee was his close relations with his Swedish colleague, the chairman. According to observers, Sandström placed full trust in his alternate.[5] The Swedish foreign ministry made it clear to its representatives that it had no intention of intervening in their work; they were free to act according to their own discretion and conscience.[6]

The Australian Foreign Ministry's intentions were the precise opposite. Herbert Evatt, the minister who ran a tight ship, wanted his country to play an important role at the fall session of the UN General Assembly. When Australia was chosen to participate in UNSCOP, he appointed two loyal ministry staffers, John Hood and Samuel Atyeo.[7]

Hood, an Australian Foreign Ministry official, received the post of his country's official delegate to UNSCOP. He pursued advanced study at Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship . He later served in a series of diplomatic posts in England. He also represented Australia at international committees on a range of subjects, including one on the Balkans.[8]

Atyeo, Hood's alternate, also came to UNSCOP with experience that would be of benefit in the upcoming inquiry. He and Hood had much in common. Both were dedicated public servants with bureaucratic skills. During the inquiry it would emerge that the two of them took similar positions on the political issues involved. They displayed a measure of antagonism toward the Jews and uncompromising loyalty to the British. From the start, Atyeo openly voiced his objections to Zionism; Hood came off as much the same, if more temperate. The two Australians were loyal defenders of the British, who were subjected to much invective during the investigation. Their hostility to Zionism may well have grown out of their appreciation of the difficulties faced by the British, which the inquiry revealed and about which they had not previously held firm opinions.[9] However, the pair's prior opinions did not dictate their work on the committee. Before they set out to join UNSCOP, Evatt asked them not to voice a clear position during their work on the committee without his prior approval. Evatt himself took care to maintain ambiguity, resisting Zionist efforts to elicit from him a statement of support for the idea of establishing a Jewish state. It would later transpire that the appointments of Hood and Atyeo were meant to serve Evatt's own plans, and the two delegates presumably understood this quite well from the start.[10]

Canada's senior representative was Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand. Obstinacy and severity coexisted in his complex personality alongside sentimentality and liberalism. A bit condescending, and sometimes aloof from those around him, Rand formed his positions on the basis of his ability to view issues from a broad perspective. He used this quality when he resolved a lengthy and acrimonious labor dispute at a Ford plant in an original way and to the satisfaction of both sides, burnishing his reputation in his country. According to Eliezer Tauber, Rand had been exposed to the Zionist idea before his mission to Palestine, as a result of his professional ties with

Jewish-American judges, and that he began his work on UNSCOP with a pro-Zionist inclination.[11]

Rand's alternate was Leon Mayrand, a French-Canadian diplomat who had acquired some knowledge of the Middle East. Neither was the Jewish people and its plight unknown to him—he had helped several Jewish families flee from Austria to Canada during the Second World War.[12] Unlike the other deputies mentioned thus far, but like most of those who served on UNSCOP, Mayrand remained in the shadow of his superior. The Canadian Cabinet decided that its representatives would not receive instructions of any sort.[13] For his part, prior to setting out, Rand stressed to his foreign minister, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester Pearson, that he would refuse to accept instructions.[14]

The quartet of Western European and British Commonwealth countries was completed by the Netherlands. The Dutch delegate was Nicolas Blom and his alternate was A.I. Spits, both of whom had served, until not long before this, as officials in their country's colonies. Spits had been governor of Sumatra and Blom, a jurist by training, had served as governor-general of Indonesia. Blom was an administrator of analytic mind. During the inquiry he frequently took upon himself the work of wording decisions and documents. Both men were seen as objective and unbiased professionals who put their experience at the service of the committee. They fostered this impression, stressing the vast experience they had gained in addressing "similar problems." In the later stages of the inquiry they continued to claim that they had not yet formed an opinion.[15] The Zionists viewed the Dutch pair as "sympathetic."[16]

In fact, Dutch documents show that both men started off not with an inclination to Zionism but rather with manifestly pro-Arab opinions. Blom seems to have wanted to see Palestine through the prism of his experience in Indonesia. Upon his appointment to UNSCOP, he insisted on adding an Indonesian Arabist advisor. Blom presumed that, "given the issue of Indonesia," the country with the world's largest Muslim population, "the Netherlands would do best to avoid a confrontation with the Arabs." He sought to use his mission to solve his own country's problems. He may well have thought that Holland could use its unanticipated involvement in the Arab-Jewish conflict to shore up its tottering administration in Indonesia. While, in the end, the Indonesian advisor was not appointed due to "budgetary difficulties," as the Dutch Foreign Ministry told Blom, the former governor-general nevertheless continued to put Palestine in an Indonesian context throughout his service on UNSCOP.[17] Before leaving to join the inquiry, Blom was called in to receive a briefing from the Dutch foreign ministry, where he was told that his instructions would be conveyed to him later. He contacted the ministry at critical points during the inquiry and acted entirely in accordance with the directives he received from the foreign minister.[18]

The Eastern bloc countries sent two almost entirely disparate delegations. Czechoslovakia's senior representative was Karel Lisicky, a jurist and diplomat who had served as ambassador to several European countries and

had represented his own country at the League of Nations and the United Nations.[19] Lisicky quickly emerged as a suspicious and apprehensive man. Jewish Agency representatives who had expected him to be sympathetic to their cause, given his country's consistent support for Zionism, were surprised by his conduct. He tried to conceal his opinion and had trouble making decisions, making it difficult to discern where he really stood. His peculiar behavior might have been a result of the unstable situation he found himself in at the time. Up until February 1948, Czechoslovakia was still not officially a Communist state, but Communists were systematically being installed in most key posts. The process was at its climax at the time UNSCOP was formed. Lisicky, a social-democrat by conviction, felt that his time was at hand. He was identified with the old regime and had personal connections with Jan Masaryk, the liberal foreign minister whose days in that post were numbered. Lisicky had lived outside his country for 30 years because of his ambassadorial posts, and feared that his dismissal was imminent.

But Lisicky's problems did not end there. During his long sojourn abroad he had attached himself to other patrons. He had spent most of his working life in London. A conversation he held at his initiative with a close associate in the Foreign Office at the start of his work on the committee shows that his dealings with those others went beyond proper working relations. He told the official that, "as usual," he could "count on his goodwill and his understanding of the British position." He passed on information about UNSCOP's initial work and consulted with the Foreign Office on his future activity. The official who reported on Lisicky made a point of informing his superiors that it was necessary to take special care not to reveal this sensitive source of information. His report is the only document testifying to such contacts. But they were ties that necessitated that the Czechoslovakian representative try to take British interests into account.[20]

Lisicky's alternate was Richard Pech, also from the staff of his country's foreign ministry. He was apparently in much the same dilemma as his superior. Before setting on his assignment, Pech met with Foreign Minister Masaryk and Foreign Ministry Secretary Vladimir Clementis, but they gave him no concrete instructions.[21] In fact, the Czechoslovakian government intended to formulate its position at a later stage.[22] The two representatives presumed that the government would soon inform them of its position, and as such were left disoriented for the present. Taking into account the policies of the Foreign Ministry and Cabinet, they presumed that they would favor the Zionist position, but they did not know if Moscow would send directives and, if so, what they would be. Masaryk and Clementis supported the Jewish position,[23] but the briefing they received showed no signs of that. The attempts of the Czechoslovakian delegate to straddle the divide has been attributed to his character, but he had other good reasons to do so.

The Yugoslavian delegation, with ten members, was the largest, liveliest, and most unpredictable of them all. During the inquiry, they maintained wide-ranging contacts with the Arabs, Arab Communists in particular, but

also with the Jewish Agency, members of the Marxist-Zionist Hashomer Hatza'ir movement, as well as with Etzel and Lehi—in short, with everyone they could. The Yugoslavians' intensive activity and contradictory declarations produced a wide range of evaluations and conjectures about them; they were the subject of ongoing British surveillance.[24]

The two Yugoslavian delegates to the committee were Vladimir Simic, the chief representative, and his alternate Jože Brilej. Brilej was originally named the senior of the two, but his sharp anti-British tone during the initial weeks of the inquiry seem to have prompted his government to demote him to alternate.[25] A Communist and former partisan commander who became a diplomat, Brilej sometimes behaved more like a soldier in combat. David Horowitz, one of the Jewish Agency liaison officers, described him as a "dogmatist … A resolute determination, rocklike principles, and immovable ideology were his main characteristics."[26]

Simic, brother to the Yugoslavian foreign minister, was the director of the Foreign Ministry's Political Department. Unlike his ministry colleagues, he was not a Communist. They were "Tito's boys," installed in political positions after the Second World War. In contrast, he was a professional, a lawyer by training, who had worked in his country's service for many years, including as ambassador in Washington. Bunche later said that Simic was the "strongest" representative on the committee.[27]

Yugoslavia, as a multi-national, multi-religious state fraught with ethnic tension, was at the time in the midst of a complex political-constitutional process aimed, on the one hand, at satisfying the aspirations and demands of each of its six national groups, while on the other hand keeping them in a united state. It was only natural for its representatives to be leery of territorial solutions to ethnic problems, and to seek to apply the Yugoslavian model, which had thus far been relatively successful, to other places as well. The Yugoslavian regime would thus hardly recommend granting independence to warring nationalities by partitioning a territory. That would set a precedent for its own ethnic groups that were demanding independence. Furthermore, a rigid single state conformed to Communist ideology, which some members of the delegation believed in devoutly. Another consideration for the Yugoslavians was their country's large Muslim minority, although this seems not to have been a significant factor.[28] The Yugoslavians were in constant contact with Belgrade, their capital. They were apparently told to conduct a serious and comprehensive inquiry and to collect as much material on Palestine as possible. But they knew from the start that, when decision time came, much weight would be placed on the solution they had arrived with.[29]

The Indian representative, Sir Abdur Rahman, a justice of his country's Supreme Court, was the voice of Islam and the Arabs on the committee. An eminent jurist, he was a devout Muslim and member of the Congress Party. He voiced his opinions unequivocally, frequently speaking out of turn, sometimes in anger.[30] Mohn, the Swedish alternate member, likened him to a raging bull trying constantly to gore the red cape waved in front of him—that is, the

Jews.[31] Abdur Rahman took upon himself to be the voice of the Arabs, and maintained contact with Arab leaders in and outside Palestine. He held private meetings in Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon, and mediated between the Arab states and the committee, seeking to present a uniform and clear Arab position.

The junior members of the Indian delegation included his son, who served as his personal secretary, and his alternate, Venkata Viswanathan. The latter, an Indian Foreign Ministry official and scion of a prominent family,[32] did not have a great impact, but in a single instance when Abdur Rahman did not attend a meeting, he lashed out with an anti-Zionist diatribe that surprised everyone present.[33] His partisan position made it clear that the anti-Zionist position of the Indian delegation was not due to the whims of a single representative, but rather represented Indian government policy.

But that was clear from the fact that India appointed a member of its Muslim minority to the post. Abdur Rahman, one of the Muslim followers of the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, did not have to try hard to do New Delhi's bidding, as his government was hostile to Zionism from the start. There were a variety of reasons for this, both internal and external. Within the country, the Indian regime needed to display great sensitivity to the position of its large Muslim minority, which stood solidly behind the Palestinian Arab national struggle. Furthermore, India took a broad view of its interests in Asia and the Middle East, seeking to put together a bloc of Arab and Asian states that would play a central role in the international arena. As such, it pursued a policy that served the interests of the Arab and Muslim states.[34] Nehru, who at the time served both as head of India's transitional government and as its foreign minister, took a personal role in Abdur Rahman's appointment. He gave the delegate detailed instructions, beginning with his own impression that the best solution "perhaps" be an independent Arab state within which there would be a Jewish autonomous territory. While Nehru claimed that he had "great sympathy" for the Jews and the success of Zionism in Palestine, India would support the Arabs, because the territory in dispute was an Arab one, a fact that could not be changed.[35]

Iran's representative, Nasrollah Entezam, reached, at the end of the investigation, the same conclusions as his Indian colleague, but did so against his will. His previous post had been foreign minister, and prior to that he had been a diplomat, spending many years as his country's ambassador in London, Warsaw, Bern, and Paris. Refined and liberal, he found it difficult to align himself with his Indian colleague, but his commitments at home dictated his actions.[36]

Shortly after the committee began its inquiry in Jerusalem, Entezam met with his country's consul there and told him confidentially that "We will need to reach an accommodation with the Jews."[37] In private conversations he surprised his interlocutors with his interest in arranging for Christian control of Jerusalem.[38] His colleagues on the committee had the impression that he himself supported partition but, as Blom, the Dutch representative, put

it at the end of one of his reports, "He can't be less Muslim than his Indian counterpart."[39]

Entezam's alternate, Ali Ardalan, was also a blend of East and West. In his background and views he resembled his superior.[40] The Arab states took nothing for granted when it came to these two men; they put heavy pressure on Iran during UNSCOP's work, such that the country's representatives had little room for maneuver.[41]

Concerned about the three Latin American countries sending representatives to the committee, the British made considerable efforts to counter them with appointments more amenable to them. Their concern would later prove to be well-founded. Guatemala's representative was Jorge García-Granados, a jurist by training but, as he wrote of himself in his memoirs, a revolutionary and freedom fighter in spirit. His life was marked by his country's frequent uprisings and rebellions, during which he was imprisoned and exiled. His volatile personality and quick mind were in accord with this liberal and militant heritage, and were harnessed to a determined anti-British and pro-Zionist crusade.

Some said that the Zionists had pushed for his appointment,[42] but in fact he came to identify with the Zionist cause only during the course of the inquiry. Like many of his UNSCOP colleagues, Granados came to the committee with his own country's problems in his briefcase. At the start of his mission, he told Jewish Agency officials about the dispute between Britain and Guatemala over Belize (British Honduras). Guatemala's position was that anything that would push Britain out of its overseas territories would hasten the liberation of this territory, ruled by Britain, which Guatemala claimed. Granados, a man of great and varied political and diplomatic experience, was an apt choice for his country, and a clear signal that Guatemala wanted to exploit the inquiry for its own benefit.[43]

Granados and the British had a tense relationship. He acceded to a request from a Jewish Agency official to smuggle, from the USA to Palestine, confidential documents that incriminated Arabs in collaboration with the Nazis.[44] The British first called Granados a Soviet puppet, and later supplemented that with other invectives.[45] Initially intent principally on provoking the British, he soon became an avid advocate of the Zionist cause, beginning what would become a beautiful friendship.[46] Granados chose Zea Gonzalez, a young member of parliament, to serve as his alternate.[47]

Uruguay's senior representative on UNSCOP was Enrique Fabregat, a professor of geography and a former education minister. The British were correct in their assessment that he was "in the Soviet and Zionist pockets"; he came to the inquiry with a clear commitment to Zionism, a product of years of study of the Jewish people, Palestine, and the Bible. Fabregat was sympathetic to the idea of establishing a state where, as he put it, the Patriarchs had lived, and talk of the Holocaust would bring tears to his eyes.[48] The Uruguayan government, which supported the right to national self-determination and faced a public campaign by Zionists, was quick to instruct Fabregat, on May

22, to support partition.[49] Later, following the intervention of the British ambassador in Montevideo, and because the Uruguayan foreign minister was concerned about his representative's strong opinions, Fabregat was summoned home, during UNSCOP's first working days, to be briefed. He and his superiors agreed that the foreign ministry would rule on any matter of principle that would come up during the committee's work, and that its instructions would be sent by cable, using a secret code. But there was no change in the goal, partition.[50]

Another member of the Uruguayan delegation who deserves mention is Edmundo Sisto, an engineer who served as secretary of his country's delegation. He had a background in managing planning and building projects. When the goal—partition—had been determined, Sisto, as an engineer with vast technical knowledge, was able to draft the committee's first partition map. Fabregat's alternate, Óscar Secco Ellauri, also set out on the mission with a large measure of sympathy for Zionism.[51] This cohesive trio, together with the energetic Guatemalan delegation, astonished the Zionists with their hardnosed zeal for doing all they could to promote a pro-Zionist solution.

Like its two Latin American partners, Peru received an urgent recommendation from the British of whom the latter would like the country to appoint to the committee. Guatemala and Uruguay had countered with half-promises to brief their representatives appropriately. The Peruvians told the British that their preferred candidate was ill.[52] Instead, Peru appointed Alberto Ulloa as its senior representative, and Arturo Garcia Salazar as his alternate. Ulloa, a senior statesman, former foreign minister, and a much-admired figure at the UN, attended the committee's initial meetings and was chosen to serve as its vice chairman.[53] Nevertheless, he decided not to make the trip to Palestine, citing previous personal commitments. He meant to join the committee only for its final stage in Geneva. But the long road the committee traveled before it reached Geneva made bringing him in for the final stretch impracticable. As a result, Salazar, who had taken leave from his post as his country's ambassador to the Vatican, and who was not meant to serve as his country's senior delegate, ended up representing Peru alone.[54]

Conservative and devoutly Catholic, Salazar was a silent man of stern countenance; he served the Church before all else. As such, he diverged greatly from his government's pro-Zionist stance. Using his sharp analytic mind, he arrived, during the inquiry, at insights and opinions that he stuck to. He refused to meet with the Zionists, kept the other members of the committee at a distance, and did his best to translate his deep commitment to the Church into political gains for it.[55]

Overall, the representatives appointed to the committee had some things in common. Most had a legal or diplomatic background, and only a few had previous knowledge of Palestine. But they had different outlooks, and these, together with the impressions they would form during their work, would meld with the instructions they received from their governments. When the inquiry commenced, some of them clearly leaned to the Zionist or the Arab

side; others were bound to one side or the other by the instructions they had received. Overall, however, the forces were balanced, and they all intended to conduct a real inquiry. While that statement is based, of course, on the wisdom of hindsight, even at the start it was clear that the committee's blend of nationalities made for a varied and unconventional group. There was no way of predicting then what conclusions it would reach. "It was a strange assortment," said Abba Eban, who would serve as one of the Jewish liaison officers with the committee.[56]

The UN's First Big Test: Putting UNSCOP Together

Trygve Lie's futile attempts to avert a special session of the General Assembly, and the series of events that followed them, showed him how complex and sensitive the Palestine issue was. The contradictory interests, along with the involvement of the great powers, made it difficult to manage the crisis. Lie was cognizant of the weight of his responsibility. Palestine faced the young international organization with its first major test, one that, for many, would determine whether it could live up to expectations.[57]

Lie was also troubled by the short period of time assigned to the committee to conduct its inquiry and submit its recommendations.[58] The deadline for its work was the opening of the General Assembly's regular session on September 1. The committee thus had, in practice, only three months for its work, on all accounts a tight schedule for such a complex investigation, not to mention for drafting recommendations that clearly would have dramatic consequences. These two factors, the short time period and the UN's prestige, remained very much in the minds of the committee's members, and to a large extent dictated their moves in the final stage of their work.

Lie tried to do his best to ensure the investigation's success. He exerted considerable influence over the proceedings from the time the British referred the question and during the process of establishing the committee. The Arabs would later claim that Lie had used all the power at his disposal as UN secretary-general to help the Jews achieve their dream of a Jewish state.[59] Lie denied all such accusations. In his memoirs, he acknowledged that he had felt sympathy for the persecuted Jewish people's demand for a state of their own. Nevertheless, he claimed, when the subject came before the UN he addressed it objectively. After the committee's majority recommended partition, he supported it, just as he would have supported whatever other recommendation the committee might have issued. The partition plan was subsequently accepted by the General Assembly, and from that point onward it was his duty to implement it.[60]

The claim of Lie's bias was voiced not just by the Arabs, but by some scholars as well.[61] Others accept his claim that his primary motivation was concern for the UN and its standing, and the organization's need to prove that it could live up to its mission by successfully handling global crises. On this account, Palestine was not just the first test of whether the UN could

find solutions to regional conflicts, but also of whether it could get rival blocs of countries and the great powers to work together. Lie made every effort to prove that the international organization was capable of grappling with and resolving the crisis.[62] In any case, the debate is not all that relevant to the period under study in this work. Lie worked hard to set up the committee, but during the period it was active had almost no contact with it, and certainly did not try to sway its findings. He writes in his memoirs that he did not intervene; nothing in his personal papers[63] or in the rest of the material on the committee contradicts that. During Lie's intensive involvement in the Palestine issue, from February 1947 to the beginning of the committee's work, nothing he did gave either the Jews or the Arabs an advantage. A single meeting took place, on March 4, between Lie and three representatives of the Jewish Agency, headed by Shertok. Lie emphasized to them that he would conduct the UN debate over Palestine evenhandedly, as his position demanded, and that he would keep his personal opinions to himself.[64]

As already noted, in parallel with the process that led to the establishment of the fact-finding committee during the special session, a special preparatory team made up of members of the UN Secretariat prepared a database on Palestine and the political dispute. In addition to many cartons of material gathered by the team and sent with UNSCOP to Palestine, the preparatory team was able to edit and publish an impressive compendium of data before the committee first convened. This five-volume compendium, comprising more than 800 pages, was distributed to all the General Assembly's delegates. The most important and useful of its volumes categorized the issues in dispute and enumerated the solutions that had been proposed to them.[65] Most of the material was taken from the report of the Peel Commission, a royal commission of inquiry that studied the Palestine issue in 1937 and recommended partition, and from the report of the Anglo-American Committee. An additional volume, much perused by UNSCOP's members, included economic, geographic, and demographic surveys and data on Palestine.[66] This volume was based on comprehensive research that the British provided to the Anglo-American Committee.[67]

In parallel with collecting data, the team also made preparations for the inquiry. Beyond preparing a list of issues that the committee would have to address in the early stages of its work, some members of the team began to prepare the general thrust of the questions that would be put to the representatives of the parties involved.[68] The team did its work well. The comprehensive information it prepared was of considerable use to the committee, and made it easier for it to begin its work.

Putting together the committee's staff and filling its positions was much more complex. Lie personally appointed the senior members of the staff, and then gave them the task of filling the rest of the posts.[69] Lie named Victor Hoo of China, his deputy for trusteeship affairs, to head it. Hoo was a veteran diplomat who had served in many positions in the League of Nations and UN Secretariat, and was known as a conscientious professional who stuck

to rules and protocols.[70] The Zionists considered him "pro-Jewish, but not necessarily pro-Zionist," and believed that his principal concern was for "the committee's objectivity."[71] It soon became apparent that any attempt to influence him would not go well. He remained closed-off and distant throughout the inquiry, taking care not to do anything to favor any side. He preferred not to get into the thick of the actual inquiry.[72]

The second most senior figure in the formal hierarchy of the committee's staff was Alfonso García Robles, a Mexican who headed the Political Section of the UN Security Council. A jurist by training, he was responsible for the organizational side of the committee's work, which included the editing and printing of the records of its meetings and of its extensive correspondence. It was a huge job, which Robles quickly dove into and performed well. He kept his opinions on the Palestine issue to himself.[73]

The third-ranking person on the staff was Ralph Bunche. His title was "special assistant" to Hoo, a role tailored for him by Lie. Seeking to ensure that the UN would address the Palestine question in the best possible way, Lie wanted Bunche involved. Bunche was considered one of the UN's most talented and prominent officials, and would later receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in achieving the armistice agreements that brought the 1948 Israel-Arab war to an end.[74] He was the first member of the UN Secretariat drafted by Lie to deal with Palestine. At the secretary-general's behest, he studied the issue in the hope of crafting a solution even before the informal preparatory team had been put together.[75]

At the UN, the African-American Bunche was a synonym for making working procedures more efficient and for a tradition of activism and initiative. He said of himself that he had "a burning desire to excel at everything I undertake,"[76] and his actions proved it. Bunche established a personal connection with each member of the committee, and gained the confidence of both the Zionists and the British. His remarkable way with words, along with his endeavors to ensure that the committee fulfill the mission it had been assigned, would prove decisive at a number of stages in the inquiry. Bunche's official position was inferior to that of Hoo and Robles, but he was without a doubt the most influential and important member of the committee staff.[77]

Hoo, Robles, and Bunche were officially designated as the Committee Secretariat Executive, and following their appointment they were charged with choosing the rest of the administrative staff and officials. It turned out to be complicated. On the one hand, they sought to bring in people who could further the committee's task, for example people fluent in Hebrew and Arabic, and other experts of Palestine. On the other hand, they clearly needed to take care not to appoint interested parties who might bias the inquiry. This latter concern led them to turn away any number of qualified people, and to prefer permanent members of the UN bureaucracy rather than people from outside, whose backgrounds and connections would need to be carefully vetted.[78]

After considerable labor, they put together a list of candidates for staff positions. At the time, there were two natural candidates in the UN Secretariat,

experts on the Middle East: William Epstein, a Canadian of Jewish origin, and Mahmud Salah, an Egyptian. Both were senior officials in the Security Council's Middle East Department, and had been involved in the preparatory work performed by the UN Secretariat in advance of the inquiry.[79] Lie, who was given the list for his final approval, ruled out both the Jew and the Egyptian, as well as Henri Vigier, who had many years of experience in the League of Nations, but whom the Arabs saw as a Zionist sympathizer.[80]

The sixty people who comprised the committee's staff and administration were of fourteen different nationalities. A third of them were Americans. This multicultural cadre included officials who dealt with the press and with transportation; there was a treasurer, advisors on a range of subjects, archivists, and a large contingent of stenographers, translators, and interpreters.[81] Especially important contributions were made by the committee's legal counsel, Constantin Stavropoulos of Greece, and its economic adviser, John Reedman. Stavropoulos, an expert on international law, earned the respect of the committee's members, most of whom were themselves jurists. Reedman, the only economist on the staff, joined it when it reached Geneva, and made important contributions as the report was drafted.

When UNSCOP arrived in Palestine, additional staff was added, among them drivers, porters, and office workers, increasing its size to about 100. This colorful collection of people, speaking a babel of languages, were talented, but not one of them had expertise on the Middle East. Another problem was that only a few members of the senior staff spoke English as their mother tongue; economists and geographers were also lacking.[82] Putting this puzzle together took more time than anticipated, and was completed only after the committee held its initial meetings.

Inaugural Meetings in New York

Even though most of its designated members had not yet arrived in New York, UNSCOP convened for its first meeting on May 26, at Lake Success, the temporary headquarters of the United Nations on Long Island. It was a public meeting chaired by Secretary-General Li as well as the press and invited staff of the UN departments. Lie welcomed the members of the mission, and reminded them that from this point forward they represented "the hope and faith of millions of people" who had put their trust in the United Nations. He stressed that the outcome of their work would have a great impact on the world's attitude toward the organization and its ability to resolve international conflicts, and acknowledged the complexity of the Palestine question. Following his opening remarks, he urged the committee to proceed immediately and hold its first working session, despite the lack of a quorum. He apologized to the press and other guests and asked them to leave the members of UNSCOP to themselves.[83] From this point forward, the committee met behind closed doors, and its members were forbidden to speak of what was said there.

The cameras, smiles, and festive nature of the inaugural session soon gave way to the atmosphere of suspicion and questions that pervaded the meetings that followed. Lie, who chaired the first closed meeting as well, put heavy pressure on the members to postpone choosing a chairman, on the grounds that six—a majority—of the designated members had not yet arrived. While this sounded reasonable enough, Lie lost credibility when the Swedish representative at the UN, Gunnar Hägglöff, who was representing his country until the arrival of Sandström and Mohn, inexplicably offered him enthusiastic support. Granados, the Guatemalan representative, attacked Lie's proposal and demanded that the committee choose a chairman and begin to work immediately, despite the absences. In the end, Lie succeeded in putting off a decision,[84] but in doing so he brought to light the internal conflict that afflicted UNSCOP during the initial stage of its inquiry, a conflict between those who were suspected, with a large measure of justice, to be acting in accordance with British interests, and those who opposed them.

In the week that followed until the next meeting, as more of the members and alternates arrived, everything was done to ensure that Sandström would be elected chairman. Granados made no secret of his interest in the post, and won the support of the Yugoslavian and Uruguayan representatives. As a result, the committee's secretary, Hoo, did not invite them to a lunch he organized for the other representatives. At the lunch, following which the representatives immediately proceeded to the meeting where the vote for the chairmanship was to be held, it was agreed that Sandström, the Swedish delegate, would be elected.[85] At the start of the meeting, Fabregat, the Uruguayan representative, nominated Granados for the post, and Simic of Yugoslavia quickly seconded the nomination, with reference to "Guatemala's objectivity on the Palestine question." The silence that followed was supposed to be broken by Lisicky, the Czechoslovakian delegate, who had volunteered to nominate Sandström, but instead he disregarded the looks from his colleagues and remained silent. Hoo was surprised, but was left with no choice but to declare that Granados had been chosen. But the day was saved by the spirit of leadership displayed by Rand, the Canadian delegate, who nominated Sandström, who immediately won the support of a majority. In a secret ballot, he received six votes, Granados three, and Entezam of Iran a single vote.[86]

In his memoirs, Granados wrote that Sandström had intended to fly directly to Jerusalem, but had been summoned hastily to New York for the sole purpose of being elected chairman. Granados termed his own candidacy for the post a "rebellion," and accused the USA and Britain of engineering Sandström's election because they believed that he "could not be altogether indifferent to the British point of view."[87] But the documentation shows that it was Lie's initiative. As part of his efforts to ensure that the committee would succeed, he urged the Swedish government to appoint Hägglöff, its ambassador, to the committee, and hoped that he could arrange for him to be elected chairman. The secretary-general informed the British of his plan; they believed that Hägglöff was unqualified, but preferred not to say so.

The Swedish government, which wanted to make it clear that they were not involved in the inquiry, decided to send a clearly apolitical representative, who was then elected chairman.[88]

Sandström had no interest in the chairmanship. In a letter to his Foreign Ministry, he related how, upon his arrival in New York, Hägglöff announced that he had been designated the "victim" and that there was no point in opposing it. "I accepted the judgment," he wrote. "It was very much my destiny."[89] It later turned out that his appointment had been the right move. Even without reference to who represented Sweden, the country was the correct choice to ensure that the committee functioned objectively. It was neutral, both with regard to the Jewish-Arab conflict and in the Cold War between the Eastern and Western blocs. Had the pro-Zionist, anti-British Granados been given the post, it would have been hugely problematic. Relations with the British, which were essential, would have been damaged, and the interactions within the committee would have been charged. It may well have been detrimental to the moral standing of the committee's work and its recommendations. The Zionists, who tried to persuade the committee's members to choose "one of the Latin Americans,"[90] should have been grateful that their campaign did not succeed.

UNSCOP conducted its initial meetings on the basis of a working paper provided to the preparatory team.[91] Alongside general headings, such as "Working Procedures," discussion of which would last several days, the committee also had to address specific points, such as the way in which its meetings would be documented (a full transcript, not just summaries).[92] The pace of events also dictated decisions. The dozens of requests to testify before the committee in New York, and concern that the Arabs would criticize the committee if it spent too much time in a city in which Jews allegedly wielded great influence, required setting a timetable. The committee decided to do without preliminary study of the material and hearing testimony in New York, and to leave the United States quickly, so as to spend as long as possible in Palestine.[93]

Another substantive issue discussed in the initial meetings was the nature of the committee's connections with the British, Jews, and Arabs. The committee had before it a request from the Jewish Agency to be allowed to appoint a representative who would attend all meetings, including closed ones. UNSCOP did not turn down the request out of hand. While the committee's members had no enthusiasm for having observers present at all times, the common wisdom was that the British government would insist on participating in the discussions. The inclination in the committee, in an informal meeting convened for this purpose, was to consent, although it knew that this would compel it to allow Jewish and Arab representatives to attend meetings as well.[94]

The British were appalled by the idea that they might send an adjunct to the committee. Harold Beeley, an adviser to Bevin who was in New York to keep an eye on the committee's initial moves, conducted the talks over the idea. He

asked for a meeting with Hoo, the committee's secretary, where he explained that the Mandate government in Palestine and the British Cabinet in London were two entirely distinct bodies, and that the former would appoint a liaison. He stressed that he "had no instructions from London on this subject" but was certain that his government's preference would be for the committee "to meet in absolute privacy, free from the influence of any interested party." Hoo said he was pleased with the British approach.[95] The members of the committee were relieved when they heard this from Hoo, and quickly notified the parties that each of them was to appoint a liaison officer whose role would be restricted to "supply such information or render such other assistance as the committee may require." The Zionists, who had hoped to be involved to every extent possible in the committee's activity, were disappointed. The British breathed a sigh of relief.[96]

The above misunderstanding brings home the absurd relations that developed between UNSCOP and the British. The committee's members could not understand the British insistence on keeping all the space they could between themselves and the committee's decision making process. The members knew that British cooperation was an important condition for the inquiry's success, and that being the case most of them were inclined to make certain concessions to satisfy the British. While Beeley sought to ensure that the inquiry would have the best possible opening conditions, once it began the British let the committee do its job alone.

Alongside the feverish meetings and discussions, UNSCOP's members, at the staff's request, made a range of personal preparations for their upcoming journey. They were asked to bring a long list of items with them, and to undergo inoculations. Hoo inquired into the weather conditions in Palestine, and asked whether the formal suits that the representatives were dressing in for their meetings in New York would be appropriate for Palestine's hot summer. The United Nations insured each member of the committee and staff for a relatively large sum, and approved a budgetary framework which, in the end, turned out to be inadequate because it underestimated the cost of room and board in Palestine.[97]

From the moment the committee decided to conduct its entire inquiry in Palestine, matters proceeded quickly. Most of the subjects that needed to be discussed were postponed to the next stage, and the members occupied themselves with the upcoming trip. The final meeting in New York was held on June 6, some ten days after the committee commenced its work. The meeting finalized the flight arrangements. They were to be divided into two groups, one with a layover in London and the other in Malta. A few members of the former group voiced an interest in speaking with British officials while they were in the British capital, but Nasrollah Entezam, the Iranian delegate, cautioned that the public might interpret such meetings to the detriment of the committee's good name, convincing the others to abandon the idea.[98]

The initial meetings in New York, the appointment of the staff, and the gathering of all the committee members from their respective countries completed UNSCOP in its full complement. Zionist observers who followed it closely remarked in disappointment that the committee looked "unsalvageable,"[99] and that its members "seemed nervous with their authority." The Zionists added that "Not one of them had been involved in any decisions as momentous in which he would now have to participate."[100] The disparagement of the committee's members also grew out of a comparison between them and their parallels on the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of the previous year, which had been composed of prominent and prestigious figures. The comparison led to concern that UNSCOP "would not bring salvation."[101] The single point of light was the hope that this committee, unlike its predecessor, would be independent, a hope that, with the passage of time, turned out to be correct.

The British, whose expectations of UNSCOP were far less clear, did not try to evaluate the committee as a whole. Other than personal jabs directed largely at the representatives of Yugoslavia, Uruguay, and Guatemala, British officials were of the opinion that most of the members were totally ignorant about Palestine. The short time they had would not enable them to study the question properly.[102] The Arabs did not reflect at all on the committee's capabilities. As they saw it, its members had been in the thrall of Zionism even before the inquiry, so the whole inquiry was mere theater. Bunche, who had been involved from the time the committee was established and in its every move, was glum: It's "just about the worst group I've ever had to work with," he wrote to his wife.[103]

Notes

1 CZA S25/3965, "Siḥah 'im D"R Hans Sheffer be-'Inyan ha_Shofet Sandström," July 8, 1947; CZA S25/5374, Katz to Lourie May 29, 1947.
2 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 165.
3 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 240–241.
4 Ibid., p. 253.
5 TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 20, 1947; FO 371/61782, MacGillivary to Martin, June 29, 1947.
6 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox." September 26, 1947. The scant correspondence between the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the members of the delegation addresses formal matters only, with no political implications. See SNA HP, Box 906.
7 ISA 93/חצ/2266/15, Comay to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 29, 1947; ANA 852/19/1, Evatt to Hodgson, May 17, 1947.
8 CZA S25/5963, "John Hood," June 9, 1947.
9 ISA 93/חצ/2266/15, Lourie to members of the Jewish Agency Executive, July 7, 1947; Lourie to Max F. Freilich, July 15, 1947; TNA FO 371/61873, "Sam Atyeo"; CO 537/2339, MacGillivary to Martin, July 19, 1947.

10 David Mandel, *H.V. Evatt and the Establishment of Israel: The Undercover Zionist*, London: 2004, pp. 1–5, 63, 80–86.
11 Eliezer Tauber, Personal Policy Making: Canada's Role in the Adoption of the Palestine Partition, Westport, CT: 2002, p. 12.
12 Ibid.
13 NAC RG 25/4219, "United Nations Palestine Committee–Canadian Representation," May 22, 1947; "Special Committee on Palestine of the United Nations–Canadian Representation," June 18, 1947.
14 William Kaplan, *Canadian Maverick: The Life and Times of Ivan C. Rand*, Toronto: 2009, p. 22.
15 The quote is from CZA S25/5878, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, June 7, 1947; Comay to Shertok, June 30, 1947, in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, p. 426; NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2147, Macatee to Merriam, July 21, 1947.
16 ISA 93/חצ/2266/32, Minutes of Jewish Agency Executive meeting in London, May 5, 1947.
17 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, minutes of meeting of the Dutch delegation to the UN, May 6, 1947; Blom memorandum to the Foreign Ministry, May 28, 1947; Foreign Ministry to Blom, June 20, 1947.
18 "The Delegation to UNSCOP," NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, May 28, 1947.
19 MFCZ, personal files division, file 545.
20 TNA FO 371/61779, McNeil to Orme Sargent, May 24, 1947.
21 MFCZ, International Department Division, Box 69, "The Negotiations on the Palestine Question at the UN," September 5, 1947.
22 MFCZ, International Department division, Box 69, Špaček To Černý, June 2, 1947.
23 Avigdor Dagan, *Kasheh Lehiyot Chekhi: Siḥot 'im Jan Masaryk*, Tel Aviv: 2000, pp. 54–56.
24 Interview with Zvi Locker, Jewish Agency liaison with the Yugoslavian delegation, July 2000.
25 At the committee's first meeting, Brilej declared that he had been appointed the senior delegate and that his alternate would arrive thereafter. See UNA S-608-1, first meeting, May 26, 1947. When Simic arrived in Palestine, Brilej continued to serve as the senior delegate, until the tenth meeting, when Simic replaced him.
26 Horowitz *State in the Making*, p. 165.
27 Interview with Zvi Locker, July 2000; ISA 93/חצ/2270/13, Lourie to Kohen, June 19, 1947. Bunche's description comes from NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Ralph J. Bunch–James Frederick Green, September 24, 1947.
28 Menachem Shelah, *Ha-Kesher ha-Yugoslavi*, Tel Aviv: 1994, pp. 192–193.
29 CZA S25/5374, "Do"H 'al Maga'im 'im D"R Brilej," June 23, 1947; ISA 93/חצ/2270/6, Epstein to Jewish Agency Executive, August 8, 1947; NA RG 84, Box 57, "Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
30 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 8–9; *United Nations Weekly Bulletin*, July 22, 1947, p. 143.
31 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 28.
32 HHA 115/58, Delphi, June 22, 1947.
33 UNA S-608-1, 15th Meeting, June 29, 1947.
34 Rami Ginat, "India and the Palestine Question: The Emergence of the Asio-Arab Bloc and India's Quest for Hegemony in the Post-Colonial Third World," *Middle*

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35 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, New Delhi: 1989, Vol. 2, pp. 474–475.

36 TNA CO 537/2338, MacGillivary to Martin, July 7, 1947; NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2147, Macatee to Merriam, July 21, 1947; *United Nations Weekly Bulletin*, December 24, 1946, p. 14.

37 HHA 115/58, Delphi, June 17, 1947.

38 Richard M. Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, London: 1949, p. 60.

39 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP. Blom report to Foreign Ministry, June 30, 1947.

40 Enrique Fabregat, *Sion, rebelión y cumplimiento: dos capítulos del manuscrito inédito*, Jerusalem: 1992, p. 32; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 250

41 NA 501.BB Palestine/8-2347, Dorsz to Marshall, August 23, 1947.

42 Evan M. Wilson, *A Calculated Risk: The U.S. Decision to Recognize Israel*, Cincinnati: 2008.

43 OHD 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, 1993; TNA FO 371/61778, Guatemala to FO, May 16, 1947.

44 Tov, *El Murmullo*, pp. 51–53.

45 TNA FO 371/61777, Cadogan to FO, May 14, 1947; CO 537/2337, "Palestine Biography—Garcia Granados" [no date]."

46 Conversation with Anna Naumberg, Feb. 2000. Naumberg worked alongside Granados from 1955 to 1959, while he served as Guatemala's ambassador to Israel. See also *El Macabeo*, a Guatemalan Jewish periodical, June 1961, where there are a selection of eulogies given at Granados's funeral. I am grateful the Guatemala's honorary consul in Jerusalem, Werner Loval, for this material. Basing himself on remarks by Garcia Bauer, Granados's alternate when he served as his country's ambassador to the United Nations, he described Granados as the person who led Guatemala's pro-Zionist policy. His high standing in his country, Loval claimed, enabled him to act with a great deal of independence, but it was also true that his position on Israel was in accord with the general outlook of his government. Letter from Loval, March 2000.

47 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 13.

48 Tov, *El Murmullo*, pp. 47–49; TNA FO 371/61777, Cadogan to FO, May 14, 1947.

49 Rosa Perla Reicher, "Yahadut Uruguay: Zehut Le'umit Yehudit u-Megamot Hitbolelut be-Hitpaṭhut ha-Historit," PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1998, pp. 253–254.

50 NA 867.01/6-447, Montevideo to S/S, 17 May 1947; OHD 64(155), interview with Edmundo Sisto, 1991.

51 Ibid.; OHD (155), interview with Óscar Secco Ellauri, 1981.

52 TNA FO 371/61777, Cadogan to FO, May 14, 1947; FO 371/61778, Lima to FO, May 22, 1947.

53 UNA S-608-1, 2nd Meeting, June 2, 1947; *United Nations Weekly Bulletin*, December 24, 1946, p. 22.

54 SNA ESA Box 5, Ulloa to Sandström, June 16, 1947; TNA FO 371/61780, New York to high commissioner, Jerusalem, June 3, 1947.

55 NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2147, Macatee to Merriam, July 21, 1947; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 249.

56 Eban, *Autobiography*, p. 78.

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60 Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations*, New York: 1954, pp. 158–160.
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62 Ellen Jenny Ravndal, ' "The First Major Test": The UN Secretary-General and the Palestine Problem, 1947–9," *International History Review* 38:1 (2016), pp. 197–198.
63 Barros, *Trygve Lie and the Cold War*, p. 181.
64 Ibid., p. 172; Sheffer, *Moshe Sharett*, p. 222.
65 UNA S-606-2, Working Documents Prepared by the Secretariat. Vol. II: Principal Government and Recognize Agencies, Suggesting Solutions of the Palestine Documents of Question and Reactions Thereto [no date].
66 UNA S-606-2, Working Documents Prepared by the Secretariat. Vol. III: General Background Survey [no date].
67 On this volume, entitled *A Survey of Palestine*, see Chapter 5.
68 The list of questions can be found in UNA S-504-9.
69 TNA CO 537/2336, New York to FO, May 16, 1947; Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, p.160–161.
70 UNA S-504-9, "Biographical note on members of Special Committee on Palestine"; Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 159.
71 ISA 93/חצ/2267/13, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 22, 1947; 93/חצ/2266/2, Goldstein to Silver, May 22, 1947.
72 UN Oral History interview with Abba Eban, April 1990, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, New York .
73 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 159; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, report by Blom to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.
74 On Bunche and his considerable influence on the UN's involvement in the Palestine issue, see Elad Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Mediation and the UN 1947-1949,* London: 2016.
75 Lie, In the Cause of Peace, pp. 160–161.
76 Brian Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*, New York 1993, p. 129.
77 UN Oral History interview with Abba Eban, April 1990, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, New York.
78 UNA S-504-9, "Administration Report of the Palestine Commission," [no date].
79 UN Oral History interview with William Epstein, October 1990, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, New York; UNA S-0195-01, Bunche to Cordier, March 3, 1947.
80 ISA 93/חצ/2267/13, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 22, 1947; CZA S25/5978, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 30, 1947; UNA S-609-1, "Tentative List," [no date].
81 UNA S-605-1, "The Staff," "Secretary General"; *Organization and Procedure of United Nations Commissions, Vol III.: The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine*, New York: 1949, p. 12
82 CZA S25/5978, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 30, 1947; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 246.

83 UNA S-608-1, 1st Meeting, May 26, 1947.
84 Ibid.
85 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 14–15.
86 UNA S-608-1, 2nd Meeting, June 2, 1947; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 245.
87 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 13.
88 SNA ESA Box 5, Michael Francis Doyle to Sandstrom, June 3, 1947; TNA CO 537/2336, Cadogan to FO, May 16, 1947. Sandström had wanted to proceed straight from Sweden to Palestine, but Lie urged the Swedish government to tell him to go to New York for the inaugural session. SNA HP, Box 906, Swedish mission to the UN to Swedish Foreign Ministry, May 27, 1947.
89 SNA HP, Box 96, Sandström to Swedish Foreign Ministry, June 7, 1947.
90 CZA S25/5978, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 30, 1947.
91 UNA S-504-9, "Items to be Taken Up by the Special Committee when Determining its Program," May 26, 1947.
92 UNA S-608-1, 1st Meeting, May 26, 1947; 2nd Meeting, June 2, 1947.
93 UNA S-608-1, 4th Meeting, June 6, 1947.
94 UNA S-611-1, Silver to Hoo, May 19, 1947; TNA FO 371/61779, Cadogan to FO, May 27, 1947; FO 371/61779, Cadogan to FO, May 28, 1947. The Guatemalan and Uruguayan representatives, who had flown back to their capitals for consultations, did not attend the informal meeting. Presumably other members were also absent.
95 TNA FO 371/61779, Cadogan to FO, May 27, 1947; FO 371/61779, Cadogan to FO, May 28, 1947.
96 CZA S25/5978, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, May 30, 1947; UNA S-608-1, 2nd Meeting, June 2, 1947.
97 CZA A366, "Administrative Circular No. 2"; UNA S-609-1, "Administrative Circular No. 1"; TNA OF 371/61779, Cadogan to FO, May 28, 1947.
98 UNA S-608-1, 4th Meeting, June 6, 1947; 5th Meeting, June 16, 1947.
99 CZA S25.5978, Kahany to the Jewish Agency Executive, June 4, 1947.
100 Eban, *Autobiography*, pp. 77–78.
101 "Meeting of Representatives of the Central Committees of the Displaced Persons with Representatives of the Jewish Agency (Geneva, July 15).", in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, vol. 2, p. 461.
102 TNA FO 371/61781, Gurney to Martin, June 17, 1947.
103 Bunche to his wife, Ruth, June 29, 1947, quoted in Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, p. 140.

3 The Encounter with Palestine

On June 6, 1947, an official letter from the UN secretary-general reached the desk of Britain's envoy at the international organization. It informed him of UNSCOP's decision to travel to Palestine and open its inquiry there.[1] The British, Jews, and Arabs might have been expected to step up their preparations for the upcoming investigation, but that is not what happened. The arrangements that each party made were corollaries of its estimate of what weight the committee's report would bring to bear on the General Assembly when it convened that autumn. Consequently, the British prepared ineffectively, the Zionists with alacrity, and the Arabs not at all.

The Achilles heel of the way the British proceeded was their failure to define a goal. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, with the exception of the initiator of the entire process, Foreign Secretary Bevin, no one in the British Cabinet was really clear about why the Palestine issue had been referred to the UN. Policy makers remained foggy about the endgame—was it a tactical move, meant to benefit from the campaign in the UN, or a real effort to unload the yoke of Palestine? The range of opinions, public and private, among the country's leaders about the future of Palestine confused the people who were assigned to implement that policy. This included dissent between the two government offices, Foreign and Colonial, that were charged with making and administering policy in the territory.[2] As a result, there was a plethora of initiatives that sought to take advantage of the committee's visit to Palestine to reap short-term political benefits. Immediately following the special General Assembly session, Britain asked all UN member countries to help it prevent illegal immigration "while the question remains *sub judice*."[3] In this same spirit, the British high commissioner in Palestine, Alan Cunningham, sought to exploit UNSCOP's visit to achieve a moratorium on terrorist activity, which was on the increase. Cunningham thought that a UN request to halt violence would have some influence, and that given the shaky security situation, even a short-term cease fire, for the time that the committee was in Palestine, was worth making every effort to achieve.[4]

Cunningham was one of the few senior British figures to take an unequivocal position. He made a point of stressing that he viewed UNSCOP as "the only possibility of bringing peace to this land."[5] Cunningham did not

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share the ambiguity that some of his colleagues felt about the referral to the UN; he took it at face value. He thus ensured a well-organized welcome for the committee and provided all possible assistance. He was angry that he had not been kept abreast of the UN process of establishing the committee. He needed, he said, to make the necessary preparations for the inquiry, and asked to be kept informed so that he could do so properly.[6]

The failure to provide information to Cunningham and to properly brief the responsible officials in Palestine cannot be attributed to a technical glitch in communications, as the British delegation to the UN claimed. In fact, it was typical of the general British approach to preparing for the inquiry. The initial contacts with the committee in New York were placed in the hands of Alexander Cadogan and Harold Beeley. The former, experienced and clear-headed, was dismayed by the policy he was working to implement at the special session and was apprehensive about the outcome that he expected. His sense was that the guiding hand in London was not entirely aware of the convolutions of the path it had maneuvered itself onto, and this led him to disengage himself as much as he could from UNSCOP's affairs.[7] Under these circumstances, and at Cadogan's explicit request, Beeley was left solely responsible for the initial steps that shaped relations between Britain and the committee. Beeley handled the task in a remarkable way, by turning down every advantage that was offered to the British. He barely consulted with his British colleagues, and at the decisive stage of preparations stopped responding to messages from the Foreign Office in London.[8]

In a moment of candor, Beeley offered a possible explanation. He was convinced that the power relations at the UN would not, in any case, lead to a decision that would constrain the British government and whatever policy it might decide to pursue further down the line. That would never happen, Beeley said.[9] Beeley staunchly adhered to the approach of the Foreign Office, where the inclination was to be dubious about UNSCOP's capacity for influencing the autumn session of the General Assembly, which was the real testing ground. The lack of confidence in the committee and a series of mistaken predictions and assessments contributed to, and were reinforced by, Bevin's soothing view that, in any case, UNSCOP would be wary of reaching conclusions that the British government would not like.[10]

The intensive preparations in Palestine did not correct the impression left by Beeley. When Hoo ordered that the government liaison office that had been located next to the committee's meeting place should be dismantled, it surprised the British, who had labored to set it up. They did not realize that it was a consequence of an idea that Beeley had planted in Hoo's mind, to the effect that the British should be given no advantage over the other parties. The Mandate government held its peace and continued with the preparations. It wanted to provide UNSCOP with a full picture, rich in data, that would present the full range of Britain's achievements during the Mandate period. To this end, the British also crafted an exhibition aimed at putting on display

all that Britain had done, in fields as diverse as agriculture, education, health, forestation, immigration, and transport.[11]

With violence in Palestine on the increase, the British were preoccupied with ensuring security throughout UNSCOP's time in Palestine. On the one hand, they did not want to expose the committee to the full ramifications of the rift between them and the Yishuv, or to the distress of the population as a whole. On the other hand, they wanted to demonstrate just how fraught the situation was so as to justify the severe measures they were taking against terrorism. Senior figures in the army and police were also concerned about the difficulties of ensuring the safety of the committee members and staff.[12]

One of the important steps taken toward receiving the committee was the appointment of a liaison officer. Here, too, the British stuck to their policy of not wanting to make a recommendation. It was an important function, and the person who held the post would be continually rubbing shoulders with the members of the committee. He could, ostensibly, steer the committee in the direction Britain wished, influence the members and staff, and convey the mood on the committee to high-placed officials in London. The UNSCOP staff debated whether the liaison officer should attend all committee meetings, including closed ones.[13] But Beeley left no doubt that the British were not interested in any such thing and that they wanted the formal definition of the role to be restricted to technical matters alone.[14] Donald MacGillivray, an energetic and relatively young Scot, was assigned the task. He had served in the Palestine administration since 1931, and his experience aided him in his new position.[15] His appointment raised some eyebrows. "Indeed, in more normal circumstances it would have been appropriate for you yourself or the Chief Secretary to attend as spokesman for Palestine," a senior Colonial Office official wrote to the high commissioner.[16] Cunningham had had another candidate for the post, but in the end everyone involved agreed with the decision.[17]

MacGillivray, a low-ranking official, was given the sensitive assignment precisely because his superiors did not want a person who would seek to intervene and influence the committee's work—a fact of which he was no doubt fully aware.[18] Nevertheless, he was well-qualified. He was an expert on the issues at hand and had broad knowledge of Palestine, in particular thanks to his service as governor of Acre and of the Nablus district. His personal diaries (which he stopped writing a bit before his appointment) depict a man of great curiosity who had made himself very much at home in Palestine and with its inhabitants.[19]

It turned out, in retrospect, that his qualities, and his ability to forge personal relations, made him a successful choice. Appointed with the intent that he would serve as a glorified messenger boy, he gained the confidence of UNSCOP's members and staff and was lauded by his Zionist counterparts. MacGillivray quickly became the British figure closest to the committee's members, a position from which he was able to exert influence, even if, for the most part, he was used to convey information about the committee's internal workings to his British superiors.

The Zionists, as opposed to the British, set themselves a clear goal. They wanted to navigate UNSCOP toward partition. In the decade that had passed since the Peel Commission voted to recommend partition as the right political model for resolving the Palestine question, the Zionist leadership had come to see it as the most desirable possible outcome. In the end, it was adopted as official policy at the Jewish Agency convention held in Paris in August 1946.[20] Once the target was marked and tactics were fashioned to be used in the testimony stage of the committee's work, negotiations commenced between Mapai and the political parties that advocated a different goal (such as Hashomer Hatza'ir and the Revisionists), so that the Zionist position presented to UNSCOP would be uniform.[21]

Well aware of the importance of the inquiry's results, the Zionists treated UNSCOP with the utmost gravity. Whatever doubts they harbored about its capabilities and the significance that its recommendations would have did not in the least detract from their preparations. Abba Eban put it concisely: "If UNSCOP refused to recommend Jewish independence, we could hope for no remedy in the General Assembly or anywhere else."[22] This conviction produced estimable efforts and many original initiatives, the purpose of which was to win over the hearts of UNSCOP's members and sway them, in any way possible, to incline toward the solution the Zionists sought. The Zionist preparations and the nature of their ties with the committee were diametrically opposed to those of the British. The first difference was clearly evident even in New York, when the question of liaison officers came up. The Jewish Agency wanted to give the liaisons broad authorities. They demanded that these officers be permitted to cross-examine witnesses and participate in all committee meetings, including those held behind closed doors. When the prerogatives of the liaison officers were, at Britain's request, strictly limited, Jewish Agency officials offered three candidates: Aubrey (Abba) Eban, Si (Isaiah) Kenen, and Moshe Tov. Further consideration led to a more effective division of labor—Eban and David Horowitz were appointed official liaison officers, Tov took responsibility for the Latin American members of the committee, and Kenen would serve as press officer and arrange for the unprecedented media coverage that the committee received.[23]

From the moment they were appointed, Eban, Horowitz, and Tov ceaselessly searched for ways into the hearts of the committee members. Already in the early stages they established close ties with most of them. Eban, who would later be named Israel's first ambassador to the UN, showed himself, despite his young age, to be a brilliant diplomat and orator. UNSCOP's members quickly grew fond of him. Horowitz, director of the Jewish Agency's Economic Department and later the first director-general of Israel's Ministry of Finance and the first governor of the Bank of Israel, had served in a similar liaison role with the Anglo-American Committee. He also had impressive diplomatic abilities. Tov was less well-known than the other two, but his ties with the Guatemalan and Uruguayan representatives made an important contribution to the success of the Zionist effort. Eban later wrote of him that "Tov

must be accounted by any serious historian as one of the central architects of Israel's independence."[24]

The Jewish Agency did not trust only to the work of the liaison officers. It also appointed a broad team to support and aid them. Among them were experts in a variety of fields, among them economics, geography, and law, who could provide information and answers to questions that were liable to arise. Moshe Shertok (later Sharett), head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department and the coordinator of all the activity regarding UNSCOP, closely followed events and took personal responsibility for preparing the testimony that agency representatives would give before the committee.[25]

Jewish Agency officials operated on additional levels as well. As soon as the list of countries that would send representatives to the committee was announced, they sought ways to influence the representatives slated to arrive in Palestine. They conducted preparatory meetings with the countries' consuls in Jerusalem. The consuls played mediating roles and served as liaisons between their governments and their country's representatives. Their positions, of course, meant that the representatives viewed the consuls as reliable sources of information.[26]

A file with the title "Tending to the Committee Members" offers more information about these preparations. Walter Eytan, a senior official in the Jewish Agency's Political Department and later the first director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, led a search throughout the Yishuv for people and organizations with backgrounds like those of the representatives. This included soliciting suggestions and information from Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora who had skills or connections that could help. After collating and vetting the profiles of the people who offered their services, Eytan briefed and coached the suitable candidates. Many of these people came from kibbutzim and other Jewish agricultural settlements where there were large concentrations of residents who came from the countries of the UNSCOP representatives. Also useful were Jews who belonged to military veteran organizations in these countries.[27]

The search for ways into the hearts of UNSCOP's members was accompanied by a wide-ranging covert operation aimed at providing the Yishuv leadership with ongoing news of the committee's work and the mood among its members. The Haganah formed a special task force, headed by Chaim Herzog, to keep tabs on the committee's members. This included placing wire taps on the telephones used by the committee. The employees at the hotel where the committee was housed were also told "to put your hand on any piece of paper" they found in the members' rooms. Herzog wrote summaries of the findings, including evaluations of the leanings of each of the committee members.[28] The Zionists spared no expense in this work, placing funds that had not originally been allocated for the purpose into a special bank account that was used to pay the costs.[29]

The Arabs had no less clear a goal than the Jews did. But, unlike the Zionists, who opted to focus on making realistic demands—that is, partition—the

Arabs would not budge from their claim that the whole country was theirs. Their refusal to consider any sort of accommodation with the Jews and to pursue a more rational policy was only part of the Arab camp's problem. They lacked any confidence in UNSCOP and dismissed the importance of the results of the inquiry. Furthermore, the Palestinian Arab leadership was weak and not on speaking terms with the leaders of the Arab countries.

The Arabs lost no time in vilifying UNSCOP. They declared that it had Zionist sympathies from the start, a claim that they did not mean to be simply a starting position for a bargaining process. The Arabs were still in shock from the publicity that the Zionist cause had received in New York and from the success Zionist diplomacy had scored during the special General Assembly session. As such, they believed that the results of the inquiry were preordained. While the claim was fundamentally wrong, it was the common wisdom among both the Palestinian Arab leadership and leaders of the Arab League countries. Having already despaired, the fervor and energy they had displayed during the special session dissolved just when they were needed most and could affect the results. They made accusations against the members of the committee (with the exception of the Indian and Iranian representatives), but principally against the United States, which they saw as transparently pro-Zionist. As the Arabs saw it, the Americans controlled the committee, and as such the battle was lost from the start.[30]

Beyond this, the Arabs also presumed that, when all was said and done, the status of Palestine would not change and it would remain under British rule. In their evaluation, the British wanted to stay and had the political will and power to do so. In other words, however pro-Zionist the UNSCOP report might turn out to be, in the end it would make no difference.[31] The Arab approach was also impaired by divisions and contradictory approaches among the Arab states, and all the more so between them and Mufti Hajj Amin al-Ḥussaynī, who headed the Arab Higher Committee. All of al-Ḥussaynī's attention was taken up by his battle with the Arab states over who had custodianship over the Palestinian issue, and with his personal rivalries with other figures in the Arab world and in the Palestinian community.[32] For al-Ḥussaynī, who had fled Palestine when the British sought his arrest in 1937 and was now living in Egypt, UNSCOP was a golden opportunity to demonstrate to his detractors how much power he wielded on his home turf, and he jumped on it. From the time he preempted the Arab members of the UN, his allies in the political battle at the special session, by announcing that he would boycott the committee, the mufti did not coordinate his moves with the Arab states and operated in a manner diametrically opposed to their policies.

Unlike previous commissions that had studied the Palestine issue, which treated the Arab states as parties to the conflict, UNSCOP focused on Palestine itself, and thus sought to engage the body that claimed to represent all the country's Arabs—the Arab Higher Committee.[33] This approach relieved the Arab countries, for a time, of the burden of conducting the diplomatic battle. As the British and Jews completed their practical preparations for UNSCOP's

arrival in Palestine, the Arab representatives who had worked together at the UN went home, each to his own country, leaving the mufti to handle the rest. Izzat Darwaza, a member of the Arab Higher Committee, recounted that when that body convened in Cairo, where the mufti was residing, to discuss preparations for UNSCOP's work, the atmosphere was chaotic and disrespectful. Meetings regularly began much later than scheduled because they had to wait for the mufti, who then proceeded to address minor matters. Suspicious and concerned with maintaining his prestige, al-Ḥussaynī devoted most of the discussions to neutralizing other Arab figures, often even when it was clear that doing so would come at the expense of furthering the Palestinian cause. Darwaza, who futilely and at length argued with al-Ḥussaynī, resigned from the Arab Higher Committee in June 1947, at the height of UNSCOP's work, feeling resentful and hurt.[34] The Arab Higher Committee in Palestine was also in a bad state.

In fact, only three members of the Arab Higher Committee, Jamal al-Ḥussaynī, Ḥussayn al-Khalidi, and Aḥmad Ḥilmī Pāṣā, remained in Palestine to greet UNSCOP, and the first of them left the country soon after the committee's arrival. In his memoirs, Aḥmad Farāj Tāyiʿ, the Egyptian consul in Jerusalem, termed the conduct of the senior members of the Arab Higher Committee "the great crime."[35]

A Cold British Shoulder and the Shadow of the Gallows

The first group of UNSCOP members landed at the airport in Lydda (Lod) on June 15, led by its chairman, Emil Sandström. He offered calm responses to the questions fired at him by the drove of journalists who surrounded him. While the Arab boycott was a matter of concern, he remained optimistic and hoped that it could be dealt with quickly.[36] In the days that followed, the problem of the Arab position, which was expected to be the major obstacle the committee faced during the initial stage of its inquiry, would be shunted aside by difficulties resulting from the charged relations between Britain and the Yishuv.

According to the general contours of the inquiry laid out at the committee's final meeting in New York, the visit to Palestine would open with hearing brief "factual" testimony on the Mandate from the British hosts, after which the Jews and Arabs would be allowed to respond. This stage was meant to provide preliminary background and serve as a kind of initiation for the committee. The purpose was to form a direct impression of the country and its inhabitants.[37]

But the committee's hope that it could suffice with a formal opening hearing quickly proved illusory (see Figure 3.1). Two weeks prior to its arrival, Cunningham informed the Colonial Office that he insisted that the British testimonies be heard behind closed doors, without the presence of the liaison officers or any other representatives of the Jews or the Arabs. The high commissioner also insisted that the substance of the testimonies remain secret,



Figure 3.1 UNSCOP arrives in Jerusalem, June 1947. From right to left: the Canadian representative Ivan Rand (wearing glasses); the chairman, the Swedish representative Emil Sandström; the deputy chairman, Paul Mohn; the Uruguayan representative, Enrique Fabregat; and the Venkata Viswanathan, the alternate Indian representative.

Source: Central Zionist Archives.

and not provided to either the Jewish Agency or the Arab Higher Committee. He said this was necessary "on security grounds," without offering any details or explaining the concern that was the basis for this prohibition.[38]

The committee's members learned of the British demands through reports in the local press, which depicted them as orders that UNSCOP had no choice but to accept. In fact, the British had conveyed their demands to the committee chairman, who assented to them without consulting his colleagues. At the committee's first working meeting in Palestine, Sandström explained to his fellow-members that the situation was so tense in Palestine that the British were concerned that the lives of government officials who testified before the committee would be at risk if their testimony were made public.[39]

The other members had trouble with the demand. They feared that British *in camera* testimony at the start of the inquiry would be seen by the public as preferable treatment for the British, and thus be detrimental to the committee's credibility. Some of them believed that the British invocation of security reasons was just an excuse aimed at making it possible for its officials to testify without having to face the press or Jewish and Arab critiques. A long debate ensued over whether the meeting should be open or closed. It was important because it would establish the future relationship between UNSCOP and the British, who had asked for the inquiry. The dilemma was not an easy one. The committee wanted to present itself as independent and unbiased, and to show that it could conduct an objective investigation without constant fear of the British response. Yet it was important to have the cooperation of the Mandate

administration, and anything that might interfere with that could well pull the carpet out from under the committee's work. But another factor in the debate was the pro or anti-British bias of certain members of the committee, clearly evident in their arguments, which made it harder to find a solution to an already complex situation.

Sandström, who for some reason thought that, using security as an excuse, he could agree on the terms with the Mandate administration and then simply bring it before the committee to be ratified, was taken aback by the ferociousness of the opposition to his act. To resolve the issue, he proposed that, instead of hearing the British testimony at a closed official meeting, the committee do so in informal talks with the British. This, he suggested, would avert damage to the committee's reputation while giving the British the cover they demanded.[40] The concept of non-formal channels was one that UNSCOP's chairman had a penchant for—he evoked it, over the course of the inquiry, in a variety of circumstances, using it with the consent of his colleagues or without notifying them. Indeed, a day before the committee met, Sandström had, at his own initiative, approached Henry Gurney, the chief secretary of the Palestine government, seeking to put in place just such a back channel.[41] He now tried to find allies in the committee for such an arrangement.

In contrast, Granados and Jože Brilej of Yugoslavia insisted that the British testimony be heard publicly. Brilej warned that the committee would lose the confidence of the public if it gave in to the British demand, but most of the members were unwilling to confront the British on the security issue and preferred criticism to going head-to-head with the British. Karel Lisicky of Czechoslovakia and Ivan Rand of Canada maintained that the British request could not be rejected, while John Hood of Australia explained that there were special reasons that trumped the principle of open proceedings, as important as it was. The British are our hosts and we are its guests, the Australian representative reminded his colleagues. He proposed informing the press that the Palestine government's testimony would be heard in a closed session because of the security situation, but that there was no intention to receive from the government secrets that could not be revealed publicly. In the end, the committee accepted Hood's formulation.[42]

The British took no notice of UNSCOP's qualms. It was clear to them that the committee would not dare defy them. In his report to London, Gurney simply remarked on the fact that the committee conducted an exhausting meeting and that "there was general confusion and uncertainty." Amused by his meeting with Sandström, Gurney wrote that the committee expected the British to help them, but that "I do not see how they are going to do it in so short a time." He ended his letter with a reference to Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*: "When I had talked to them for three hours, I was reminded of the verse in the Snark which begins: 'The indictment had never been clearly expressed'." The last two lines of that verse are: "And had spoken three hours, before any one guessed / What the pig was supposed to have

done." The British continued to act as if they had more urgent things to attend to.[43]

Shertok protested that the Jewish Agency's liaison officer hardly presented a security hazard, but for naught. The committee invited Gurney to give his opening testimony behind closed doors and without providing any account of what he said.[44] Gurney, who one historian has described as "the archetypal British colonial official" was a restrained and condescending man.[45] His testimony was dry and didactic. The Indian, Yugoslavian, and Guatemalan representatives interrupted him with questions. They were astonished by the huge amounts of money wasted on routine security and wondered why so little was allocated for education and health. Granados wrote that Gurney displayed "a strong sense of superiority concealed under an icy courtesy" and answered questions "in an almost contemptuous drawl."[46] The meeting left Gurney with a bad feeling. Most of the committee's members had not expected their colleagues to bombard the chief secretary with questions and criticisms, and their silence, which Gurney interpreted as assent, gave him a negative impression of the committee as a whole and its attitude toward the British.[47]

The words "security grounds" became a fixture of the committee's work. Most of the members complied with the British demands in this regard, but in some cases the Mandate administration eased up its requirements and changed rules in the wake of consultations between the committee staff and the police.[48] It later turned out that the requirements the British dictated, some of which look inflated and unnecessary, were approved in a rush and without qualification by Bernard Alexander, UNSCOP's administrative officer, who had long served as a British army officer before moving to the UN. In a memorandum to Lie following UNSCOP's trip, Hoo criticized Alexander for "believing that the whole committee had to abide by whatever the administrative officer had taken." Alexander also aroused the ire of his UN colleagues when he showed up at a British army party in Jerusalem in his military uniform.[49]

But the greatest pall over the committee's relations with the British during the initial weeks of the inquiry was cast by the death sentences a Mandate court meted out to three Etzel operatives on the same day that UNSCOP held its first meeting in Palestine. The sentences created a grim atmosphere, and no doubt was one cause of the committee's indignant attitude toward Gurney. The discomfiture that the sentences caused the committee's members was redoubled by a call from the UN to Palestine's inhabitants to refrain from any action or use of force that might affect the atmosphere in the country and interfere with the inquiry.[50] The British had asked the UN to issue the plea, in the hope that it would encourage calm, so the death sentence, which seemed likely to fan the flames of violence, caught UNSCOP by surprise.

The Jewish Agency interpreted the sentence, which could only elicit a harsh response from Etzel, as a deliberate British attempt to torpedo the inquiry. The Mandate regime was indeed well aware that that the sentence would most likely spark violence. Gurney had said as much during the trial to senior

officials in the Palestine government at a meeting to discuss security measures for the judges in the case. He stressed that the trial should be concluded before the committee's arrival in Palestine. But the administration's decision makers were certain, without having given sufficient thought to the consequences, that the battle against Etzel and Lehi took precedence over whatever damage the judgment would cause to UNSCOP's work.[51]

But the British were not the only ones to blame for the fact that the sentence was handed down on the opening day of the committee's work in Palestine. Yitzhak Gurion, Etzel's liaison with the attorneys for the accused, wrote in his memoirs that his organization had worked to synchronize the dates of the trial with UNSCOP's arrival. The cook at the prison in Jerusalem, who was himself a member of Eztel, served the prisoners tea laced with tobacco, which caused one of them to become feverish. A government doctor who examined the ill man had no choice but to find that the man could not appear in court for a few days, delaying the sentencing for all three of them. Etzel's leadership presumed that the British authorities would prefer to put off the sentencing until after UNSCOP left, or that they would be deterred from handing down a death sentence.[52]

But the trial was not a matter of no consequence to the British. The three accused men, along with another two sentenced to life in prison by a military court, had been caught while breaking into the Acre prison during the special session of the UN General Assembly. The daring and audacity of the operation was widely covered in the press in Britain and the USA. The British apprehended the perpetrators, and were determined that the full force of the law would be used against them.[53]

The blaring headlines in the local press and the Jewish Agency's declaration that "the committee is beginning its work in the shadow of the gallows" disconcerted UNSCOP's members.[54] While their initial hopes that the men's lives would be spared were dashed, Etzel and others continued to do all they could to impel UNSCOP to intervene. The committee's members received a flood of requests urging them to speak to the British authorities about the condemned men. The men's parents and families sent a letter to the committee beseeching it to ask the British to reduce the sentence.[55]

The letter was addressed personally to Sandström, who decided not to bring it up for discussion in the committee. But he told Granados, who had asked him about it, that he intended to discuss the subject informally with the British. Granados agreed to the suggestion. He himself viewed the sentence as a message to UNSCOP: "Once and for all, gentlemen of the United Nations: *we* are the masters of the house here." He took advantage of the reception organized by the government of Palestine for the committee to bring up the subject with Gordon MacMillan, the commander of the British army in Palestine. The two spoke at length but with no result.[56]

Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, who also attended the reception, entreated Sandström to intervene. Sandström was evasive, responding that it was not the appropriate place to discuss the issue. But, following the pressure, he

decided to convene the committee that same night to discuss the matter.[57] Exceptionally, he invited the members to his own room and asked that only the conclusion they reached be recorded. He presented the letter he had received from the families of the condemned men and said that his position was that the committee should not get involved, because it lay outside its purview. Some of the other members protested. Sandström himself admitted that he agreed that the men's execution would have "a bad effect" on the committee's work, but he and other members nevertheless insisted that "it was not within the competence of the committee to interfere in this matter."[58]

The committee members were divided. Lisicky and Fabregat, the Uruguayan representative, allied themselves with the Yugoslavian and Guatemalan delegates, who demanded intervention.[59] Lisicky, who endeavored to take a moderate line with the British, was under pressure from Czechoslovakian Jews who now lived in Palestine—a community to which one of the condemned men belonged. This group also sent urgent messages to the country's foreign minister, Jan Masaryk, and to its president, Edvard Beneš.[60] Rahman, of India, who made a name for himself in the early days of the inquiry as a person who gave the British no quarter, changed his stripes when the action at hand would benefit the Jews. He maintained, along with his Australian and Canadian colleagues, that the committee should not intervene and that the British should be left to handle their own affairs.[61] The debate regarding the death sentences and its implications for the inquiry grew fraught and stretched out to cover full meetings. Some of the members warned that any involvement would place the committee in the midst of a vicious circle of violence, cause a serious rift with the British, and alienate the Arabs. Others maintained that the committee would find it difficult to conduct an inquiry in complete disregard for what was happening around it. Anger over the timing and the conduct of the British intensified. The wording of the appeal sent out by the UN prior to the inquiry, "to refrain from the use of force or the threat of it, and from any other action liable to create an atmosphere that will interfere with the conduct of the inquiry," was quoted and dissected by those who condemned the British action. It was clear to everyone from the start that the call had been directed at the Jewish side, but that the first to act counter to it had been the British. The advocates of intervention also underlined the humanitarian aspects of the issue, claiming that, as representatives of the United Nations, they needed to be all the more attentive to such cases.[62]

In the end they agreed (with the Indian, Canadian, and Dutch representatives voting against and the Australian and Iranian representatives abstaining) to send a message to the UN Secretary-General Lie expressing "concern" about the consequences of carrying out the sentence.[63] It stated explicitly that the sentencing was held on the committee's first day of work in Palestine, and it attached the letter from the families of the condemned men. It asked Lie to serve as an arbitrator, and to convey the message to the British government. The committee subsequently sent a letter to the families informing that,

despite the matter being outside its purview, it had decided to bring it before the appropriate people.[64]

Hood, who had emphatically opposed any involvement, sent the Australian Foreign Ministry an angry report, including his impression that UNSCOP's chairman had handled the matter badly. He argued that most members of the committee believed that it was wrong to get involved, but that the resolution finally adopted was a compromise that Sandström had supported so as to avoid a public rift in the committee, and out of a desire to project an image of unity, at least outside the committee.[65]

As the committee had expected, the Mandate government's response was swift. Gurney, who refused to wait for the request to reach him via the UN, sent the committee a message arguing that the matter was *sub judice*, since the sentences had not yet been given final approval; the committee's request was thus out of place. He also rejected the claim that the sentencing had been deliberately timed to coincide with UNSCOP's arrival in Palestine.[66] Basing himself on a conversation with Gurney, Robert Macatee, the American consul in Jerusalem, reported that the British viewed UNSCOP's letter to the UN as a slap in the face.[67]

A few of the committee members expressed their displeasure with Gurney's answer, and demanded that the committee respond to his letter.[68] UNSCOP might well have wasted more time on the issue had another event not provided the members with food for thought. Terror acts had up to this point appeared only in British reports, but it now made itself felt to the committee itself. Several masked men, apparently Etzel operatives who wanted to abduct British officers to use as bargaining chips to obtain the release of the three condemned men, attempted to abduct the deputy British liaison officer to UNSCOP, Alan Major, on a Jerusalem street. The abductors struck Major on the head with a hammer, but were forced to let him go when he fought back and when his wife's screams alerted passersby.[69]

The shocked members of the committee convened for an urgent meeting, Now, Hood wrote, some of the members regretted their appeal to the British on behalf of the Etzel operatives.[70] Indeed, the two meetings that addressed the incident were important milestones for UNSCOP. At the center of the discussions was the intention to issue a fierce condemnation of the attack on Major. Sandström himself drafted the document, and asked the members to approve it. According to Macatee, now that the committee had sought to help the Jews and received an attempted kidnapping in return, it quickly turned to the other side.[71]

Tempers were high. Salazar, of Peru, put the feelings of most of the members into words when he demanded that the statement make it clear that the committee was placing the terrorist act—the attempted kidnapping—and the British death sentences "on the same plane." To bring this point home, Salazar suggested "condemning without qualification the criminal acts committed," so as to distinguish the previously published statement from the new one. Granados sharply objected to such a condemnation and the comparison

between the statement on the death sentences and that which would be issued in the wake of the kidnapping attempt. Equating them bothered most of the members, especially after the Guatemalan member countered that they had all lauded and admired the underground partisans who attacked the Nazis in their fight for their homelands. The members of the Jewish underground were fighting for the same goal, he maintained.[72]

Realizing that there was no further way of bridging over their disagreements, the members stopped compromising. The statement issued to the press about violent acts was harsher and clearer than its predecessor.[73] Major, who had suffered mild injuries in the abduction attempt, received a personal note from Sandström expressing regret at the incident.[74] Hood believed that the incident had had a significant effect on the committee, and that the rift among its members, apparent from the start, was now irreparable. After seven meetings, most of the members sensed that the primary goal of a minority of their colleagues was to use the committee to bash the British.[75] Salazar told Granados that "this is the last time you will slap England with my hand."[76]

Macatee said that, during the committee's first two weeks, it experienced "bewilderment at the maelstrom" into which it had been sucked.[77] And it was certainly true that, in the meantime, the committee did not have much to show. It had produced little work because of the time it devoted to pointless debate. Worse still, it had alienated its British hosts. While the British were undoubtedly to blame in part for that, UNSCOP's members realized that they could not claim innocence. Hood implicated "some members, notably Yugoslavia, Uruguay, and Guatemala," who made an "ill-advised attempt to interfere with the local administration of justice," thus complicating the committee's work. He also noted the lack of a "clear or positive plan."[78] Another explanation that Hood offered was the lack of a clear policy that laid out whether and to what extent it should respond to the hundreds of requests for intervention sent to it by civilians, organizations, and movements. To the same end of streamlining the investigation, the committee accepted the official reply the British envoy to the UN made to its appeal to the international organization about the convicted men. The reply repeated what Gurney had said, and stated that the death sentence was part of the judicial process in Palestine. The committee discussed it briefly and resolved that there was no need to address the matter further.[79] When Etzel sent a sharply-worded letter to the committee after the death sentences had been confirmed, the committee did not even reply.[80]

The committee's members recognized that there was no hope of crafting a united front. That being the case, they now acted as individuals, with much more freedom. The British quickly caught on to this, distinguishing between the committee's members in general and the trouble-makers—the members from Guatemala and Uruguay, along with the two Yugoslavians. Later this approach improved relations between the British and UNSCOP. MacGillivray was thus able to write, after the issue was talked through over dinner by General MacMillan and Sandström, that "the letter to the secretary-general

did not impinge on the warm relations between the government officers and the members of the committee." Sandström even feigned that "he did not know that the subject was still considered *sub judice*."[81]

In fact, Sandström seems to have held the opposite view. Right at the start of the affair he had taken upon himself to intervene, and he believed that he had succeeded in deterring the British. After speaking to the high commissioner, he told the committee that his sense was that the death sentences would not be carried out during the committee's stay in Palestine.[82] At another juncture, he said in a private conversation that the three condemned men would not be executed. Later, during the committee's visit to the Galilee, he slipped away from his colleagues to visit the three men at the Acre prison, speaking to them for about forty minutes.[83] Presumably, he hoped that the British would show respect for the committee, and for him personally, by pardoning the three men. When the sentences were confirmed, however, putting paid his hopes, he sent a personal message to the high commissioner stating that he fully understood that the decision was a part of the task the country had taken upon itself in Palestine, and that "he in no way regarded it as an affront to the committee." Nevertheless, he expressed his hope that the sentence would not be carried out during the committee's sojourn in the country.[84]

The British, who could have procured the committee's favor with a pardon, did not do so. While they did wait for UNSCOP to leave before carrying out the sentence, they did so while it was still deliberating on its recommendations. At the end of the first stretch of their inquiry, following some creaks and screeches, UNSCOP's members realized that, while the British had initiated the inquiry and would bear the brunt of its outcome, they would not go out of their way to help the committee. Instead, they would adhere to their policy in Palestine even if it were detrimental to the inquiry.

The Arab Boycott

The committee was surprised by the difficulties it had with the British. That its relations with the Arabs would be fraught was, however, known in advance. Indeed, the Arabs' hostility only increased as the inquiry progressed. The Arab Higher Committee had declared at the end of the special General Assembly session that it would boycott UNSCOP. But the committee's members seem, because of its timing and for other reasons detailed below, to have taken that as no more than grandstanding. The boycott declaration sounded much like the empty one that had been declared against the Anglo-American Committee, after which the Arabs deigned to testify before that panel. The assumption was that the same would happen this time. On top of that, UNSCOP received conflicting reports on the Arabs' intentions, which led it to believe that the boycott would either be revoked or circumvented by means of covert discussions. In the event, however, the Arabs stood fast to their boycott throughout the committee's work. It was violated only rarely, generally at the initiative of individuals.

This view of the Arabs' true intentions was also bolstered by the policy adopted by the Arab delegations at the end of the special session. Its essence was that the Arabs would carry on their campaign in the framework of the UN, out of confidence in the organization and its institutions. The decision to do so was then ratified by the Arab League. The members of UNSCOP thus had reason to hope that the leaders of the League's member states would be able to sway Palestine's Arabs to cooperate with the committee. UNSCOP, as a result, made many but ultimately futile efforts in this direction.[85]

The situation in Palestine was also deceptive prior to the committee's arrival. There were Arab voices calling to appear before the committee, and public assemblies opposing a boycott were organized. Some of the participants in a meeting of Arab mayors held in Ramla at the initiative of the Arab Higher Committee initially refused to endorse the boycott, but in the end they were pressured into doing so.[86] Opponents of a boycott raised their voices in the Arab press, and some of the Arab newspapers came out explicitly against it and questioned the reasons that had been given in support of non-cooperation.[87]

Macatee, the US consul, received a visit from Dr. Izzat Tannous after UNSCOP had held its initial meetings in New York. Tannous, a well-known political figure, claimed that he had been sent by the Arab Higher Committee to speak about the implications of boycotting UNSCOP. He claimed that the leadership of the Palestinian Arabs had not yet made a final decision about UNSCOP.[88] Macatee reported that, after the Arab Higher Committee officially declared its boycott, it was difficult to enlist support for the inquiry among Palestine's Arabs, and that so far his attempts at persuasion had been fruitless. Indeed, *Filasṭīn* reported at the time that, according to Jamal al-Ḥussaynī, an official decision to boycott UNSCOP had yet to be declared, and that a decision would be made only when the Arab Higher Committee convened on June 15, a day before UNSCOP's arrival in Palestine.[89]

In fact, the Arab Higher Committee had no hesitations about boycotting UNSCOP. The mufti sent out envoys to ensure a chilly reception for the committee when it arrived, declaring a commercial strike on June 16. Compliance was overwhelming; the strike was also observed in some neighboring Arab countries, in support of the Palestinian Arabs. The Arab Higher Committee thus passed the first test of its powers with flying colors. The support was especially notable given the previous opposition to the boycott, and demonstrated the authority wielded by the mufti.[90] This initial success whetted the appetite for continuing the boycott.

A cable sent by Hoo asking for the name of the Arab Higher Committee's liaison officer received no reply.[91] Instead, Jamal al-Ḥussaynī sent his own cable to Secretary General Lie, notifying him officially that, "after thoroughly studying" the circumstances under which UNSCOP was formed, the Arab Higher Committee had resolved not to cooperate and would not appear before it. Several reasons were offered, beginning with the refusal of the special session of the General Assembly to take up the termination of

the Mandate and to declare Palestine's immediate independence, or at least to include such a clause in UNSCOP's letter of authority. He also cited the passage in the letter of authority that stated that the inquiry should consider "world religious interests" in Palestine, despite the fact that it was clear, so al-Ḥussaynī maintained, that what was at stake was the "natural rights" of the Palestinian Arabs. Another charge was the UN's "failure [to] detach Jewish world refugees from [the] Palestine problem." The cable ended by repudiating the inquiry, as Arab rights "cannot continue to be subject to investigation but deserve to be recognized on the basis of [the] principles of [the] United Nations Charter."[92]

The Arab Higher Committee claimed, in leaflets and newspaper advertisements, that the boycott decision had been made at a meeting that took place in Cairo on June 8, in keeping with the resolutions passed by the Arab League's Political Committee on April 17, prior to the special session of the General Assembly, which opposed the establishment of a UN commission of inquiry.[93] Attributing the boycott to the Arab League was meant to embarrass the Arab states, which had previously declared a tough line that they were now trying to abandon.

The cable conveyed to UNSCOP and the newspaper advertisements offered the official reasons for refusing to cooperate with UNSCOP. More substantive explanations were conveyed through other channels. Fāris al-Khūrī, Syria's envoy to the UN and a fervent advocate of boycotting UNSCOP (as opposed to the position taken by his Arab colleagues at the international organization) convened in Jerusalem, along with Jamal al-Ḥussaynī, a meeting of the local Palestinian leadership, where additional reasons for the boycott were offered. The two men claimed that the formation of UNSCOP was part of a delaying action being pursued by Britain and the US with regard to Arab affairs, and that the composition of the panel discriminated against the Arabs. Most of the countries represented on it, they said, "in direct relations with Jews, Americans, and British whose sentiments toward Arabs [are] well known [sic]." But the most stunning revelation came when al-Ḥussaynī told his audience of a communication he had received from New York stating that UNSCOP had already formulated its position. He claimed that Osvaldo Aranha, the Brazilian chairman of the special session, told the Arab delegations that, that his government and those of the United States and Britain had already decided on partition, rendering the inquiry moot.[94] There is no way of knowing whether Aranha actually said this to al-Ḥussaynī, but the latter certainly believed that the inquiry was a charade, and its outcome predetermined. Mufti al-Ḥussaynī, in Cairo told the Palestinian Arab journalist Nasser Eddin Nashāshībī to convey to the Arab leadership in Palestine that it was all "'a conspiracy', and that all [UNSCOP's] members were pro-Zionist, 'who would be deciding only what the Jews of New York and Palestine wanted'."[95]

Attentive to the Arabs' claims and seeking to clear its name, UNSCOP, in a radio broadcast on the day of its arrival in Palestine, called on the Arabs

to cooperate. In the broadcast, Chairman Sandström refuted the accusations that the committee was not objective.[96] He also sought to speak personally with Jamal al-Ḥussaynī, but to no avail. Al-Ḥussaynī refused to take his calls and rejected overtures from the Swedish consul, who tried to arrange a meeting between the two.[97]

Arab journalists conspicuously absented themselves from the party that welcomed UNSCOP at the airport. When members of the committee encountered Arabs at cafés or on the street, the Arabs avoided having any contact with them.[98] All this showed that the boycott was being observed to the letter, in accordance with the very clear instructions provided to the Palestinian Arab press, over the signature of Jamal al-Ḥussaynī. Beyond the blanket prohibition against oral or written testimony, a range of measures aimed to isolate UNSCOP from local Arabs, who were warned against any contact with the committee's members. Further directives were aimed at isolating the Arabs from everything the committee did, so as to demonstrate that they were completely disregarding it. Arabs were forbidden to attend the committee's public meetings, and Arab journalists were ordered not to publish reports or photographs of the committee, except for the statements issued by the Arab Higher Committee on the subject.[99]

UNSCOP's third meeting in Palestine addressed the Arab boycott. The Indian and Iranian representatives, along with the chairman, maintained that the boycott would not last long, and hoped to conduct secret meetings with members of the Arab Higher Committee. Opposing them was the Yugoslavian delegate, Vladimir Simic, who took the minority view that the secret channel would not work and that the boycott would be maintained.[100] Simic based his stand on his delegation's contacts with Palestine's Arab Communities, whose party, the National Liberation League, led the opposition to the boycott. The League decided, on June 8, to appear before UNSCOP despite the ban. Its leader, Emile Touma, conveyed the decision to Jamal al-Ḥussaynī, who physically threatened Touma and persuaded him to retract the decision and to demand that his colleagues comply with the boycott.[101]

Jewish Agency officials were of the opinion that the boycott was a tactical move coordinated with the Arab states. On this account, the Palestinian Arabs would put on a show of being insulted and angry, while the Arab states spoke for them before UNSCOP. In this way the interests of the local Arabs would not be disregarded; on the contrary, they would have a stronger voice.[102] Other Zionists maintained that the British were behind the boycott. The argument was that the British, seeking to maintain their rule in Palestine, knew that UNSCOP's work would be worthless if it were accomplished without testimony from the country's Arabs, and were thus seeking to sabotage the committee by encouraging the Arabs to boycott it.[103]

In fact, the British believed that the boycott was "folly" and sought to persuade the Arabs to end it. Beeley, Bevin's adviser, tried to achieve this by talking to the Arabs in New York, while in Palestine, High Commissioner Cunningham asked Jamal al-Ḥussaynī not to put the boycott into effect.

Cunningham told al-Ḥussaynī that the Arabs had a fair chance to present their case; if they missed it, they would arrive at the General Assembly session in the autumn in a weak position. Cunningham's arguments were shared with his British colleagues throughout the Middle East and conveyed by the latter to the leaders of the Arab states.[104] The Americans also believed that the boycott was a gross error, and said as much to the Arabs. None of this helped. The Arabs did not budge.[105]

There was, in fact, no basis in reality for the claim that the boycott was a shrewd plan coordinated between the Palestinian Arab leadership and their counterparts in the Arab states. Indeed, the boycott was a sign that relations between the Palestinian Arab leadership and the leaders of the Arab states had reached a new low. The latter realized that the boycott was a mistake that the Palestinians would pay for dearly, but preferred, despite the British and American warnings and the reports they received from their own consuls in Jerusalem, to disregard it during the early stage of the inquiry.[106]

To display his power, the mufti had to overwhelm not just the Communists but also the Ḥussaynī clan's traditional rivals in the Palestine theater, the Nashāshībī family. Some of the latter were more flexible and willing to compromise than the mufti was,[107] but their voice was not heard. In the end, throughout the inquiry not a single Palestinian Arab voice appeared as an alternative to the mufti. During the inquiry, the Arab Higher Committee worked hard to enforce the ban. This included sending leaders of the internal opposition to warn and threaten anyone suspected of violating the ban and to prevent any of them from claiming that the Arab Higher Committee did not represent them.[108] The Arab Higher Committee also organized four large rallies aimed at putting its power on display, both for internal political purposes and for the Arab states and UNSCOP.

The high point of these rallies was an assembly held in Jerusalem on July 6, attended by, according to Darwazza, some 3,000 people. In Arab histories it is referred to as "the Arab testimony" to the commission of inquiry, hence its importance. It was conducted by Jamal al-Ḥussaynī, and its pivotal point was the public reading of a letter in which the mufti demanded categorically that the UN and the British grant immediate recognition to the rights of the Arabs, "who are prepared to bear many sacrifices on the road to defending the homeland."[109] More explicit threats against the committee were voiced at other junctures, pledging an armed uprising if UNSCOP recommended partition. In the interests of creating a united front, the Arab Higher Committee also sought to conciliate and mollify its opponents in the Palestinian Arab camp.[110] Jamal al-Ḥussaynī claimed that the unified front was proof that Palestine's Arabs were worthy of political independence.[111]

The Arab adherence to the boycott made no dent on UNSCOP's conviction that they would soon begin to cooperate. Its members hoped that during their trips around the country they would be able to speak with Arabs who were afraid to appear at the formal sessions. The Iranian and Indian members were assigned the task of dealing with the boycott and conducting contacts with

the Arab Higher Committee, but following nearly a month of futile attempts, they admitted defeat. UNSCOP thus conducted its inquiry while at odds with the British and without any communication with the Arabs.

In the meantime, UNSCOP got on its feet. It conducted its hearings and established its offices in the YMCA building in Jerusalem, where the Anglo-American Committee had also conducted its work. The "library," that is the written material on Palestine that the UN put together for it, was housed in a large room and was soon augmented by memoranda, maps, and publications that were collected and catalogued for the members of the committee. They also enjoyed the services of a private post office and dedicated telephone lines installed for their benefit.[112] The members of the committee were housed in Beit Kadima, a newly-constructed apartment hotel in the nearby Rehavia neighborhood. Their living conditions, they could say with satisfaction, were better than they had expected. The British decided on these lodgings because the hotel was relatively isolated and thus relatively easy to secure. The Palestine government also helped the UN recruit a staff to serve UNSCOP from among its own employees. An effort was made to employ equal numbers of Jews and Arabs. Most of the Arab civil servants who were approached turned down the job, but in the end a few Arabs were found who agreed to work with the committee despite the Arab Higher Committee's threats.[113] A fleet of some thirty automobiles was placed at the service of UNSCOP's members and staff. Painted black, they were given special license plates emblazoned in large letters with "The United Nations." They could be identified from far off.

Notes

1 UNA S-611-1, Lie to Cadogan, June 6, 1947.
2 Cohen, "Mediniyut Britaniyah," pp. 80–85; Cohen, *Britain's Moment*, p. 478.
3 *UNSCOP Report*, p. 12. The request was sent to Secretary-General Lie, who circulated it to the member states.
4 TNA CO 537/2335, Cunningham to CO, April 4, 1947.
5 TNA CO 537/2336, Cunningham to CO, May 17, 1947.
6 TNA CO 537/2336, Cunningham to CO, May 7, 1947.
7 TNA CO 537/2336, Martin to Lloyd, May 1, 1947; Cadogan to High Commissioner Jerusalem, May 10, 1947.
8 TNA FO 371/61799, Cadogan to FO, May 29, 1947; Cadogan to FO, May 28, 1947; NA 867.01/6-1147, Galiman to S/S, June 11, 1947.
9 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 141.
10 Cohen, "Mediniyut Britaniyah," pp. 37–38; TNA FO 371/61875, FO to Cairo, April 16, 1947; FO 371/61774, FO to Cadogan, April 29, 1947.
11 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 6, 9, 13, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, April 11, 1947.
12 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 2, 11, 1947; TNA CO 537/2335, Cunningham to CO, April 4, 1947.

13 UUL Mohn papers, Box 14, "Working Paper No. 3 Prepared by the Secretariat for the preparatory working group on the Special Committee on Palestine."
14 TNA FO 371/61799, Cadogan to FO, May 28, 1947.
15 Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*, Princeton, NJ: 1982, p. 263.
16 TNA CO 537/2335, Lloyd to Cunningham, April 10, 1947.
17 TNA CO 537/2335, Cunningham to CO, April 17, 1947.
18 MEC MacGillivray papers, MacGillivray to Cunningham, December 5, 1947.
19 MEC MacGillivray papers, MacGillivray Diary, 1945.
20 Itzhak Galnoor, *The Partition of Palestine: Decision Crossroads in the Zionist Movement*, Albany, 1994, pp. 279–283. In fact, some Zionist leaders, Chaim Weizmann most importantly, had supported partition years before the Peel Commission's decisions. See Motti Golani, " 'The Meat and the Bones': Reassessing the Origins of the Partition of Mandate Palestine," in Arie Dubnov and Laura Robson (eds.), *Partitions: A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism*, Stanford, 2018, pp. 85–108.
21 Freundlich, *Mi-Ḥurban li-Tekumah*, p. 105; OHD 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, 1993.
22 Eban, *Autobiography*, p. 76.
23 ISA 93/חצ/2269/22; Lourie to Robles, May 27, 1947; CZA S25/5380, Shertok to Hoo, June 16, 1947; UNA S-611-4, Alexander to Lourie, May 28, 1947.
24 Eban, *Autobiography*, p. 81. On Tov's contribution, see also Benno Weiser Varon, "The Latin American Contribution to the U.N. Palestine Partition Resolution and the Individuals behind It," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 2 (1989), pp. 536–542.
25 Sheffer, *Moshe Sharett*, p. 235.
26 CZA S25/5375, Eytan to Myerson, May 21, 1947.
27 CZA S25/5375, Eytan memorandum, May 16, 1947; OHD 58(155), interview with Walter Eytan, 1991.
28 Chaim Herzog, *Derekh Ḥayim*, Tel Aviv: 1997, p. 107.
29 CZA S25/5370, Eytan to Shertok, June 23, 1947, Eytan report, May 11, 1947.
30 Muḥammad Fāḍil al-Jamāli, *Dhikrayāt wa-ʿibr*, Beirut: 1965, p. 78; al-Ghouri, *Al-Muʾamarah*, p. 191–194; HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 19, 1947; NA 867N.01/6-1047, Wadsworth to S/S, June 10, 1947; NA 867N.01/5-2347, Moose to S/S, May 23, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Sinclaire to Bromley, May 28, 1947.
31 Eliahu Elath, *Ha-Maʾavak ʿal ha-Medinah: Washington, 1945–1948*, Tel Aviv: 1979, p. 132.
32 Zvi Elpeleg, *Ha-Mufti ha-Gadol*, Tel Aviv: 1989, p. 84; Walid Khalidi, "The Arab Perspective," in William Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey (eds.), *The End of the Palestine Mandate*, London: 1986, p. 112.
33 UNA S-608-1, 5th Meeting, June 16, 1947.
34 Muhammad Izzat Darwaza, *Mudhakarāt Muhammad ʿizza Darwaza*, part 5, Beirut: 1993, p. 583.
35 ISA 93/חצ/170/8, "Tamtzit ha-Do"H shel ʿAbd al-Raḥman Hassan ʿAzām Pāṣā ʿal Nesiyaʿto le-ARH"B u-Vritaniyah," October 10, 1947; Tāyiʿ, *Ṣafaḥat Maṭwiyya ʿan Filasṭīn*, pp. 56–57.
36 *Davar*, June 15, 1947; A 501.BB Palestine/6-2347, Macatee to S/S, 23 June 1947.
37 UNA S-608-1, 4th Meeting, June 6, 1947.
38 TNA FO 371/61779, Cunningham to colonial secretary, May 29, 1947.
39 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 40–41.

40 Ibid.
41 TNA FO 371/61781, Gurney to Martin, June 17, 1947.
42 UNA S-608-1, 5th Meeting, June 16, 1947.
43 TNA FO 371/61781, Gurney to Martin, June 17, 1947.
44 UNA S-609-1, Bunche to Hoo [undated].
45 Motti Golani, *Yamim Aḥaronim: Ha-Mimshal ha-Mandatori—Pinui u-Milḥamah*, Jerusalem: 2009, pp. 103–108.
46 The quotes are from Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 44–45. The record of the testimony can be found in: UNSCOP Report, Vol. IV, pp. 1–13/ See also the Haganah intelligence report on the testimony, HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 19, 1947.
47 TNA FO 371/61876, Gurney to Martin, July 20, 1947.
48 UNA S-611-1, Shertok to the chairman of UNSCOP, June 18, 1947.
49 UNA S-504-9, "Commentary on Administrative Report of the Palestine Commission," September 26, 1947.
50 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. II, p. 13.
51 CZA S25/3970, Leo kohen to Berl Locker, May 25, 1947; TNA CO 537/2335, Cunningham to Martin, March 18, 1947; MEC Cunningham papers, Box IV, Minutes of Security Conference, June 6, 1947.
52 Yitzhak Gurion, *Praklitehem shel Loḥamei ha-Ḥerut*, Tel Aviv: 1973, pp. 178–182.
53 Ibid., pp. 176–179.
54 *Davar*, June 17, 1947; *Haboker*, June 17, 1947.
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56 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 53–55.
57 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 20, 1947.
58 UNA S-608-1, 9th Meeting, June 18, 1947.
59 Ibid.
60 Gurion, *Praklitehem*, p. 183; MFCZ, International Department Division, Box 69, "Report on the Work of UNSCOP, June 6–July 19, 1947."
61 UNA S-608-1, 9th Meeting, June 18, 1947.
62 Minutes of sessions 9, 10, 11, 12, June 18–24, 1947. Located in UNA S-608-1.
63 UNA S-608-1, 12th Meeting, June 24, 1947.
64 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. II, p. 13.
65 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, June 30, 1947.
66 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. II, pp. 13–14.
67 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-3047, Macatee to S/S, June 30, 1947.
68 UNA S-608-1,13th Meeting, June 27, 1947.
69 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-3047, Macatee to S/S, June 30, 1947; Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, p. 56.
70 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, June 30, 1947.
71 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-3047, Macatee to S/S, June 30, 1947.
72 UNA S-608-1,15th Meeting, June 29, 1947.
73 Ibid.
74 UNA S-611-1, Sandstrom to Major, July 16, 1947.
75 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, June 30, 1947.
76 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 62.
77 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-3047, Macatee to S/S, June 30, 1947.
78 ANA 852/20 P. 1, "Special Committee of Inquiry."
79 UNA S-608-1, 25th Meeting, July 9, 1947.

80 SNA ESA Box 5, Irgun Zvai Leumi to UNSCOP, July 8, 1947.
81 TNA FO 371/61781, Cunningham to CO, June 29, 1947.
82 UNA S-608-1,10th Meeting, June 20, 1947.
83 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 23, July 4, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 3, 1947.
84 TNA CO 537/2338 P.2, Gurney to Martin, July 9, 1947.
85 NA 867.01/6-1047, Wadsworth to S/S, June 6, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Jeddah to FO, June 12, 1947. On the divisions among the Arab states regarding UNSCOP, see Chapter 6.
86 CZA S25/5401, "The Arab Boycott of the United Nations Special Committee On Palestine."
87 Ibid.; Tūmā, *Yawmiyyāt Shaʿb*, p. 50; *al-Shaʿab*, May 21, 1947; *Filasṭīn*, May 16, June 6, 1947.
88 NA 867.01/5-3147, Macatee to S/S, May 31, 1947.
89 *Filasṭīn*, May 22, June 1, 1947; NA 501.BB Palestine, Macatee to S/S, 11 June 1947.
90 Muḥammad ʻIzzat Darwaza, *Ḥawla al-Ḥaraka al-ʻArabiyya al-Ḥadītha*, Part 4, Beirut: 1949, p. 93; *Filasṭīn*, June 18, 1947.
91 UNA S-611-1, Hoo to Arab Higher Committee, June 4, 1947.
92 SNA ESA Box 5, Lie to Sandström, June 14, 1947.
93 Shākir al-Dabās, *Al-Qaḍiyya al-Filasṭīniyya wa-al-Umam al-Mutaḥida*, Damascus: 1949, p. 78–79; *Filasṭīn*, June 9, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Cairo to FO, June 10, 1947.
94 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-1147, Macatee to S/S, June 11, 1947.
95 Nasser Eddin Nashāshībī, *Jerusalem's Other Voice: Ragheb Nashāshībī and Moderation in Palestinian, Politics, 1920–1948*, Exeter: 1990, p. 188.
96 UNA S-607-5, Press Communiques, June 16, 1947.
97 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 18, 1947; NA 501.BB Palestine/6-1647, Macatee to S/S, June 16, 1947.
98 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 18, 1947; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 31.
99 CZA S25/5401, "The Arab Boycott of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine"; *Filasṭīn*, June 12, 18, 1947; *Davar*, June 16, 1947.
100 UNA S-608-1, 7th Meeting, June 17, 1947.
101 CZA S25/5374, "Ha-Ḥerem ha-ʻAravi ʻal ha-Vaʻadah ha-Meyuḥedet."
102 ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, report by Kenen, June 22, 1947
103 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 29, 30, 1947.
104 TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, June 7, 1947; FO 371/61875, Jedda to FO, June 13, 1947. The word "folly," quoted in the text, appears in both documents.
105 CZA S25/5965, Report by Asher Lutzky, "Siḥah ʻim Clayton Lane, ha-Nispaḥ le-ʻInyanei Kalkalah leyad ha-Tzirut ha-Amerikayit be-Veirut vi-Damesek, be-Arzi ha-Levanon," July 9–10, 1947; NA 867.01/6-1947, London to S/S, June 19, 1947.
106 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, Report of conversation, Eban and Horowitz with Sandström, August 1, 1947; ISA 93/חצ/2270/5, Epstein to Jewish Agency Executive, Report on meeting with ʿAbd al-Raḥman ʿAzām, secretary-general of the Arab League, June 20, 1947; Tāyiʿ, *Ṣafaḥat Maṭwiyya*, pp. 65–66, 106–107. On the position of the Arab states, see Chapter 6.
107 Muṣṭafā Kabhā, "Palestinians and the Partition Plan," in Ruth Gavison, ed., "The November 29 Resolution: Then and Now," in Ruth Gavison, ed., *The Two-state*

Solution: The UN Partition Resolution of Mandatory Palestine—Analysis and Sources, London: 2013, pp. 64–65. ḤḤ

108 CZA S25/5434, untitled survey on the Arabs and the Committee of Inquiry, June 6, 1947; Nashashibi, *Jerusalem's Other Voice*, p. 190.

109 The quote is from Darwaza, *Mudhakarāt*, p. 93. See also Fālaḥ Khālid ʿAli, *Filasṭīn wa-al-Intidāb al-Bariṭānī*, Beirut: 1970, p. 244.

110 *Filasṭīn*, May 24, 1947; Avraham Sela, "She'elat E"I ba-Maʿarekhet ha-Bein-ʿAravit mi-Hakamat ha-Ligah ha-ʿAravit ʿad Pelishat Tzeva'ot ʿArav le-Eretz-Yisra'el, 1945–1948," PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1986, p. 329.

111 *Al-Ahrām*, July 18, 1947.

112 UNA S-609-1, Administrative Circular No. 4 [no date].

113 ISA 539/X/118/47, letters on the employment of employees of the Palestine government in the service of UNSCOP; CZA S25/5963, list of workers for the UN committee [no date].

4 With Their Own Eyes

UNSCOP Tours Palestine

UNSCOP's members thought it very important to travel around Palestine. Its Subcommittee One, charged with planning the trips, was composed of all the alternate delegates, and headed by Ralph Bunche. After consulting with the British liaison officer, MacGillivray, and with the Jewish Agency liaison officers, the subcommittee put together an itinerary for twenty packed days of travel. The non-involvement of the Arabs in the planning was taken into account, and an effort was made to fully balance the number of sites between the sides. While, for practical reasons, the entire committee sometimes split up, the plan was for each committee member to participate in exactly the same trips and hear the same explanations. To ensure that the members were not unduly influenced by informal conversation with the guides and liaison officers along the way, and perhaps to preserve a certain formality between them, the latter were forbidden to travel in the UN cars. The order of the cars was fixed: the chairman first, then the cars of each of the representatives, along with their alternates and other members of their delegations, in alphabetical order by country.[1]

The first destination was the holy sites in Jerusalem, which would obviously be a major concern. A large crowd greeted the committee in the Old City's Jewish Quarter. The Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities squabbled over who would have the honor of hosting the party, and finally decided to divide the committee up between them. Dumbfounded by their first encounter with the Jewish public, who treated them as saviors, the members were honored by being seated at the eastern wall of the synagogues they were taken to visit. They listened to the congregations recite psalms and rabbis welcoming them and wishing them success with their mission.[2] Over the course of their inquiry, it was apparent to UNSCOP that the Jewish street had pinned high hopes on the panel. Fabregat recounted in his memoirs just how much it touched him, and even the imperturbable Paul Mohn, the alternate from Sweden, admitted that this heartfelt expectation perturbed him.[3]

At the Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount, the committee was guided by British antiquarians. The Supreme Muslim Council, the body that

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Figure 4.1 The Rishon Letziyon, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel, welcomes Gradados (wearing the light hat) in the Rabban Yohanan Ben-Zakkai Synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

administered Muslim religious affairs in Palestine, including the Temple Mount shrines, had notified the committee prior to the visit that they would prevent reporters and Jewish officials from entering. Its functionaries stood guard to ensure that the orders were carried out. Rahman, the Muslim Indian representative, captivated his colleagues by praying and prostrating himself in pious devotion. In the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the committee witnessed how furiously different Christian churches contended for control of the shrine. It was because of this rivalry that, according to legend, the key to the church had been held by a Muslim family for centuries. The brief visit to these places brought home just how much religious tension there was in the Old City.[4]

After this opening trip, the committee headed for Haifa, where it expected to see Jewish-Arab cooperation. Its first stop in that city was city hall, which took pride in having an equal number of Jews and Arabs serving on its city council. But the members were disappointed by what they saw. Shabtai Levy, the city's Jewish mayor, gave a talk on coexistence and how Jews and Arabs



Figure 4.2 UNSCOP visits the Western Wall.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

made decisions together in municipal institutions, but the Arab city councilors absented themselves from the reception held for the committee. Only Shaḥāda Shalaḥ, the Arab deputy mayor, took part, but refused to say a word; he did not confirm Levy's claims about coexistence.[5]

During their tour, the committee encountered a demand that would become routine during its visits to Arab sites. The Arab-owned Karaman Dick cigarette factory informed UNSCOP that it would not allow the press, the liaison officers, or Jewish leaders to accompany the committee on its tour of the plant. The members protested the condition indignantly, but in the end put their anger aside and gave in to the demand, after realizing that not doing so would be tantamount to removing all the Arab sites from their itinerary. The visit to the factory shocked them—they discovered dozens of children working in harsh conditions. It was a phenomenon they saw in every Arab-owned factory they visited. The committee members tried without success to strike up conversations with the child workers. Clearly, the children had been forbidden to speak with UNSCOP.[6]

The major disappointment of Haifa repeated itself in every Arab area UNSCOP visited. The boycott was observed, even as Arabs argued over

whether they were permitted to receive the members of UNSCOP as long as they did not reply to political questions, or whether the visiting committee should be ignored. At times the committee encountered those who took the latter position. At an Arab school near Bir Seb'a (Be'er Sheva), for example, the teachers simply went on with their lessons when the members of the committee entered their classrooms as if nothing had happened; the pupils were forbidden to look at the visitors. When the committee visited Rameh in the Galilee, the village's inhabitants evacuated, leaving only a delegation of children who greeted the committee with curses and insults. In other cases the committee found itself in truly embarrassing situations, when mayors and Arab institutions who had agreed in advance to receive the committee avoided doing so at the last minute. So many lunches were canceled at a moment's notice that the members learned to bring along sandwiches.[7]

Despite these incidents, the members insisted on visiting all the Arab locations that had been included in the itinerary. In the end, they were able to see a fair number of educational institutions, hospitals, agricultural and commercial centers, municipalities, and other institutions, and to reach nearly every area in which Arabs lived in Palestine, including the Galilee, the Jerusalem district, Samaria, the Negev, and the Gaza region. They saw little to convince them that Jewish–Arab coexistence was possible, and their impression of the Arab sector was largely negative. The educational, welfare, and health systems were substandard; manufacturing and agriculture were not developed and largely used outdated methods. Their impression was that Arab society in Palestine was backward and could not be the basis for the independent country that its representatives had demanded at the special session. This impression was buttressed by Arabs' fear of cooperating with the committee, which was instructive about the nature of the mufti's leadership, and by comparison with the achievements of the Jews.[8]

On its "Jewish" days, UNSCOP had an entirely different experience. In Tel Aviv, it was received like royalty. Streets were festooned with flowers, flags, and posters; crowds came out to see them and applaud. Rabbi Isser Yehuda Unterman, the city's chief rabbi, and Mayor Israel Rokach offered effusive greetings and praise. When the committee completed its meetings at the municipal building and went out to its balcony, a waiting crowd of thousands broke out singing the Zionist anthem, "Hatikvah." Tel Aviv was a huge success, Granados enthused. He called it the "miracle on the dunes."[9]

Contact with Jews on the street was also unlike the encounters in Arab towns. Indeed, the members of the committee could hardly avoid encountering Jews, even if they had wanted to. "The locals scattered people who knew [different] languages, who seated themselves unaffectedly next to the members of the committee and ate with them," effused Kenen, who accompanied the visits. "A Persian girl spoke with the Persian, a Czech man with the Czech, and so on," he recounted.[10] Walter Eytan and his staff searched among new immigrants to Palestine for speakers of the native languages of UNSCOP's members. Wherever they went, the members encountered young Jews, some



Figure 4.3 UNSCOP in Tel Aviv.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

of them Holocaust refugees, who told them their stories.[11] Even Brilej, whose mother tongue was an obscure dialect of Slovenian, found himself talking to a young man in his own language. He presumably had no idea that Eytan's people had found the only person in all of Palestine who spoke it.[12]

The Jewish Agency did all it could to show the committee the Yishuv's advanced industrial and commercial facilities, as well as its settlements and agriculture. To this end it enlisted the Jewish National Fund and other experts to route the trips along roads where rock-strewn scrub land could be seen on one side and lush fields on the other. As the Jewish guides were not allowed to ride in the cars of the committee's members, they handed out written material each morning explaining the sights along with way, and explanations of concepts and symbols such as the draining of swamps.[13]

The Negev, which had made a sorry impression on the committee when it visited the Bedouin there and the city of Be'er Sheva ("This biblical oasis turned out to be a dusty Arab village," Granados recalled), looked entirely different when they reached the green and blooming fields of Kibbutz Revivim. The members of the kibbutz proudly showed the delegation the gladiolas and vegetables they grew in the desert, and a reservoir of water collected using

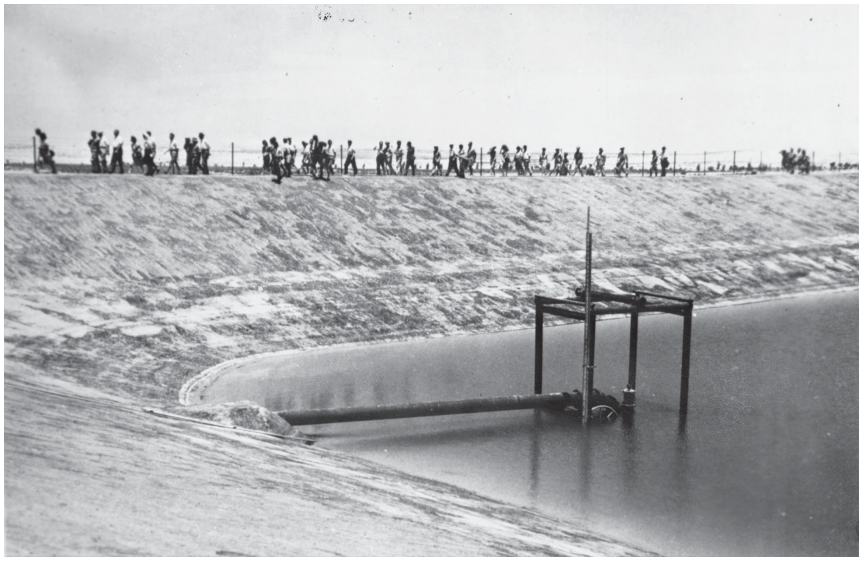


Figure 4.4 UNSCOP at Kibbutz Revivim's reservoir.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

a special method they had developed.[14] At Beit HaAravah, on the northern shore of the Dead Sea, the visitors were shown an original method for farming saline soil. In both these sparsely-settled regions, the Jewish Agency guides stressed that only advanced science and technology could make such areas habitable. The subtext was that only the Yishuv could take full advantage of the Negev and Aravah regions. The members of UNSCOP were largely convinced.[15]

While in principle UNSCOP determined the route, the Jewish Agency offered many suggestions both in the planning stage and during the trips themselves, when circumstances required last-minute changes. In particular, it stressed visits to kibbutzim. Beyond their achievements and innovation in agriculture, manufacturing, and social structure, the kibbutzim showed that Jews were willing to make personal sacrifices in order to settle and develop the land. This message also made a strong impression. Blom set aside his usual dry language and wrote effusively to his superiors in Holland about kibbutz principles. He wondered at the sight of people of high intellect and education who chose to work in the fields as simple laborers. "The situation can only be explained by Zionist ideological fervor," he maintained.[16] Simic told his colleagues that "the kibbutz is in fact a *kolkhoz*, a Soviet collective farm. Rahman told Eban to arrange a visit to an Arab kibbutz.[17] "The spirit in the kibbutzes [sic] is impressive," Bunche effused in his diary.[18]



Figure 4.5 UNSCOP visits Kibbutz Beit Ha'aravah. Fabregat, the Uruguayan representative, kneeling, speaks with the children. Bunche, behind him, documents the visit.

Source: Central Zionist Archives.

The committee also visited a range of educational institutions and hospitals. Of special note was their tour of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which was presented to them as "the worldwide spiritual center of the Jewish people," and the adjacent Hadassah Hospital, where they saw many Arabs benefiting from advanced medical treatment. Entezam, the Iranian representative, had an emotional reunion with a surgeon who had performed a complex operation on his ear in Jerusalem a few years previously.[19]

The official trips came to an end with a packed three-day visit to the Galilee, which followed the established pattern and added little. The Arabs boycotted and disappointed the committee, while the Zionists showed off flourishing kibbutzim, cutting-edge farming, and other Zionist successes. The high point was a moonlight cruise on Lake Kinneret from Tiberias to Kibbutz Ein Gev on the opposite shore, where some of the UNSCOP staff joined the kibbutz's residents in dancing the hora, while others went for a nighttime dip in the lake.[20] The British showed the committee an experimental agricultural station run by the Mandate administration, one of a modest number of government initiatives that the committee was taken to see on its trips. The British did not seek to take credit for developing



Figure 4.6 UNSCOP visits Kibbutz Revivim.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

the country in any significant way. Rather, they emulated a teacher who presents his students' achievements without mentioning his own role in them.[21]

Eban, the Jewish Agency liaison officer, did not hide his feeling that the trips had been a Zionist success. The Zionists had, he said, operated under favorable conditions. Because of the Arab boycott and the British attitude, he wrote, "the Committee lived for some weeks as citizens or guests of the [Jewish] national home." Eban termed the committee's travels a survey of the Zionist enterprise, and said that they had been surprised by the Yishuv's potency and organization.[22] He was right. The committee saw with its own eyes that the Zionist community in Palestine was modern, cultured, visionary, and undoubtedly able to sustain itself. In other words, it was ready to become an independent sovereign entity.[23] "What asses the Arabs are," Entezam, told his Iranian alternate, Ardalan, unaware that a Haganah intelligence agent who knew Persian was standing next to him. "The country is so beautiful, and it could be developed; if it were all given to the Jews they would turn it into Europe.[24]



Figure 4.7 UNSCOP's chairman with a gladiola sprouting in Kibbutz Revivim's fields. To his right stands Zeev Maites, an agricultural expert from the Jewish National Fund (KKL).

Source: Central Zionist Archives.

Personal Encounters

"UNSCOP Remains Remote" blared a headline in *The Palestine Post*,[25] summing up the feelings of pretty much everyone who was involved. The strict discipline imposed on the trips, and the desire to give each side strictly equal treatment, meant that the committee was unable to form any direct impressions. The members felt increasing dissatisfaction about this during their travels, and as time went on they relaxed their observance of the rules and felt more confident to set out on their own. The committee approved a suggestion by the Dutch representative that the members be allowed to conduct visits and inquiries as they saw fit. During the second half of their stay in Palestine, the members operated independently, seeking to form their own impressions.[26]

Their private travels and their encounters at Zionist sites were not much different from the organized trips. But the sense of independence and the absence of their colleagues and, in particular, the press, made its mark. Some of the members made additional visits to kibbutzim. Granados went the

farthest, showing up at Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim, outside Jerusalem, without prior notice. He spent an entire day there and was then invited to a Friday night party to celebrate the release of a kibbutz member from the British prison at Latrun. Blom proudly reported to his superiors in the Netherlands that the Jews attached great importance to Dutch cows, and Lisicky told Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk about a moving visit to Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk, named after the foreign minister's father, President Tomáš Masaryk.[27]

These individual encounters for a large part seem to have amassed some cumulative impact, but it would be difficult to point to a specific person or meeting that changed the view of any given committee member. The reason may well have been that the members had become accustomed to hearing pretty much the same claims from their Zionist interlocutors, time and again. The most influential interlocutors seem to have been those whom the members saw as dispassionate. Rand, for example, had been disconcerted by the Zionist propaganda offensive and searched for what he termed a "vantage point" from which to form his position. He received it from a countryman of his, William Lovell Hull, a Canadian Christian minister, whose father Rand knew. Hull had lived in Palestine since the 1930s and was thus very familiar with the local scene. A short time after UNSCOP's arrival, Rand had dinner with Hull. "Here," Rand later related, "was one whom I could trust to express himself with honesty and frankness." He was surprised when Hull held forth at length about the hardworking and dedicated Jewish people and their right to return to their land. His conversation with Hull cleared up "irrelevancies and shadowy prejudices," Rand wrote. He acknowledged that, while predisposed to the Zionist cause, he had been plagued by a "vague constraint of doubt, uncertainty and puzzlement." His conversation with Hull was decisive for him, he related.[28]

The independent channel had been motivated, to a large extent, by the hope of making contact with Arabs. Many attempts were made, and a few were successful. While many Jews initiated contact with the committee, when it came to Arabs almost all the overtures came from members of the committee. Bunche, in particular, managed to arrange conversations with several well-known Palestinian Arab figures and succeeded in persuading some to speak to certain members of the committee off the record.[29] Notes from these conversations, as well as of similar informal talks with British and Jewish figures, were collated and typed up by UNSCOP's staff for the eyes of the committee members alone under the rubric "Special Series." Among the Arabs who appeared in this material, three were judged especially valuable by the members, and the conversations with them were chosen for inclusion in the Special Series. The Special Series did not, however, include material from all the meetings individual members had had at their own initiative. In some cases, the members involved preferred to keep such meetings to themselves. Notably, all the Arabs who spoke to members of the committee or its staff, irrespective of circumstances and rank, rejected categorically any sort of territorial compromise with the Jews.

MacGillivray, who had good relations with the Mandate's British district governors, under whom Arab officials served, served as an intermediary between the committee and those Arabs who consented to testify.[30] For example, a young Arab district officer from the Galilee named Fārūqī, was volunteered for the purpose by his British superior officer. Two members of the committee met with him and reported that "he had an answer to every question, but almost every answer was loaded with heavy anti-Jewish bias."[31] Much rarer were meetings like an hour-long exchange that a small number of members had with a "prominent Arab" during a visit to Jaffa. He told them that Palestine's inhabitants had lived well and peacefully until the Jews came and took over the country using "Nazi and Fascist" tactics. Regarding Arab politics and the region's political future, the man said that Arab Higher Committee was the unchallenged leader of the Palestinian street; the mufti was a worthy leader of the Arabs of Palestine. He denied that the mufti had supported the Nazis. Rather, he explained, Hajj Amīn "was carrying out his duty on behalf of the Arab cause." The Arabs, he said, "do not intend to lose [Palestine] to the Jews." If a decision was made to "give part or all of Palestine to the Jews," the Arabs would "fight to the last man to prevent it."[32]

The British, up to their necks in their travails in Palestine, and those with the best access to UNSCOP, surprised the committee with their ambiguity. Following the official visits, during which the government of Palestine had played the role of an objective guide, the members of the committee expected to meet with members of the Mandate administration. There, out of the public eye, British officials, they presumed, would speak more expansively and the British position would be clarified. But other than High Commissioner Cunningham, who invited the members at his residence so as to come toward meeting their expectations, the British consistently avoided voicing their opinions, and did not even do so at receptions and social events that they organized for UNSCOP.[33]

In short, the independent encounters and visits did not provide the committee with any new information. The Zionists rehashed their already familiar claims; the Arabs adhered to the boycott, and the dribs and drabs of testimony that came in did not offer anything that would advance a solution; while the British refused to say anything at all. The members of the committee formed impressions and did not rush to reach firm conclusions about the Jewish and Arab claims. But it was different with regard to the British. Despite their reticence, the committee's opinion of them crystalized at an early stage.

"The British Made a Terrible Mess": The Summer of 1947

"Daily bombings, shootings, kidnappings, sirens, security checks and ducking armored cars, jeeps and barbed wire," Bunche wrote to a friend, describing the backdrop to the UNSCOP inquiry.[34] He was not exaggerating—the UNSCOP inquiry was conducted during a high point of the Yishuv's struggle against

the British. Two other subjects often shunted UNSCOP out of the headlines in the local press—Etzel's brutal campaign against the British and the *Exodus* affair. Ironically, while the British had hoped that the inquiry would provide them with a breather in just these two areas—terror and illegal immigration—they actually reached a climax that summer. The call for a moratorium on violence, initiated by Cunningham, approved in London, and issued by Secretary-General Lie, was derailed soon after UNSCOP left, when the three Etzel operatives were executed and Etzel, in retribution, hung two British sergeants it had abducted, shocking world opinion. In parallel, the response to the effort to prevent illegal Jewish immigration, which included appeals to the UN and to all its member states, was a ship full of Jewish refugees, the *Exodus*, which reached the shores of Palestine and became the symbol of the Jewish effort to return to Palestine.[35] The British could have cited UNSCOP as a reason for a moratorium on both these policies, which would have served as an honorable way out. But they preferred not to.

In fact, Etzel and Lehi acceded to the UN's call, and informed UNSCOP that they would halt their operations during the inquiry. The committee viewed this as a step forward. But the good intentions dissipated before they could even be put to the test. When the death sentences were handed down, Etzel notified UNSCOP that it would retaliate immediately if its men were executed. Lehi also sent a message to the committee, accusing the "enemy" of disregarding the "cease-fire" and declared itself no longer bound by its promise to refrain from violence.[36]

The death sentences set off a vicious cycle of events. Etzel sought to abduct British soldiers to use as bargaining chips. After several failures, they captured two sergeants in Netanya. The militia declared that, if the death sentences against its men were carried out, it would dispatch the two captives. The British launched a massive search operation, imposing a draconian curfew on the entire Netanya region. Thousands of soldiers and policemen went from house to house, taking people for interrogation.[37]

The members of the Uruguayan and Guatemalan delegations went to Netanya to check out the condition of the Jewish civilians who had been detained. Encountering British soldiers searching the city for the abducted men, the South Americans bombarded them with questions about the severity of the measures being used in the city, and in particular about the curfew.[38] The soldiers and policemen complained to their superior officers that "small countries like Guatemala and Uruguay can't tell the British Empire what to do."[39]

Etzel and Lehi painted the British operation in the worst possible terms, seeking to coopt UNSCOP into their struggle. They recounted the ostensibly criminal methods that the British were using against prisoners; the British, they said, were jailing Jews without cause and covering up cases in which British troops had murdered civilians. The committee did not take this lightly; in at least one case it began an investigation.[40] The result was a situation in which the British were conducting an all-out war against Etzel and Lehi at the same

time that the committee expected it to allow them to investigate the claims of the militias. Inevitably, this set the British and UNSCOP on a collision course. The British accused UNSCOP, with some justice, of maintaining contacts with Etzel and Lehi. Fabregat, the head of the Uruguayan contingent, made no attempt to hide his sympathy for the Jewish underground forces; his papers preserve many letters that he received from the two militias. He proposed to the high commissioner that he broker a prisoner exchange agreement between the two sides.[41]

The Yugoslavians also made life difficult for the British, to the point of accusing them of engaging in an ongoing effort to impede UNSCOP's inquiry. The British, they said, were using security concerns as a justification for systematically obstructing the investigation by denying the committee free access to places its members wanted to visit.[42] In fact, the British did not deliberately seek to hamper the inquiry. Indeed, they issued the committee members and staff special passes that allowed them free movement, including entry into curfew zones.[43] All the members had the experience of being held up for long periods at roadblocks, but must of them took this to be a sign of the fraught security situation, not of a British effort to prevent them from doing their job. The internal evaluation that the UN conducted following the inquiry documents Hoo, the chief of the UNSCOP Secretariat, as recalling that the question the young soldiers they encountered most frequently asked was "when the United Nations troops were coming to relieve them."[44]

The *Exodus*, a ship carrying more than 4,500 *ma'apilim*, as the Zionists termed Jews seeking to enter Palestine in violation of Britain's restrictive immigration quotas, arrived at Haifa's port on July 18, while UNSCOP was hearing testimony. The passengers were survivors of the Holocaust from displaced persons (DP) camps in Europe. The British learned of the ship shortly before it set out from France's Mediterranean coast, and shadowed it on sea and from the air, and then intercepted and boarded it when it approached the shore of Palestine, wounding dozens of the passengers, some of them mortally, in a battle to take control of the ship that lasted several hours. It was led into port in the afternoon, surrounded by British battleships. The entire incident was broadcast to the public in real time by the Haganah, and the many foreign correspondents who had come to Palestine with UNSCOP provided on-the-spot coverage.[45]

At the height of the battle, while the ship was still at sea, it broadcast an appeal to UNSCOP to come to record live testimony from the passengers and crew. After the ship was brought into port it continued to broadcast appeals to UNSCOP. The only members to respond were Simic and Sandström, who at the time were visiting the detention camp at Atlit, just south of Haifa, where the British held Jewish immigrants who had arrived without permits. The two men had coordinated the visit with the British before they had learned of the *Exodus*'s impending arrival.[46] A harsh scene greeted them at the port. The exhausted and, in some cases, wounded immigrants, were taken off the ship and loaded on British boats that were to expel them from the country. Ruth



Figure 4.8 The *Exodus* in Haifa's port. Sandström (in the light hat) and Simic (in the light suit) stand on the dock.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

Gruber, an American newspaper correspondent, wrote of wailing mothers and children, and reported that families were torn apart because the British wanted to care for the wounded separately.[47] Simic and Sandström spent about two hours watching. They saw three stretchers coming down from the ship, bearing the people killed during the battle, and heard British officers and the commanders of the *Exodus* offer contradictory versions of the battle to take over the ship. They also boarded one of the three expulsion ships and spoke to the *ma'apilim*. The refugees told them about their difficult journey and asked the two men to convey messages to their families in Palestine. Sandström and Simic emerged pale and shocked. "This was the best testimony that you could have provided us with," the Yugoslavian said, and did not say another word for the rest of the drive back to Jerusalem. Sandström remarked that he felt that without this trip, an important link in the whole visit to Palestine would have been missing.[48]

The next day the two of them convened a special meeting of UNSCOP to report on their impressions. A few of the members also heard further and especially emotional eye-witness testimony from Staney Grauel, a Methodist

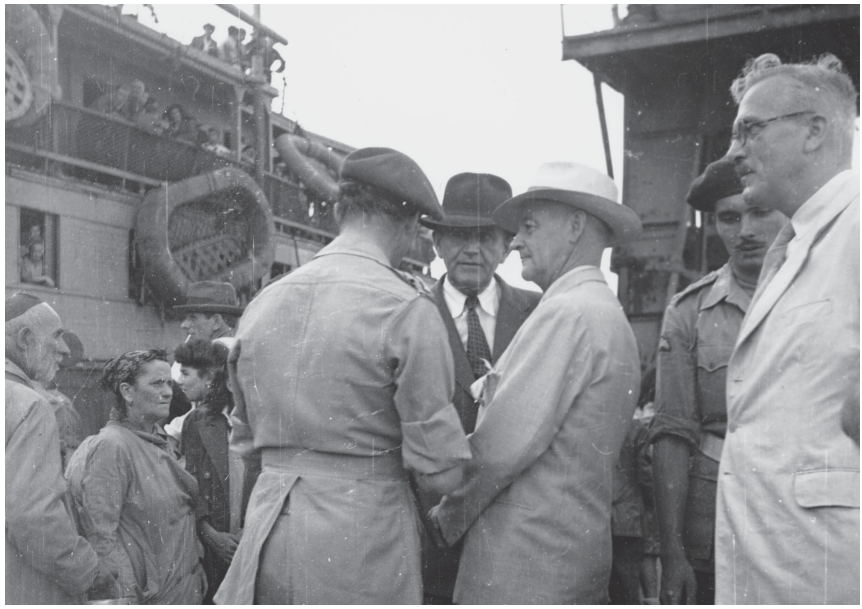


Figure 4.9 Sandström (in the light hat) speaks with a British officer, standing alongside Simic (wearing glasses and a light suit). The *Exodus* is in the background.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

minister who had sailed on the *Exodus* to gain a first-hand acquaintance with the problems of the DPs and to receive inspiration for his Zionist activism. After he identified himself to the British as an American citizen, he was allowed to leave the ship. He gave interviews to reporters at the port, and then found his way to UNSCOP in Jerusalem.[49] Sandström invited a small group of committee members to his rooms, where Grauel recounted the voyage and the battle on the boat's deck between the *ma'apilim* and the British. At the end of his story, after he had responded to numerous questions, Grauel declared that "I don't think anything short of open warfare and destruction will ever stop" Jewish DPs in Europe from coming to Palestine.[50]

The perfect timing of the *Exodus*'s arrival during UNSCOP's inquiry in Palestine looked as if it had been planned by the Zionists. An Arab historian went so far as to claim that the whole incident had been staged and that most of the people on the ship's deck were in fact Haganah operatives.[51] But the available evidence shows that those who planned and carried out the *Exodus* expedition over the previous months were unaware that the timetable they set for the operation coincided with UNSCOP's plans. The date the ship set sail from France was set for other reasons entirely. It is true, however, that once

the ship made its approach to Palestine's shore, the desire to make an impression on the UN committee began to play a role in the decisions they made.[52]

The act of deporting the refugees, as dramatic as it was, did not come as a surprise. The British had established a detention camp in Cyprus to which it sent the passengers on illegal immigration ships. But this time tragedy struck. The British decided, precisely in this case, to put into effect a new policy—not to take the would-be immigrants to Cyprus, but to return them to their port of departure. The *Exodus*'s passengers were transported back to France, and when they refused to disembark there, they were taken to Germany. Following a debilitating two months at sea, they were physically forced off the ships and left in the land that, for them, symbolized the horrors of the Holocaust. Bevin, who personally oversaw the crisis, became the target of a tidal wave of criticism and international condemnation. UNSCOP was inundated with demands that it intervene, arriving from all over the globe. Members of the committee expressed their astonishment and protested the British handling of the affair. Granados, as usual eager to enter into battle in such circumstances, demanded that the committee send a representative to France to meet with the *ma'apilim* and to check on their condition. But after a series of votes, UNSCOP resolved to remain silent about the subject.[53]

In its final report, the committee mentioned the *Exodus* in only two sentences.[54] Yet the common wisdom has long been that the fate of the immigrant ship made a huge impact on its recommendations. Abba Eban, who was hardly a man to be carried away by rumors or myths about the committee's work, maintained that the *Exodus* affair was decisive. "I had the feeling," he wrote, "the British Mandate took its last breath that day."[55] Bartley Crum, who had been a member of the Anglo-American Committee, called the *Exodus* "the ship that launched the nation," while Golda Myerson maintained that Grauel's testimony to UNSCOP "became a turning point in the attitudes of the UN representatives."[56]

The fate of the *Exodus* might well have had an impact on the members of UNSCOP, but there is no support for the claim that it tipped the scales. It did, however, impress on the members of the committee the futility of blocking Jewish immigration, and the desperate plight of the DPs. It demonstrated that large numbers of the DPs wanted to go to Palestine, and the institutions of the Jewish "state-in-the-making" were determined and capable of making that happen. As for the two members who saw the *Exodus* at first hand, Simic voted on the instructions of his government, which opposed partition. Sandström indeed became an important advocate of establishing a Jewish state, but in private conversations in which he discussed what he had seen at the port he acknowledged sympathy for the plight of the immigrants. But he also said that "he was sickened by the use made of them by the Zionist propaganda machine." He seems to have believed that "the resistance and the propaganda surrounding the fatal consequences had probably been staged primarily for the Committee's benefit."[57]

For the British, the *Exodus* affair became an indelible stain, but even in its absence their difficulty in maintaining the Mandate as they saw fit was evident to the committee. The DPs' passionate desire to settle in Palestine and the appalling conditions they were living in were brought home to the committee when it visited the DP camps in Europe. In short, even if the *Exodus* had not arrived during the inquiry, the committee would almost certainly have reached the same conclusions. "The longer our stay here goes on, the more clueless we are all becoming," Bunche wrote candidly to a friend in the USA, "but the only thing that is clear to me … is that the British have made a terrible mess of things here." He put it bluntly: "About the only subject on which both Arabs and Jews seem to be in agreement is that the British must go."[58] The committee had a pro-British contingent made up of the Dutch, Swedes, Canadians, and Australians, but even they thought that the British were rapidly losing credibility.

UNSCOP now prepared itself for its formal hearings. In fact, by this stage each committee member had acquired a significant quantity of impressions and ideas, gathered as he became acquainted with the situation in Palestine. John Hood told the Australian Foreign ministry that the question of Jewish-Arab relations had been shunted aside by the conflict between the Jews and the British. "Racial antagonism seem[s] to be as strong as ever," he reported, on the basis of his travels around the country and brief meetings with Arabs. If the British were to withdraw, he said, it "would lead to immediate and prolonged bloodshed."[59] Indeed, some members of the committee saw this as the only justification for extending the Mandate. The British were the only force standing between the Jews and Arabs and preventing a war. But they showed no signs of wanting to continue to do that job; in fact, it looked as if they were losing control.

Notes

1 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 166–167; NNA 999.212, UNCOP, report by the Dutch delegation on the committee's travels to the Foreign Ministry, July 31, 1947; UNA S-611-4, "Recommendation of Subcommittee One on the Itinerary of Visits Adopted by the Committee," June 22, 1947.
2 ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, report by Kenen, June 20, 1947; *Davar*, June 19, 1947.
3 Enrique Fabregat, *Sion, rebelión y cumplimiento: dos capítulos del manuscrito inédito*, Jerusalén: 1992, pp. 43–46; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 254.
4 *Yedioth Aharonoth*, June 19, 1947; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 68–69; UNA S-608-1, 7th Meeting, June 17, 1947.
5 Tamir Goren, "'Cooperation Is the Guiding Principle': Jews and Arabs in the Haifa Municipality during the British Mandate." *Israel Studies* 11:3 (Fall 2006), pp. 128–129.
6 ANA 852/20 pt. 1, "Special Committee of Inquiry"; ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, Kenen report, June 24, 1947; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 73–74, 83–84.

7 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 84–87; INA 93/חצ/2267/16, Kenen report, June 22, 24, 1947; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP Division, Spits final report to the Foreign Ministry on the committee's trips, July 31, 1947; TNA CO 537/2335, Cunningham to CO, July 5, 1947.
8 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to the Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, July 14, 1947; MEC Crossman papers, Eban to Crossman, "Impressions of the UNSCOP." July 22, 1947.
9 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 89–91; UNA S-611-5, "Address by Mr. Rokach," June 25, 1947.
10 ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, Kenen report, June 20, 1947.
11 MEC Crossman papers, Eban to Crossman, "Impressions of UNSCOP," July 22, 1947.
12 Interview with Zvi Locker, Jewish Agency liaison with the Yugoslavian delegation, July 2000.
13 CZA S25/5370, Epstein to the Jewish Agency, June 8, 1947; CZA A366, container 2, explanation sheet on trip to Haifa on June 20, 1947; CZA S25/5375, Chernowitz to Eytan, June 27, 1947.
14 Yoel De Malach, *Mi-Geva'ot Tuskanah le-Merḥavei ha-Negev*, Jerusalem: 2007, p. 142.
15 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 170–171; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, 74–80, 84–88.
16 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to the Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.
17 *Ha'aretz*, June 22, 1947; Eban, *Autobiography*, p. 78.
18 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364), Box 5, Bunche's diary, July 4, 1947.
19 *Ha'aretz*, June 29, 1947; *Davar*, June 29, 1947.
20 ISA 93/חצ/ 2267/ 16, Kenen report, July 3, 1947; TNA CO 537/ 2338 pt. 2, MacGillivray to Martin, July 8, 1947.
21 UNA S-611-4, "Proposals for Itinerary on Three day tour of Galilee District, 30th June-2nd July"; S-609-1, MacGillivray to Bunche, June 23, 1947.
22 MEC Crossman papers, Eban to Crossman, "Impressions of the UNSCOP," July 22, 1947.
23 CZA S25/5978, Eytan to Shertok, Eban, Horowitz, and Tov, July 2, 1947; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Dutch delegation's report on the committee's travels to the Foreign Ministry, July 31, 1947.
24 HHA 115/58, Delphi, June 23, 1947.
25 *Palestine Post*, June 30, 1947.
26 CZA S25/5375, Chernowitz to Eytan, June 27, 1947; UNA S-504-9, "Administrative Report of the Palestine Commission," September 11, 1947; UNA S-608-1, 7th meeting, June 17, 1947.
27 MFCZ, International Department Division, File 69; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 94–101; NNA UNSCOP 999.212, report by the Dutch delegation on the committee's travels to the Foreign Ministry, July 31, 1947.
28 William Hull, *The Fall and Rise of Israel*, Grand Rapids, MI: 1954, from Rand's introducdtion to the book.
29 Bunche's diary entries of July are full of information about such contacts. See UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, July 1947.
30 TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 3, 1947; HHA 115/58, Delphi, July 8, 1947.

31 UNA S-605-4, "Notes on Casual Discussion with Mr. Thorene-Thorene, District Commissioner, Galilee District" [no date].
32 UNA S-611-1, "Conversation with a Prominent Arab, Jaffa, Wednesday, 25 June, 4:30–5:30 p.m."
33 Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, pp. 59, 61–62.
34 UNA S-610-1, Bunche to Power, August 7, 1947.
35 Many have claimed that these two events persuaded the British to leave Palestine as soon as possible. See, for example, Ritchie Ovendale, *Britain, the United States and the End of the Palestine Mandate 1942–1948*, London 1989, p. 210.
36 SNA ESA Box 5, The Fighters for the Freedom of Israel to UNSCOP, 4 Tamuz 5707 (July 2, 1947); Irgun Zvai Leumi to the Chairman of UNSCOP, June 18, 1947.
37 Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*, pp. 241–244.
38 OHD (155), interview with Oscar Sako-Azouri; ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, Kenen report, July 11, 1947.
39 HHA 115/58, Delphi, July 14, 1947.
40 HHA 115/58, Delphi, June 26, 1947; UNA S-608-1, 25th Meeting, July 9, 1947; S-611-1, Nakar, Weiss and Haviv to U.N.S.C.O.P, June 26, 1947; The Captured Prisoners of the Fighting Jewish Underground at Jerusalem Central Prison to U.N.S.C.O.P, July 3, 1947.
41 Fabregat papers. See ISA 72/פ/763/21, where there is also a sharp protest that a British officer sent to Fabregat; ISA 72/פ/763/21, Green to Fabregat, June 28, 1947; TNA CO 537/2339, MacGillivray to Martin, July 19, 1947.
42 Memorandum of I.N. Bakulin on UNSCOP, July 31, 1947, *Documents on Israeli–Soviet Relations 1941–1953*, pp. 212–214.
43 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 22, 1947; UNA S-504-9, "Administrative Circular No. 3—Security."
44 UNA S-504-9, "Commentary on 'Administrative Report of the Palestine Commission'," September 26, 1947.
45 A plethora of books have been written about the *Exodus*. The most important scholarly treatment is Aviva Halamish, *The Exodus Affair: Holocaust Survivors and the Struggle for Palestine, 1947*, Syracuse, NY: 1998; the most recent is Elisabeth Åsbrink, *1947: When Now Begins*, London: 2017.
46 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, Yassky memorandum, July 18, 1947.
47 Ruth Gruber, *Witness: One of the Great Correspondents of the Twentieth Century Tells Her Story*, New York: 2007, p. 117.
48 The quote is from ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, Yassky memorandum, July 18, 1947. See also the account in UNA S-608-2, 37th Meeting, July 19, 1947.
49 Eleanor Elfenbein, *Grauel: An Autobiography, as Told to Eleanor Elfenbein*, Freehold: 1983, pp. 93–97.
50 UNA S-605-4, "Notes on Statements Made by Mr. Grauel Concerning the Incident of the Boarding of the Refugee Ship Exodus 1947, at Mr. Sandstrom's Flat, July 28, 1947 at 9:30 a.m."
51 ʿAlī, *Filasṭīn wa-al-Intidāb al-Bariṭānī*, pp. 246–247.
52 Halamish, *The Exodus Affair*, pp. 58–60, 80–83; John Quigley, *The International Diplomacy of Israel's Founders: Deception at the United Nations in the Quest for Palestine*, New York: 2016, p. 63.
53 UNA S-608-2, 42nd Meeting, July 30, 1947.
54 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, p. 28.

55 Abba Eban, *Pirkei Ḥayim*, Tel Aviv: 1978, p. 78. The English version of the book omits this language.
56 The quotes are from Teddy Kollek's introduction to Elfenbein, *Grauel*, p. x. Ruth Gruber took Crum's formulation as the subtitle of her book on the affair, Ruth Gruber, *Exodus 1947: The Ship that Launched a Nation*, New York: 1999.
57 TNA FO 371/61876, Gurney to Martin, July 21, 1947.
58 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche to Ben Gerig, July 23, 1947.
59 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, July 14, 1947.

5 The Hearings in Palestine

UNSCOP now turned to receiving formal oral and written testimony. While still in New York, the committee had received more than 20,000 proposals, demands, and requests to testify. It established its Subcommittee Two to address these and to draw up criteria for sorting through the requests.[1] Following an exhausting process of sifting through them, the committee decided to hear sixteen formal testimonies in its hearing room at the Jerusalem YMCA. About half of these came from representatives of the Jewish Agency. The British sufficed with two, and the others came from organizations, political parties, and religious figures.

In contrast with these oral testimonies, no restrictions were placed on the submission of written material. Consequently, books, articles, reports, and other documents on a wide range of subjects touching on Palestine and the Jewish people piled up in the committee's library, along with memoranda received from organizations, parties, and institutions, as well as a plethora of individual affidavits, accounts, and requests. The thirty-two metric tons of paper sent to UNSCOP are now housed in the UN Archives in New York and the Sweden National Archives, where they have been largely forgotten. The members of the committee apparently read very little of it. They had a hard time coping with such quantities of material. Chaim Weizmann, the former president of the World Zionist Organization and still one of its most prominent figures, did not understand why the invitation to dinner that he sent the committee received no reply. It turned out that his letter had been added to a pile of unsorted papers and was located only a day before the scheduled meal.[2]

"We Need a Jewish State": Testimony from the Jewish Agency

The leaders of the Jewish Agency plotted out in advance the general line they would take in presenting their case to the committee. First, they would argue that the Jewish people had a right to all of Palestine, and would demand immediate independence. Then, in confidential conversations, they would admit that they were seeking a partition that would grant the Jews a state. At a later stage, they would agree to give an indication of the borders they had in mind.[3] This process would lead to negotiations with UNSCOP, but would

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also serve internal needs. Despite the official and explicit decision made by the Jewish Agency Executive in Paris in August 1946 to seek "a viable Jewish state in an appropriate area of Eretz Israel," it was apparently still difficult for the Jewish public in Palestine, and some of its leaders, to speak explicitly about conceding part of the land. Partition, as the Zionist proposal for a settlement in Palestine, had been adopted only in a general way. No real discussion had been held over the borders this would entail, or over the status of Jerusalem. Neither had it been determined when and in what forum the partition idea would be presented to the committee. That was left to the discretion of the Jewish Agency's leaders and others involved in the matter.[4]

Seeking to offer a reasonable solution for Palestine's Arabs, the Jewish leaders intended to propose a "divide and annex" plan, according to which the part of Palestine granted to the Arabs would be attached to the Kingdom of Transjordan. King Abdullah of Transjordan had a year previously explicitly endorsed the idea,[5] and the Jewish Agency, for tactical reasons, wanted the idea to be broached with UNSCOP by the king. Behind the scenes, the Agency's Arab Branch urged the king to invite the committee to visit him, and to tell it that he supported partition.[6]

The order and content of the Jewish Agency's testimonies was constructed so that partition would be brought up only at a late stage of UNSCOP's time in Palestine. The foundation of the testimony was the Jewish people's historical ties to the Land of Israel, and the rights that derived from that connection. The Jewish Agency witnesses reminded UNSCOP time and again that it was about to make history. As such, it needed to set aside the usual political formulations and short-term interests and to render historical justice. The speakers lectured on the plight of the Jewish people, who had suffered throughout its exile from its land from antisemitism, culminating in the Holocaust. Now, following that catastrophe, the international committee had come to provide a solution for the Jews. The problem of the Jews and of Palestine were both international in nature, Jewish Agency Executive Chairman David Ben-Gurion told the committee. If the Jewish people were not able to establish a state, he warned, another Holocaust was liable to annihilate the Jewish people.[7]

The claims about the Jewish people's historical rights in Palestine were supported by legal arguments. When UNSCOP was appointed, the Jewish Agency immediately took note of the fact that a large number of the members had a legal background. This prompted a special effort to present legal arguments in support of the Zionist case. To make sure that the legal arguments were of the highest order, the Jewish Agency brought in a team of American jurists. It was headed by District Court Judge Simon Rifkind and included prominent academic jurists who were veteran Zionist activists. In the end they worked on the entire set of Zionist testimonies, authoring the great majority of memoranda submitted to the committee, recommending who should testify and what sort of testimony they should offer, and preparing a list of questions that the members of UNSCOP were likely to pose

to the witnesses. Judge Murray Gurfein, another prominent member of the team, traveled to Palestine to help prepare the witnesses.[8]

The legal line of reasoning that ran through all the testimonies was that the British had made a mockery of the Mandate they had been given, violating the commitment they had assumed to develop the country and turn it into a national home for the Jewish people (see Figure 5.1). Britain "is here only as a temporary trustee to carry out an international mandate under specific conditions and with a specific purpose," Ben-Gurion declared, maintaining that the Mandate power's failure to live up to its obligations had legally voided its remit in Palestine.[9] The Jewish Agency witnesses lambasted the British, blaming nearly all Palestine's ills on them. Even the Jewish Agency economic testimonies attacked the British. They refuted the British claims that Palestine's economic capacity to absorb immigrants was limited with computations, maps, and statistics. Peretz Bernstein, director of the Jewish Agency's Trade and Industry Department, and Jewish Agency Treasurer Eliezer Kaplan, proved that "our plan for the absorption of a million Jews during the next decade … is a practical one." The only thing standing in its way was the freeze on immigration and the purchase of land by Jews imposed by the Palestine government. Along with David Horowitz, these economic experts surveyed the economic successes of the Zionist



Figure 5.1 Shertok and Sandström during the Zionist testimony.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

project. The speakers also presented plants for future utilization of land and the development of water resources. They reminded the committee members of the sites they had visited, such as the water reservoir at Kibbutz Revivim. These reminders of what the members had seen with their own eyes seem to have been very effective.[10]

The Jewish Agency witnesses had a harder time, however, with the Arab issue, about which the members of the committee asked them over and over again. The memories of their visits to Arab areas were also fresh in the members' minds. Those did not accord with Ben-Gurion's claim that, prior to British rule, he had worked as a farmer alongside Arab laborers. Not one of them was anti-Jewish, Ben-Gurion maintained. The Zionist claim was that the conflict with the Arabs was the fault of the British, who fomented conflict between the new nations competing for the same slice of cake. The solution of separating the contenders and giving them equal status in their own states would put an end to the constant Arab fear that the Jews would seize control of Palestine, and lead to productive cooperation, Ben-Gurion declared.[11] For UNSCOP, it was the weakest point in the Zionist case. Its members refused to place the blame for Jewish–Arab tensions on the British, and some of them believed that the British were serving as a buffer and were preventing the situation from getting worse. According to some of them, the economic and technical arguments about the realism of the Zionist solution consistently disregarded the fact that the Arabs were not prepared to give up land they viewed as theirs, and that the Arabs who would end up living in the Jewish state would not accede to foreign rule.[12]

Furthermore, Jewish Agency spokesmen noted that Zionist development had brought about a notable rise in the standard of living of the country's Arabs, to the point that it had attracted large-scale Arab immigration from neighboring countries into Palestine. The economy of the independent Jewish state would continue to contribute to Arab prosperity, the Zionists promised. But they did not address the contradiction between that and their aspiration for a complete separation between Jews and Arabs.[13]

The two most important witnesses for the Jewish Agency were David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann, who gave complementary testimonies. Ben-Gurion offered a forceful presentation of the Zionist demands. He nearly had a shouting match with the Indian member of the committee, Sir Abdur Rahman, repeated the same points over and over, and vilified the British. He said nothing about the Jewish Agency being prepared to accept partition; only with intensive interrogation were the committee members able to induce him to make an indirect reference in favor of it.[14] Following Ben-Gurion's testimony, Sandström said to Donald MacGillivray, the British liaison officer, that he had been "surprised at the line taken by Ben-Gurion," and that "he did not understand how the Agency could imagine that such a statement was in their interests."[15]

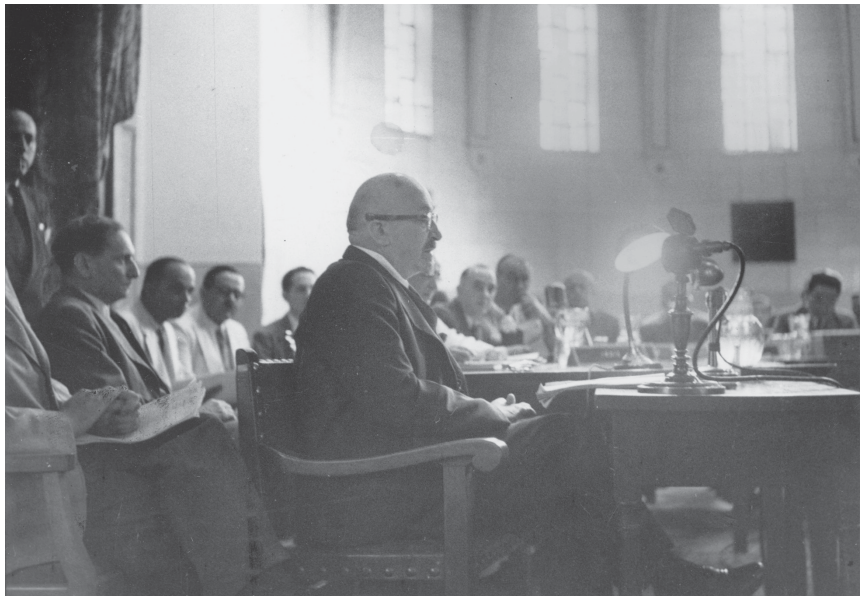


Figure 5.2 Chaim Weizmann's testimony before UNSCOP.
Source: Central Zionist Archives.

Weizmann's testimony was the polar opposite (see Figure 5.2). He spoke with moderation about the suffering of the Jewish people and its special character, and unambiguously about partition and its advantages. To round off his testimony, Weizmann invited the committee members to an intimate get-together at his home in Rehovot. The visit made a very positive impression. Weizmann told them the story of the Jewish people.[16] Having been shunted aside from formal leadership of the Zionist movement, he could permit himself to speak freely. He thus took advantage of the occasion to present his personal philosophy in the clearest possible way.

With the same end in mind, he met with a small group of committee members made up of Sandström, Blom, and Rand, along with Bunche and Hoo from the committee staff. The meeting took place secretly in Sandström's rooms. Weizmann shed the image of the elderly and anguished statesman that he had presented to the full committee. There he had said almost nothing about the British; now he offered his guests his account of what was going on in the British leadership. He explained Bevin's powerful position in the cabinet, and acknowledged that the foreign secretary "frightened" him. He said that, in his opinion, had it not been for the assassination of Lord Moyne in 1944, the British would already have partitioned Palestine, given that then-Prime Minister Winston Churchill had advocated the idea. But the assassination

infuriated him and the idea was put off. According to Weizmann, UNSCOP's job was to carry out what the British should have done but did not (see Figure 5.3).[17]

Weizmann stressed that any solution needed to be "simple and final," and that the Jewish state should be established with the borders set out in the Peel Commission report, with the addition of the Negev. "Hitler … has facilitated the task of UNSCOP," Weizmann remarked mordantly, explaining that the number of immigrants who would come to the new state would be smaller than it would have been prior to the Holocaust. He dismissed the Arabs' apprehension that "the Jews are conspiring to get a bridgehead in the Near East as a basis for a future engulfment of the Arabs," and painted in bright colors the prosperity that the Jewish state would bring to the region, and especially to King Abdullah, whom he termed "moderately progressive whenever it is to his advantage to be progressive." Weizmann stressed the urgency of an immediate solution. According to the record of the conversation, "The Jews, he said, have reached the last stage; 'After this committee it will be God Almighty'."[18]



Figure 5.3 Shertok during Weizmann's testimony. Sitting in front of him are Eliezer Kaplan, the Jewish Agency's treasurer, and David Ben-Gurion.

Source: Central Zionist Archives.

Haganah intelligence adamantly claimed that the meeting with Weizmann led the members of the committee, Sandström and Rand in particular, to adopt the partition concept, and that these two men worked "under the personal influence of Dr. Weizmann."[19] A figure much admired around the world for his scientific achievements, diplomatic acumen, his liberal democratic values, and his work as a tribune of the Jewish nation, Weizmann was the public face of Zionism that seasoned public servants like UNSCOP's members admired, much more amenable to their mindsets than was Ben-Gurion. Perhaps Haganah intelligence overstated his influence, but certainly the advocacy of partition by Weizmann, who at the time was not even a member of the Jewish Agency Executive and appeared before the committee as a private individual, contributed to laying the foundations for the solution that the committee adopted.[20]

A few hours after the clandestine meeting with Weizmann, a delegation of UNSCOP members arrived at the home of Moshe Shertok, chairman of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, at the invitation of the Jewish liaison officers. The purpose of the meeting was for the members to receive the Jewish Agency Executive's explicit consent to partition. Up to this point, the spokesmen for the Jewish Agency had played a game of brinksmanship. For some Zionist leaders, it had been an unnerving tactic; they feared that the opportunity to achieve partition would slip through their fingers and insisted that it was necessary to make a clear statement to the committee that they supported such an outcome. The delegation included Bunche, Hoo, Rand, Blom, Salazar, Lisicky, Entezam, Granados, and of course Sandström. Paul Mohn, Sandström's Swedish deputy but an important figure on the committee, was also included. On the Jewish Agency side were Ben-Gurion, Shertok, Golda Myerson, and other Zionist leaders. The UNSCOP members took the initiative and asked their hosts to comment on several proposed solutions. The first was what they presented as the Rand formula, a "two-state commonwealth with a large amount of local autonomy in each state and with only the neutral powers to be exercised by [a] central authority." The Jewish Agency representatives rejected this idea. Any federal or cantonal arrangement would, they argued, prevent free immigration, which was the most important issue for the future Jewish state.

Sandström summed up the discussion, stating that the Jewish Agency would not object to Rand's proposal as long as each of the two parties would enjoy large measure of autonomy with regard to vital matters, with representation in the United Nations. Notably, he avoided using the word "state." According to the notes taken by Bunche, the Jewish Agency representatives did not challenge the chairman's statement, despite the fact that the organization's senior leaders had explicitly and clearly stated their demand for a state.[21]

The issue of borders was addressed during the second part of the meeting. Here, according to the account Abba Eban offered many years later, Ben-Gurion surprised even his colleagues when he took out a piece of paper and a pencil and sketched out a map. His action was disconcerting to the other

Jewish leaders, as they had not discussed among themselves the details of what borders they would demand. One of them hissed a warning that he was crossing a red line by not adhering to the demand that the Zionist movement issued in 1942, as part of the Biltmore Program, for a Jewish state in all of Palestine. Ben-Gurion ignored him. "We need a Jewish state," Ben-Gurion shot back.[22]

The map Ben-Gurion sketched demonstrates the difference between Weizmann's very clear statement about borders (those proposed by the Peel Commission, plus the Negev) and Ben-Gurion's refusal to relate to any previous proposal. While, like Weizmann, he demanded that the entire Negev be included in the Jewish state, he maintained that the basis for the Jewish state's territory would be the existing Jewish settlements. In addition, however, "it must include the traditionally uninhabited areas of Palestine." He demanded the Dead Sea area and the Galilee as well. He ducked the question of Jerusalem, but said that "part of new Jerusalem [the Jewish neighborhoods and institutions, mostly to the west and south of the Old City] should be part of the Jewish state." He also named several Arab areas that were not to be included in the Jewish state: Jaffa, Nazareth, and Gaza. Shertok, the only one of the Jewish leaders at the meeting who occasionally dared interrupt Ben-Gurion while he was speaking, stressed at the end of the meeting that the demands that had been made were the minimum, and that the Jewish Agency's official position remained that the Jewish state should include all of Palestine as it had originally been defined after the First World War, on both sides of the Jordan River—that is, including the kingdom of Transjordan.[23]

After the meeting the Jewish Agency leaders breathed a sigh of relief—they had finally made their position clear. Later, this event would also be portrayed as a glorious Zionist triumph. Two years later, when the Israeli delegation to the UN was discussing another matter entirely, one of the participants said: "We are liable to find ourselves in the same situation we faced in 1947, before we decided to raise the idea of partition with UNSCOP. There is no doubt that, without that step, the committee would not have accepted the idea that served as the basis for [UNSCOP's] majority proposal."[24]

The importance of the meeting in Shertok's apartment should not be discounted. While UNSCOP already knew that the Zionists were in principle amenable to partition, it did provide an official Jewish Agency imprimatur to the idea. What is certain is that the Jewish Agency's testimony before the committee was, in all its parts, a complete success. It had a real impact on the outcome of the inquiry, although in part thanks to the absence of any effective Arab response and to Britain's refusal to take a position.

"A Great Misfortune for Both Arabs and Jews": The Opponents of Partition Testify

Following the lengthy set of Jewish Agency witnesses, UNSCOP kept its promise to hear the Jewish political parties that differed from that of the

community's leaders, but in practice turned down nearly all requests from non-party movements and organizations that sought merely to echo the Jewish Agency's position. There were a few exceptions, however—spokesmen for the Jewish National Council (Va'ad Leumi), the Yishuv's executive body, and the Histadrut labor union were invited to give testimony. The most important exception to the policy of only hearing from political parties was the appearance of Judah Magnes, president of the Hebrew University and a founder of Ihud, a small group that advocated a binational Jewish-Arab state in Palestine. The committee knew very well that Magnes's views had little support among both Jews and Arabs, but it was an opportunity to hear a reasoned position that differed from that of the official Jewish leadership.[25]

The basis of Magnes's ideology was the principle of political and numerical parity between the Arabs and Jews who would be the citizens of the binational state. To create this parity, the country would open its doors to Jewish immigration, and thus solve the problem of the displaced persons (DPs). The Arabs, he maintained, would consent to immigration if they were assured that the Jews would not become a majority. The country's governmental powers would be divided equally between Jews and Arabs, and equal rights for all citizens would be guaranteed. Britain would oversee a UN trusteeship council that would manage the country during the transition period, until Palestine's inhabitants were able to govern themselves.[26]

In presenting the binational option, Magnes attacked the partition concept. It would be, he said, "a great misfortune for both Arabs and Jews." He argued that life in the region required "good will" between the two nations, and that relations between them had worsened considerably since the Zionist leadership had resolved to seek the establishment of an independent Jewish state.[27] Magnes responded at length to questions from the panel. Chairman Sandström challenged many of Magnes's assertions about the implementation of his plan. He also asked the witness what the Arabs thought of his plan. Magnes's reply did not satisfy the committee. He admitted in the end that his plan would also have to be imposed on the two sides, and that his assumptions about the cooperation that would prevail among Jews and Arabs were based on his claim that supporters of coexistence could not publicly declare their support. After Sandström completed his questions, an extended exchange ensued between Magnes and Rand. A journalist who watched it reported that "this argument touched, perhaps for the first time during the deliberations, on the fundamental problem of the Palestine question."[28] Rand also forced Magnes to address the chances of Jewish–Arab cooperation in the future. Given the doubts that Magnes himself had expressed, Rand wondered at his insistence that the country should not be partitioned into two separate states. Doing so would supply a response to both sides' demands for independent states, and would circumvent the blind alley that joint rule of the type Magnes advocated was likely to lead into.[29]

Granados also noted another weak point in Magnes's position—the transition period, during which the British were supposed to continue to govern

Palestine. Magnes said that the interim phase would be "lengthy" and come to an end only when relations between Jews and Arabs were such that the new country would be governable. The Guatemalan representative saw this as a legal endorsement of continued British rule. He asked Magnes if he thought that the Arabs and Jews would accept British oversight. Magnes said that he could not speak for the Arabs, but that he believed that the Jews would willingly accept it. He based this on the "great admiration" that he and others like him had for "the British tradition of liberalism."[30] Magnes was convinced he had convinced UNSCOP's members, but in fact, in light of all they had seen in Palestine, they were not persuaded that Jews and Arabs could share a country.[31]

The testimony offered by the Jewish Palestine Communist Party made even less of an impression. Three of its leaders testified—Shmuel Mikunis, Wolf Erlich, and Meir Vilner. They pilloried the British, and their message boiled down to "as soon as the Mandatory Power goes there will be no difficulties." UNSCOP's members, who kept probing to receive clear answers about the Communists' operative plans, were able to extract from Vilner a declaration that, in fact, the Communists did not have a clear plan. They supported a binational state or any sort of federal solution, but on condition that it be done with the consent of both sides. These Jewish Communists were willing to go farther toward the Arabs than Magnes was—they rejected the idea of numerical parity between Jews and Arabs, and maintained that Jewish immigration to Palestine should be extremely limited. The problem of the DPs should be solved by moving the refugees to other countries, not Palestine.[32]

Although Blom reported to his Foreign Ministry that the Communists' testimony did not make much of an impression, the members of the committee nevertheless gave weight to what the Communists said because they viewed it as the Soviet position.[33] The members had no doubts that the testimony was coordinated with UNSCOP's Yugoslavian delegation. During the questioning, when Simic posed questions to Mikunis, the latter read the answers from a page he held, indicating that the witness had been given the questions in advance. Vilner, who had failed to offer a clear account of what sort of government Palestine should have, nevertheless said that the aspiration was "a democratic government like Yugoslavia's."[34] Simic and Brilej made no effort to conceal that they were in concert with their fellow Communists.[35]

The Communist testimony was not of much use, but given the importance the committee attached to it, the witnesses were asked to appear for an additional session. UNSCOP's members wanted to find out whether the shared ideology of the Jewish and Arab Communists in Palestine (the latter had split off from the Palestine Communist Party in 1943 and established their own party, the National Liberation League) meant that they cooperated politically. They did not, the Jewish Communists acknowledged, but insisted that it was only for technical and organizational reasons. But the members of UNSCOP took note that even Jewish and Arab Communists had not found a way to work together.[36]

The excuses the Jewish Communists offered for their lack of cooperation with their Arab counterparts was an attempt to cover up the fact that the former had made a huge but abortive effort to establish close relations with the National Liberation League. The members of the latter, who wavered between their desire to cooperate with UNSCOP and their reluctance to breach the boycott imposed on them by the Arab Higher Committee, in the end squared the circle by submitting a memorandum to the UN secretary-general. It reiterated, in general terms, the claims made by the Jewish Communists, laying out the many drawbacks of partition.[37]

The final testimony to address the binational state proposal and a solution based on "a considerable section of opinion" that supposedly could be found among the Jews and Arabs, came from the League for Jewish–Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation. Aharon Cohen, the organization's secretary, also squirmed when asked about Arab collaboration in the proposal he offered. Cohen, a member of Hashomer Hatza'ir, claimed that there were Arabs who had wanted to present their views to UNSCOP, but that he and his colleagues "did not encourage them" to do so because "we need such friends for further work and cooperation." He told the members of the committee that he did not want these friends to share the fate of Fawzī Darwīsh al-Ḥussaynī, who had been murdered in March 1947, a short time after an organization he headed had signed an agreement with Cohen's League.[38]

The Testimony of the Religious Communities

In inviting religious leaders to testify, UNSCOP was fulfilling the explicit bidding of its writ of authority. That document stated that it "shall give most careful consideration to the religious interests on Palestine of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity." The committee had hoped that the Supreme Muslim Council, the body responsible for the religious affairs of Palestine's Muslims, would consent to testify, and in doing so help UNSCOP cope with the Arab boycott.[39] UNSCOP invited all the country's religious sects and churches to appear, no matter how small. Letters were sent to the Druze, Baha'is, Samaritans, and all the Christian confessions.[40] Most of them did not respond to the invitations, and the Supreme Muslim Council refused to appear.[41] The Christians responded positively, but most said they preferred to submit their testimony in writing. Jewish religious leaders responded enthusiastically, and UNSCOP soon found itself learning the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews and how to distinguish between different Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) communities. In the end, in order not to give offense to any of the sects, it had no choice but to allow most to testify.[42]

UNSCOP thus heard from Palestine's two chief rabbis; representatives of Agudat Yisra'el, the largest Haredi organization; representatives of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities; and the religious Zionists. The Sephardi testimony offered something new. Eliyahu Elyashar, the president of the Sephardi Community Committee, spoke of the grave situation facing Jewish

communities in the Arab states. His testimony indicated that these communities would also seek refuge in the Jewish state, if it were established.[43] Most of the other Jewish witnesses offered religious reinforcement of the Jewish Agency's positions, focusing on the Jewish people and the horrors of the Holocaust, which was given center stage in these testimonies. Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Levin, who headed the Agudat Yisra'el delegation, spoke at length of his personal tribulations until he was "by miracle saved from the wide-open jaws of the monster. I do not know why I of all should have been privileged to escape the fire that enveloped us all in the crematories of Trablynka [sic] and Auschwitz, or is it that I should be their messenger to bring their cries before you?" He told the committee about his family and his three grandchildren "who were burned together with all the other children of Israel," and demanded that UNSCOP "repair then the great injustice done to the People of the Lord."[44]

UNSCOP then turned to the Christians. The central subject was the holy sites, a charged issue in which the members sought some sort of key to a solution. They presumably hoped also to divine the Holy See's position, which might help them navigate the issue.[45] Despite its boycott, the Arab Higher Committee met with the Christian spokesmen and asked them to support its position in their testimony.[46]

The Arabs also put pressure on the pope. At least two Arab delegations visited the Vatican, seeking to persuade him to intervene. But Pius XII declined to issue a pro-Arab statement. In the end, UNSCOP was left in the fog on the Christian front as well. The Vatican's position since the end of the Second World War had been that all of Palestine should be ruled under UN auspices, "so as to preserve the sacred character of the birthplace of Jesus." But in 1947, for a variety of reasons, it began retreating from this position. At the time UNSCOP conducted its inquiry, none of the solutions that had come before the committee were to the liking of the Holy See. It opposed the establishment of a Jewish state in principle. But, while the Catholic community in the Middle East unambiguously supported the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine, the pope preferred not to support either that position or partition. He focused on protecting the holy sites and the status of the Palestinian Catholic community.[47]

This position was conveyed to UNSCOP behind closed doors by Brother Simon Bonaventure, representing the Custos of the Holy Land, the custodian of Catholic holy places in Palestine. Bonaventure said that UNSCOP needed to provide "solid international guarantees embodying effective protective measures for the safeguarding and preservation of these Christian shrines." He did not demand a special political status to this end, but reiterated the importance of putting in place a special arrangement for all the country's holy sites. The approach he presented was convoluted, making it hard for the committee to tell if the contradictions and prevarications were meant to get the maximum profit out of the situation or whether it was a deliberate attempt not to voice a clear position. In the face of cross-examination, Bonaventure

acknowledged that what the Church wanted in the case of "the Shrines in Jerusalem and Bethlehem" was an "enclave," as opposed to the holy sites elsewhere, where it sought only protection.[48]

The second round of Christian testimony was public. Statements were made by two representatives of the Anglican church and one of the Scottish church. It was less important than what had preceded it. The speakers declined to address "political questions," and expressed understanding of both Jewish and Arab demands. They did not focus on the holy sites, but rather on concern for the Christian minority and the need to find a mechanism for protecting Christian interests in whatever future arrangement that came to pass.[49] The memoranda submitted by the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Patriarchates took a similar form.[50] In fact, all the Christian testimonies were clear about one thing—the absolute importance of maintaining the status quo with regard both to the holy places and the status of the country's Christians, which was at risk of being upended by any new regime. What was notable to UNSCOP was that the apprehensions voiced by each Christian sect about the future regime did not revolve around the possibility that the regime itself would restrict Christian freedom of worship at the holy sites, but rather that it was liable to favor a sect with competing demands for control of or rights in specific shrines.[51]

The committee's impression was that the Christian community was insular. Blom, the Dutch delegate, who had personal contacts with church leaders, found that Christian clerics had little interest in the political decisions that the Arabs and Jews needed to make. Nevertheless, a few Christian leaders, among them the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, acknowledged to him that "the Jewish leadership will better look after Christian interests than the Muslim leadership." This momentous statement did not prevent the same bishop's deputy from saying exactly the opposite to Dr. Izzat Tannous, an Arab political leader allied with the Arab Higher Committee, who met him before the bishop himself appeared before UNSCOP, to hear what the Christians would be saying in their testimony.[52]

"A Thankless Task": The British Testimonies

The British, whose conduct had already raised eyebrows during the early stages of the committee's work, overdid it in their testimony. The official testimony of the government of Palestine took up only two of the sixteen sessions at which UNSCOP heard testimony, equal to the only marginally important testimony offered by the Palestine Communist Party. The three thick volumes of *A Survey of Palestine* in fact constituted the main part of the British testimony. They had been prepared for the Anglo-American Committee and offered a detailed survey of all aspects of the British Mandate in Palestine, including its political history from the time of its establishment, and the difficulties it had coped with as a result of the Arab-Jewish conflict. The volumes also laid out the attainments of the Mandate government in

many areas, and its contribution to putting the country's economy on a firm footing.[53]

The testimony provided informally by High Commissioner Alan Cunningham was the most important, but it was provided just before UNSCOP left Palestine, and did not touch on the issues that most preoccupied the members. The only real testimony that directly addressed a political solution was memoranda that the British provided to the committee only after it arrived in Geneva, following its stay in Palestine. It proposed a partition that would create a very small Jewish state. Its late submission impaired its effect.

At the start of the inquiry, most of the members were favorably disposed toward Britain; they were interested in listening to the British and seriously considering what they said. The questions that the committee staff prepared for the members to pose to senior British officials were straightforward. At the top was "What, in your opinion, is the best solution to the Palestine question?" In the event that an official evaded a direct answer, there was a set of questions about different options that could be posed to him. A large number of questions addressed Jewish terror. British officers would be asked to estimate how much support Etzel and Lehi had in the Jewish public, and to say why they had not disarmed the two militias. Other questions covered Jewish-Arab relations and the future of the conflict between them. On this latter issue, the British were seen as a source of reliable information.[54]

Immediately after landing in Palestine, Sandström had discreetly asked the British to establish an informal channel of communication. He received no response.[55] Instead, following the furor over the British demand to conduct the inquiry behind closed doors, the committee received a briefing from Henry Gurney, the chief secretary of the Palestine government, about how to use the fact and data books they had received. The section on Jewish-Arab cooperation, the only part of the prepared questions that were actually posed, were answered superficially and evasively. There was no analysis and no opinion was offered.[56]

It quickly became apparent to the committee members that the British were keeping much important material from them, and that the lack of it would make their work more difficult. The chairman, still waiting for an answer regarding the informal channel he had proposed, asked the British to supply the rest of the written material they had. This included the minutes of the London Conference talks of September 1946 and January–February 1947, which could illuminate the true positions of each side, and would certainly be of use to UNSCOP. Another important set of documents that the committee wanted related to the Morrison-Grady Plan, formulated on the basis of the Anglo-American inquiry. They also sought other documents relating to partition, which they believed the British to have. Sandström did not receive a flat-out refusal, but in practice he received only a small part of the requested material, and even that only at a late stage of the inquiry.[57] Nevertheless, the chairman did not let up and kept pushing for the establishment of the back

channel. In response to these repeated overtures, Cunningham asked for clarifications about the issue, seeking to understand just what Sandström was looking for. "He was vague on the point," the high commissioner reported to London. "He particularly mentioned that they would like to know in this manner whether there was a likelihood of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] accepting any proposals [UNSCOP] had in mind and also H.M.G.'s views on the practicality of any scheme they produced." But even after this talk Sandström received no clear answer from the British.[58]

The conduct of the British looked as if they were ignoring the committee. That, coming on top of the tension produced by the death sentences against the Etzel operatives, explains the committee's crisis of confidence with the Mandate power. The disappointment and affront felt by the members of the committee presumably could have been avoided had they been party to the large amount of correspondence in which the British addressed their requests, not to mention the strain felt by British officials in Jerusalem and overseas as a result of the policy toward the committee that they were required to implement against their better judgment. As the British saw it, the root of the matter was the pair of words "without recommendations." UNSCOP was a test of the "no recommendations" tactic crafted by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. For the eleven members of UNSCOP conducting the inquiry, Palestine was an unknown land. Furthermore, they had to craft recommendations quickly. They were desperate for help. Most of them, at least at the start of the inquiry, expected to receive that help from the British, but the British were mum. The committee's hosts took on a task that was the opposite of simple—to spend time with their guests, treat them affably, to speak to them and explain matters, but not to give any hint about what the guests wanted to hear more than anything else—what the British thought the best outcome would be. It is hardly surprising, then, that, among themselves, the British were constantly rehashing and reconsidering the logic behind the "no recommendations" policy.

In referring the Palestine issue to the UN without offering any recommendations as to the settlement Britain preferred was meant to absolve the Mandate power of the need to craft a Palestine policy. By refusing to recommend, it also washed its hands of responsibility for the results of any future arrangement that UNSCOP might recommend, and which Britain did not like. In any case, the Arabs would almost certainly oppose any arrangement other than immediate independence for Palestine under Arab rule; by refusing to take a stand, the British also avoided angering the Arabs. They were concerned that even the slightest hint that they favored any given arrangement would cause the committee to label it the preferred British option and, as such, to favor it over other proposals. The committee, they worried, would think that such a solution came with a warrantee, since if the British favored it, they would most likely support it down the line and agree to implement it—a major advantage over all other possibilities.[59] Given Sandström's efforts to establish an informal channel, the British concerns were hardly unreasonable.

In the meantime, Sandström told Gurney that the committee needed material and data on several issues. "I have told him that we have a good deal of material on the various aspects of this," the chief secretary wrote to London, chafing at the instructions that forbade him to supply it. "I feel it is perhaps a little unfair to expect them to think out all these problems for themselves."[60] Colleagues of his also wanted to provide material to UNSCOP, and to brief them on a number of British plans that had been proposed and examined and which remained on paper.[61]

The frustration forced senior officials to hone their views and discuss the entire process of handing the Palestine question over to the UN without recommendations. Roger Louis, one of the great historians of the final days of the British Empire in the Middle East, argues that the referral of Palestine to the UN was a tactical move by Foreign Secretary Bevin. It grew, according to Louis, out of the view that British interests in the region would not be harmed in any case.[62] Foreign Office officials maintained that after a trial by fire in Palestine, any rational observer would realize that any arrangement had to be based on the British—either a new version of a British mandate, or adoption of one of the political solutions the British had proposed in the London talks, based on cantonal autonomy.[63] Whatever the case, partition, which the Foreign Office's professional staff believed contradicted its pro-Arab policy, looked implausible. They maintained that, in any case, partition would not be able to gain the support of a majority in the UN, because the Russians and Americans would refuse to cooperate. In other words, even if UNSCOP were to decide on partition, the General Assembly would not endorse it, and the British would receive a new mandate under better conditions.[64] The actions of Harold Beeley, who, as an adviser to Bevin, was involved in the establishment of UNSCOP, are consistent with this view. But as powerful as Bevin was in the British Cabinet of 1947, he was not the only figure with a hand in Palestine policy. Bevin seems to have wanted to maneuver the UN into a position in which it would be easy for the British to guarantee their interests. But some of his Cabinet colleagues clearly viewed the referral to the UN as an opportunity to unload Palestine, even if the price to be paid was a loss of influence over the ultimate settlement. "The Committee have been subject in New York to propaganda to the effect that His Majesty's Government were not sincere in referring the Palestine problem for decision by the United Nations," Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones cautioned his subordinates. "To avoid any risk of appearing to confirm suspicions of this kind … [it would be] most desirable that we should be prepared to give without hesitation the most complete replies which are permissible to the questions I have mentioned." While this directive referred specifically to the armed forces stationed in Palestine, the message, conveyed prior to the commencement of UNSCOP's inquiry, clearly demonstrates the overall approach of the colonial secretary and his office.[65] Cunningham, who reported to the Colonial Office, saw eye-to-eye with Creech-Jones. He presumed that, at a later stage in the inquiry, a senior British official would appear before the committee to clarify British policy. He also,

on a number of occasions, stressed the importance he ascribed to UNSCOP's work and to the report it would submit. He maintained that the British should assist in the composition of a serious and comprehensive report.[66]

The different opening positions on UNSCOP within the British government soon turned into very real disparities. MacGillivray's reports that partition was gaining support among the committee's members raised specters from the recent and more distant past among British officials who had dealt with Palestine's future. Previous proposals could be divided into two types, one based on the partition of territory[67] and the other on the division of governmental authority between the two peoples. When the Labor party came to power in Britain in 1945, it brought with it a fundamental change with regard to Palestine policy. Partition, meaning the establishment of a Jewish state in a part of Palestine, which had been the leading template in the previous Conservative government led by Winston Churchill, was set aside in favor of the division of government, meaning a binational state with cantonal autonomy. Bevin was an avid supporter of this principle, largely because of his pro-Arab orientation. Every solution he proposed was a variation on this paradigm.[68]

But given the dead end that British Palestine found itself in, many Colonial Office and Mandate officials believed that Bevin's policy was fundamentally in error. As Cunningham put it, only some sort of partition offered a chance for a solution. But Bevin would not give in. He urged Creech-Jones to file away the partition plan that the latter had presented to the cabinet a few months prior to UNSCOP's establishment, and rebuffed members of the Cabinet who supported partition. The Foreign Office's opposition to partition grew out of the anti-Zionist and pro-Arab views of its staff, which was not shared by their counterparts in the Colonial Office. Prior to the referral of Palestine to the UN, the Foreign Office's—that is, Bevin's—position was officially adopted by the cabinet, but the breach between the officials of both offices remained.[69]

UNSCOP's partiality for partition rekindled its supporters, but they now had to conform to the without recommendations policy. Cunningham and Gurney, as well as MacGillivray and his superior John Martin, assistant undersecretary at the Colonial Office, and many others who were charged with serving what Bevin had cooked, all supported partition, but the foreign secretary, while he did not involve himself in the details of the inquiry, tied their hands.[70]

Beeley, in the Foreign Office in London, was unpleasantly surprised by the reports of the success of the Zionist spokesmen and UNSCOP's growing interest in partition. At the start of the inquiry he had advocated leaving it to its own devices, but he changed his mind and now wanted to accede to Sandström's request for secret testimony. The purpose would be to "advise" the committee and point out the difficulties that partition presented. "Mr. Beeley's letter reflects the grave apprehension which is always shown by the Foreign Office toward a partition decision," a Colonial Office official wrote to his colleagues. "They have not yet been able to recommend any more practical

solution of the problem as an alternative, and from the Colonial Office point of view it would be most unfortunate if we were to take a decision which might influence the committee against putting up a fully worked-out plan, e.g., for partition."[71]

Like many of his colleagues, Martin was furious. He also opposed sending a senior official to speak to the committee and to lay out Britain's preferences. He wrote acerbically that "since His Majesty's Government have themselves failed to make up their minds and there is no clear policy on the subject, it would be very difficult for a representative to express an opinion."[72] MacGillivray was required to report to Martin, so the latter responded on a daily basis to the liaison officer's questions, and to the distress signals MacGillivray was sending. The senior official most familiar with UNSCOP, he supported partition. Indeed, he had served previously as the secretary of the Peel Commission, which recommended it. He was also attuned to the winds blowing between the two responsible ministries. That may explain the sequence of events that was so uncharacteristic of orderly entities like the British ministries. "Mohn and Bunche are more conscious than other members of the Committee and senior secretariat staff of the extreme shortness of the time at the disposal of the Committee," MacGillivray wrote in a personal letter to Martin. He went on at length about the merits of the two men and their work focusing on possible partition plans, as well as the many requests they had sent to him. "While Mohn was in my office on Saturday looking at maps and asking for other particulars, I therefore handed him a copy of that document and authorised him to show it to Bunche and to Sandström on the understanding that it went no further." The document in question was "'Palestine: A Study of Partition," a classified Colonial Office memorandum of April 1947, prepared as a contingency plan for the eventuality that UNSCOP would tilt clearly toward recommending that solution. He was, in fact, forbidden under any circumstances to provide the UN delegation with this document, which surveyed and compared four partition proposals. The liaison officer said that he had made it clear to Mohn that it was for informative purposes only and did not in any way express an opinion. He asked Martin for retroactive sanction for what he had done. He also proposed allowing the other members of the committee to see the memorandum, but recommended doing this only when the committee reached Geneva, after completing its work in Palestine. He maintained that once it was provided to the entire committee, it would be leaked to the Jewish Agency. The public relations damage that would cause would be less severe if it happened in Geneva, he wrote.[73]

The letter Martin sent to MacGillivray did more than just sanction the action. "Although I am not sending individual acknowledgments of your various letters and telegrams about UNSCOP," he wrote, "I should like you to know how extremely interesting and useful we have found them." He commended him on his hard work and added that he was interested in giving the committee the document that MacGillivray had already given to Mohn, "if the occasion arises."[74] In keeping with his understanding with MacGillivray,

Mohn passed the memorandum on to Sandström, but that was kept confidential and British decision makers were not informed. That being the case, Cunningham wrote to the colonial secretary nine days later, asking for permission to show the memorandum "only to the chairman," not knowing that Sandström already had it in his possession. In any case, aware of how sensitive the subject was, he proposed sending MacGillivray to London to discuss the matter.[75]

In the later part of UNSCOP's visit to Palestine its relations with the British stabilized. The members accepted the situation. Those who had expected to be briefed by their hosts took stock of the attitude and slowly ceased to see any need to take the British into account in reaching their recommendations. On the other side, the members who had been apprehensive about British involvement in the inquiry relaxed. They prepared to make the best of Gurney's second appearance before them, preparing questions aimed at moving the inquiry forward rather than to vilify the Mandate administration.[76] Sandström continued to urge the British to give testimony covertly. At the beginning of the inquiry he did this in accord with a majority of the committee's members, but by this point he was conducting the contacts without informing his colleagues. The British, for their part, had a special relationship with the chairman, and consented to provide him with the records of the London talks, on condition that they would be for his "personal and confidential use only."[77] Sandström found himself in an odd situation. His colleagues, who had given up on the British, authorized him to approach the Arab states and ask them for copies of the minutes of the London talks, when he actually had the minutes in his rooms.[78]

The British attitude toward UNSCOP had undergone a change for the better. The Haganah's intelligence service, Shai, which had up to this point accumulated information testifying to British disdain for UNSCOP and its members, began to report that "the committee's standing has risen among [British] officials."[79] The change might have been brought about by Trafford Smith, assistant secretary in the Colonial Office, who arrived in Palestine and dealt with UNSCOP as at least part of his mission. Officials in London found it difficult to assess the real mood of the committee. The press frequently reported that there was a crisis between the committee and the British, but MacGillivray persisted in telling his superiors that relations were professional and proper. A memorandum that an official in London submitted to Bevin, which the foreign secretary disseminated to the staffs of both the Foreign and Colonial Offices, maintained that the British insistence on not taking a position was likely to be interpreted by the committee's members as a "negative attitude." It argued that the British were on the defensive because of the line taken by the Zionists. The committee, it warned, was liable to accept the truth of the Zionist indictment of British rule and include that in its report. According to the document, the UN was an arena in which British prestige would be put to the test. The British thus needed to be in a respectable position when the committee's report came before the General Assembly. The

memorandum led to suggestions of how to "create a healthier atmosphere" as quickly as possible. Smith's deputation to Palestine seems to have been a part of this new view. He oversaw matters from close up and was involved in preparing Cunningham's informal testimony.[80]

This was the lay of the land when UNSCOP convened, just one day prior to leaving Palestine, to hear the most important British testimony. Most of it was a response to the claims of the Jewish Agency. The Zionists had succeeded in putting the British on the defensive. Gurney was accompanied by six senior officials—the attorney general of the Mandate administration, the heads of the health, education, and labor offices, the director of the lands department, and the chief statistician. They each responded to questions from the committee members on their areas of responsibility. In comparison with Gurney's earlier testimony, the meeting was relaxed and pleasant, and the testimony offered by the officials was detailed and touched on important points. Sandström, for example, interrogated the education officer, Bernard de Bunsen, on the oversight of the material taught in schools. In response, the offer noted that Arab schools were under the direct control of the government's education department, and that there was thus satisfactory government oversight. Most Jewish schools, however, were under the purview of the Jewish National Council. De Bunsen noted that one of the goals of Jewish education was to establish an independent Jewish community in which national values would be instilled in school children. Sandström asked why the government did not "exercise an efficient control over what a teacher will say in the classroom when he is teaching?" De Bunsen replied frankly that "it is really impossible to control effectively what goes on from moment to moment in a classroom in Palestine without turning our Inspectorate into a Gestapo."[81]

On its last day in Palestine, the committee posed questions from the list that had been prepared in New York, but received no answer. It grilled Gurney about Etzel and Lehi and the smuggling in of arms from overseas. Gurney said that the British were doing all they could, but were not successful in preventing weapons from being brought in. Rahman was dumbfounded by this, "in spite of all these troops, and in spite of all the police at your command." The British spokesmen were imperturbable. It was not that they were neglecting or ignoring the problem, but they acknowledged that they were having trouble coping with the phenomenon.[82]

The new British willingness to cooperate appeared alongside the difficult and dissonant *Exodus* affair. The British government representatives appeared before the committee on the day that the would-be immigrants were expelled from the Haifa port. When they left, the committee listened to Sandström and Simic tell of their visit to the ship. Bevin, who had personally handled the affair, was fully aware of the delicate situation in the committee, but was nevertheless resolved to take an adamant stand against illegal immigration. Cunningham, one of the most notable opponents of the response to the *Exodus*, protested to London that the Foreign Office's policy had offset the improvement in relations with the committee.[83]

As part of the attempts to neutralize the image of the British painted in the Zionist testimonies, and in an effort to meet at least some of UNSCOP's expectations of a clarification of the British position, High Commissioner Cunningham invited the members of the committee to an informal gathering at his residence. Cunningham did his best to make an impression on the inquiry despite the constraints placed on him by the Foreign and Colonial Offices. But he was able to assume only narrow room for maneuver. In any case, the meeting was designated a secret one, and at its start the participants were asked not to take notes.[84]

Flanked by commanders of the British forces in Palestine, the high commissioner opened with an apology on the paucity of testimony from the government; the present meeting, he said, was meant to compensate for that. He responded at length to the accusations that the British were anti-Zionist. The Zionist testimony had, Cunningham said, given the members of UNSCOP the impression that the conflict in Palestine was between civilians and a military regime, when in fact the real problem was the "bitter conflict between the Arabs and Jews." The British were in fact carrying out a thankless task and were under attack from both sides. Cunningham expounded on the huge abyss that separated the Jews and Arabs, and how helpless the British were in the face of it. Following this grim depiction of the situation, he enumerated the difficult problems the British faced in imposing order in Palestine. It was a rare sort of confession—at the start of the inquiry, the British had tried to give the message that the security situation was satisfactory, but Cunningham now offered a diametrically opposed assessment. To illustrate it, he told the committee about a British policeman who had been shot and lay wounded in the street. No one who passed by lifted a finger to help him.[85]

He devoted the final part of his presentation to the solution. He maintained that there was no solution acceptable to both sides. With that as the starting point, he tried to offer a general outline of a possible arrangement. Jewish immigration was the principal problem, he said. Palestine, he maintained, could not serve as the only solution for the DPs. He described the nationalism that was burgeoning among both Jews and Arabs, and asserted that any solution would have to supply the demands for independence and sovereignty. He offered figures. In the case of partition, the Arab state would not be economically viable without outside assistance. Any solution that might be proposed would be opposed, and as such there would need to be a serious and effective enforcement mechanism. In any arrangement, it would be necessary to see to those who would be left a minority—Jews, Muslims, or Christians. Another factor that would have to be taken into account was that there were large armed forces in the field. The holy places were especially problematic and complex. Suggesting that these places be placed under international supervision, he stressed that he was only offering his personal opinion. In conclusion, Cunningham stressed the urgency of a detailed and final solution. A deterioration of the situation in Palestine, he warned, could lead to a global conflict.[86]

The members of the committee argued among themselves following the meeting. Some of them understood Cunningham to be indicating that the British wanted to remain in Palestine; others concluded that the British wanted to leave. While Cunningham had intimated partition, he did not speak clearly, and the committee members did not bother to interpret every crumb of British information.[87] In recounting the meeting in his diary, Mohn focused on the backdrop of muffled explosions and gunfire. A British soldier from time to time brought a note into the room updating the army officers about a new act of terror that had just taken place. "On the trip back we were accompanied by a British armored car," Mohn wrote, "but our feeling was that we would have been more secure without the escort."[88]

The "Special Series": Testimonies in the Informal Channel

In addition to the public presentations, the committee collected testimonies that were given informally, to one or more of the members. These were called Special Series, an effort to produce a report that would be the product of comprehensive and exhaustive investigation. At first the intention was that this would be limited to testimonies from the "undergrounds," as UNSCOP referred to the Haganah, Etzel, and Lehi. But the Arab boycott placed the testimonies of those Arabs who agreed to speak in the same category. The idea was Sandström's, who enlisted Bunche in the effort as well. Bunche was involved in arranging these meetings, and recorded and edited the testimonies. The records of the talks were provided to the members of the committee as supplementary material, when they arrived in Geneva.[89]

Sandström worked on obtaining testimony from the Jewish militias from the early days of the committee's work. While still in New York, he had told Beeley that he wanted to make contact with these organizations. The naivety of the request was dispelled when the committee arrived in Palestine and the British made it clear that they would arrest any wanted person they saw, even if the capture was enabled by the person's contact with the committee.[90] Despite this, and the damage that might be done to relations with the British if such contacts surfaced, the members of UNSCOP viewed this testimony as vital. Etzel and Lehi also made repeated requests to testify before the committee, further prodding Sandström to take an initiative.[91]

A few days after the committee arrived in Palestine, the chairman had a conversation with Carter Davidson, the Associated Press's chief correspondent in Palestine, who had connections with Etzel. Following a week of preparations, Sandström, Hoo, and Bunche took a hotel room in Tel Aviv. They snuck out that night and were taken by a series of cars that drove through the city. Bunche later wrote three dense pages just about the preparations for the meeting,[92] which he referred to in his diary as "my most exciting adventure in Palestine." In the end, the three men found themselves face to face with Menachem Begin, Etzel's commander.[93]

Begin thanked the three men for trying to intervene to avert the death sentences against the Etzel men. He then offered a lengthy history of Etzel. Noting that Etzel had halted its violent actions against the British during the Second World War, and that the British had in return ignored the plight of the Jews by blocking entry to Palestine for European Jews who had a chance of being rescued. He termed the British a brutal occupier and recounted in detail how young boys had lost their lives simply because they belonged to Etzel. After Begin's statement, the three UNSCOP men posed a long series of questions. Shmuel Katz, Etzel's communications chief, sat next to Begin and answered some of the questions. The UNSCOP representatives inquired about relations between Etzel, Lehi, and the Haganah, and the extent of coordination between them, and received answers. They also tried to get an estimate of the size of the armed Jewish forces, and asked Begin what he thought would happen if the British left and the Arabs attacked. Begin replied that in such a case the Arabs would be soundly defeated. He said he had no doubt about that. The most important question in this exchange was "whether, if the British were out of the country and the Jewish state could be created, [Etzel] would dissolve." Bunche jotted down: "Mr. Begin answered 'yes'."[94]

Sandström pressed Begin on the future of Palestine. Begin declared that Etzel "rejects partition and will fight against it" and that "a country … is a thing no one is entitled to trade." The Etzel leaders supplemented their ideology with an original claim, that the British statistics about the Arab population were exaggerated and counterfeit for political reasons. A real census would show that the true numbers of Jews and Arabs in Palestine were entirely different from those provided to the committee. Sandström asked him "whether [Etzel] would fight against a solution which might be acceptable to the majority of the Jewish people but which did not meet all of the aims and conditions" that his organization had declared. Begin responded in essence that, in the case of partition, Etzel would not make difficulties and would seek to participate in the state that would be established. At the end of the meeting, UNSCOP's chairman said that he was sorry that the other members of the committee could not also hear the testimony, but promised to convey the substance to them. He asked those present not to publicize the meeting until the committee left Palestine.[95]

But the meeting leaked to the press just a few hours later. The British were furious. Members of Parliament asked how UNSCOP's chairman had located Begin so easily when the government of Palestine had been unable to apprehend him for five years. Sandström immediately issued a denial, and a British investigation indicated that the story had been fabricated. MacGillivray put it down as part of the Hebrew press's effort to tarnish relations between UNSCOP and the British.[96] None of this kept Bunche from conveying a summary of the meeting to the Etzel command for approval and comments on his notes. Begin even sent a personal letter to Sandström following the meeting.[97]

The Etzel testimony was important to the committee because they wanted to hear also the positions of people whom the British sought to prevent from

appearing. It also showed observers that the committee was serious and independent. For much the same reasons, the committee thought it necessary to hear from the Haganah, the Yishuv's semi-official and semi-legal militia. As the Arabs were threatening to attack the Jews and to fight any agreement that would grant Jewish independence in Palestine, the committee knew that any solution that involved a British withdrawal would portend war. It was only logical to consider whether the Zionist demand for a state would not be, for the Yishuv, a death sentence under UN auspices. The members of the committee tried to get Ben-Gurion to address the issue in his public testimony. "Is Hagana[h] an armed force?" Sandström asked him. "I hope they are," Ben-Gurion replied, eliciting laughter from the crowd. He was then asked how strong a force it was. "I can't tell you," he replied, "but I am sure if you want to see the people of the Haganah they will gladly appear before you, and they will be able to give you the actual information."[98]

UNSCOP representatives met with the Haganah leadership after speaking to Begin, and soon before leaving Palestine. Once again, they were Sandström, Hoo, and Bunche, and once again the connection was made via American journalists. But the lead-up and backdrop were much less dramatic. Setting up the meeting was simple and expeditious compared to that with Etzel. On the opposite side of the table were four senior figures from the Haganah. The chief of the Haganah National Command, Israel Galili, was the main speaker. They made no statement, simply offering to answer questions from the representatives. Bunche was very impressed. "They were very forthright and self-assured. They seemed to be both competent and determined," he wrote.[99]

They described the Haganah as a people's army, and said without hesitation that the Jewish community would obey the Haganah's orders. "Is Hagana[h] the army of the Jewish Agency?" the UNSCOP representatives asked. "De jure, no; de facto, yes," was the reply. The Haganah leaders did not seek to evade straight answers. They even said where their funding came from: "Jews abroad, especially Jews in the United States and England." Nor did they hide the number of troops and the types of forces. Much of the meeting addressed illegal immigration. The Haganah commanders told the UNSCOP people about efforts and success. Sandström wondered whether they were currently able to bring in immigrants. "Naturally," he was told. He also asked about relations with Etzel and Lehi. The Haganah men recounted the ups and downs of those relations and declared that they opposed terror. They also promised that they would seek to rescue the two abducted British sergeants. As for a solution, they deferred to the "Jewish authorities." They did not decide such matters for themselves, they said. "In a Jewish state would Hagana[h] be the army?" they were asked. Galili replied that that would be the state's decision to make.[100]

The message that UNSCOP received was that the Haganah was functioning for all intents and purposes as an army. That was clear in the commanders' response to the Haganah's capacity for facing up to future Arab aggression.

The commanders clearly had been expecting the question. Their reply was well thought out and thorough, taking up two full pages in the report of the meeting. In brief, the Haganah was convinced that it could repel an Arab attack, even a concerted one from the Arab states. Morale in their forces was high, they said, and noted that they had an advanced weapons industry. They were also convinced that American Jewry would mobilize to help out. The Haganah had the ability to strike at the airfields and naval bases of any Arab country that joined the attack on Palestine. Yadin compared the Arab forces to those he commanded, based on information from the Haganah's "very good intelligence service." Sandström asked for details, and the commanders replied that all possible scenarios had been considered, offering specific information on each.[101]

Sandström did not offer any indication of his reaction, but in fact the encounter made a huge impression on him. In a conversation with a member of the American delegation to the UN after UNSCOP submitted its report, he predicted that, if the Jews were attacked, the Haganah, joined by Etzel and Lehi, would decimate the Arab forces. If the Jews and Arabs in Palestine fought each other without outside Arab intervention, the Jews, he forecast, would defeat the Arabs and gain control over most of Palestine.[102] With the Arabs boycotting the committee, they too became an object of the Special Series. The effort was to bring testimony from senior Palestinian Arab figures before the committee. At the end of the process, it was decided that three such testimonies would be included. They were largely the product of Bunche's contacts with the high levels of Arab society in Jerusalem. Bunche documented his meetings and was involved in making up the list of UNSCOP participants. Sandström and Hoo were always present, with other members included on a case-by-case basis. The pivotal figure in organizing the meetings was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Būshnāq, a Christian Arab who served as assistant headmaster of the government-run Arab College. Bunche was several times a guest of Būshnāq and his wife, and through them met other prominent local Arabs, among them the writer and educator Khalil al-Sakakini.[103] Bunche thus became acquainted with a largely Christian stratum of educated Arabs, some of whom were not supporters of the mufti. They may have opposed the boycott of the committee from the start, and thus consented to provide informal testimony.

Six UNSCOP men met with a dozen members of the Arab College's faculty on July 5. Most of the meeting was devoted to the Arab educational system in Palestine. Ahmad al-Sāmiḥ al-Khālidī, the headmaster and the chief speaker, claimed that the Arab public suffered discrimination in education, particularly higher education. He held the British responsible for creating a disparity between Arabs and Jews. Khālidī claimed that Jewish education was nationalistic, and that it mostly revolved around the study of the Hebrew language and the history of Palestine. In contrast, Arab schools tried to provide students with a broader education, and even devoted time to the study of European history. Khālidī addressed the economic and social aspects

of Jewish and Arab society. The former, he maintained, was divided into Oriental and Western Jews. Some of the Oriental Jews had been in Palestine before the British arrived and others had come in from Arab countries. It was the Western Jews who caused trouble for the Arabs. They had only recently arrived and had been educated in their countries of origin.[104]

Further testimony, political this time, was provided four days later at a meeting at Khālidī's home. Fifteen local Arabs were invited, some of them well-known public figures.[105] Musa Nasir, an educator who had served in several positions in the Mandate government, offered his position on the best solution for Palestine. "Palestine would be given its independence as a unitary state," the notes on the meeting record, "within its present geographical frontiers and with its population at present." There would always be an Arab majority, and to that end any significant Jewish immigration would be prohibited. The state would have to confront the problems it would have with the "strong and highly nationalistic minority" of Jews, and as such it would need to pursue "a very firm and strong governmental policy." He predicted that an absolute majority of the Jewish population would cooperate with the new regime once they saw that their rights would be guaranteed. The UN could send observers to confirm this. "The Arabs would have no desire to rule Jews," he added, and thus the Jewish would be given "a maximum degree of local autonomy" in "three pockets," Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Jewish settlements distant from these pockets would also be allowed to conduct their own affairs.[106]

The spokesmen at both these events were high-placed and respected, but they did not speak for the Arab establishment. For that reason, the third of the testimonies was by far the most important of these unofficial ones. It was provided by Hussayn al-Khālidī, the secretary of the Arab Higher Committee. The documentation of the meeting can be found in the UN archive, and is confirmed in Khālidī's memoirs, published in 2014. On the face of it, Khālidī departed from the historical narrative that the Arab Higher Committee had stuck to throughout the boycott.

UNSCOP's members had failed up to this point in making contact with anyone from the Arab Higher Committee. At the beginning of the inquiry, it will be recalled, the members assigned Sandström, Abdur Rahman of India, and Nasrollah Entezam of Iran to seek contacts with the Arab body. The three of them made a wide-ranging attempt to do so. Rahman met several times with Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī. Entezam was in touch with the consuls of the Arab states that were trying to change the boycott decision. Sandström, after failing to get a meeting with Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī, assigned the matter to Bunche. Rahman despaired first. At his meetings with al-Ḥussaynī, he demanded an end to the boycott. Al-Ḥussaynī had a hard time withstanding the pressure and consented at one point to testify, but in the end evaded it and left for Lebanon.[107] In a personal letter that Rahman wrote to Sandström on July 2, he acknowledged that he had failed.[108] Sandström and Entezam had no more luck. In the end, on July 8 the committee sent a letter to Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī,

reiterating its request for cooperation. Al-Ḥussaynī's reply came quickly. He said that the Arab Higher Committee saw no reason to alter its boycott decision.[109]

These were the circumstances under which Hussayn al-Khālidī spoke to members of UNSCOP. The conversation took place on July 16, just before UNSCOP left the country, during a large dinner party hosted by Katy Antonius, widow of the historian and author George Antonius. In addition to Bunche and Hoo, Sandström and the Australian member and alternate, John Hood and Samuel Atyeo, took part.[110] According to the report on the meeting, Khālidī answered every question put to him and spoke on further subjects at his own initiative. He began by countering the claims of the Jews. They had never had an independent state in Palestine, he maintained; they had always lived in the country as a minority. The so-called historical rights that Jews made speeches about were a distortion of the facts, he said. He also said that the Zionist claim that Palestine had enjoyed rapid development thanks to Jewish settlement did not grant the Jews any rights to the country. The problems between Jews and Arabs began, he said, when the Jews declared their intention of establishing an independent Jewish state. He illustrated the deterioration in relations with a personal story. His father's best friend had been a Jew, he related, whereas he had no Jewish friends, and his son "cannot stand the Jews" and had no contact with any. The al-Khālidī family had been living in Palestine for 700 years, he said, and he himself knew every inch of the country. The Jews, in contrast, are a foreign transplant. Of the 600,000 Jews in Palestine, only 100,000 had Palestinian citizenship; all the rest had kept the citizenship of the countries from which they came. The solution was clear, as far as Khālidī was concerned—an independent Arab state in which the Arabs would rule democratically. No more Jews would be allowed to enter the designated Arab state, and other countries would help solve the problem of the DPs. The Arabs of Palestine did not need to suffer from Jewish immigration—the United States, for example, could absorb 300,000 Jews without any detriment to its economy. When the subject of a binational state was broached, Khālidī launched a personal attack on Judah Magnes, the president of the Hebrew University and a leading advocate of a joint Jewish-Arab state. He said that he preferred Ben-Gurion and Weizmann to Magnes. "The former were at least sincere and said what they thought," he explained. "Dr. Magnes is more dangerous because one does not quite know what he is driving at." Magnes made declarations that disguised his real goals, Khālidī insisted.[111] He did not believe that there really were Jews who were prepared to give up the principle of an independent Jewish state.

It seems most likely that Hussayn al-Khālidī spoke at his own initiative. There is no indication that he spoke at the behest of his superiors, in a last-minute departure from the boycott. His presentation, as it is documented, indicates that he insisted on maintaining the framework of a casual conversation, rather than formal testimony that would be a violation of the Arab boycott. His personal situation at the time needs to be taken into account.

He was the only senior figure from the Arab Higher Committee who was in Palestine at the time of the UNSCOP inquiry, and he was seen as a counterweight to the Ḥussaynīs on that body. As such, he was subject to pressure of all sorts, from people as diverse as some of his friends, the consuls of the Arab states, foreign diplomats, and figures in the British government, all of whom claimed that the boycott was foolish and that cooperation with UNSCOP could only be of help. He found himself bearing the brunt of the boycott almost alone. The senior figures from the Ḥussaynī clan, including the mufti and Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī, were observing events from a distance.[112] At the end of the conversation, Khālidī acknowledged that he would have preferred to have the Arabs cooperate with the committee; in his memoirs he criticized the decision to boycott UNSCOP.[113] Khālidī believed that the boycott was hurting the Arabs, and perhaps also found it difficult to withstand the pressure he was under. He thus decided to take matters into his own hands. Bunche wrote in his diary that Katy Antonius, who hosted the event in her home, "broke the boycott with a bang."[114] Sandström very much wanted to regard the talk with Khālidī as more than a symbolic one-time event; just before he left Palestine he clandestinely dispatched Theo Larsson, the son of the Swedish consul in Jerusalem, to take a personal message to Khālidī. Sandström asked in the missive whether there was any possibility that the Palestinians might respond to a partition proposal with something other than a categorical no, even if they did not accept it. Sandström was hoping that the UN could continue to pursue negotiations in Palestine even after UNSCOP submitted its recommendations. Khālidī was furious and thought that if he even tried to persuade the Arab Higher Committee to discuss such a proposal, he would pay for it with his life.[115]

"[The] committee received [a] very full presentation of the Jewish case from every aspect," Hood summed up, "and also in the last week or two had some opportunity of private conversations with both Arabs and some British officials." The Arab boycott continued, but Hood took some comfort in the fact when the committee reached Lebanon, it would hear from the Arab states, which had mitigated their ban on UNSCOP.[116] In contrast, the British, as far as UNSCOP was concerned, had cemented their status as an actor who would have practically no impact on the opinions of the members regarding the solution they would recommend. If Bevin had wanted his "without recommendations" policy to serve as a smoke screen around the British intent to relieve the Mandate power of responsibility for the future of Palestine, he succeeded. If his intention had been to thoroughly terrify the visitors with the situation in Palestine, he also scored a great success. The most salient impression of the committee's members at the end of the inquiry was that the situation was severe, dangerous, and rapidly deteriorating. However, if the goal had been to cause the UN delegation to recommend that the British remain in Palestine as its only possible saviors, they should have at least given UNSCOP some indication of that. But they did not.

UNSCOP left Palestine. The original plan had been for them to proceed to Geneva to work out their recommendations, but the Arab boycott ordained an additional stage in the inquiry. In the research literature on the committee's work, the most notable feature of its inquiry in Palestine was its isolation from the British and the Arabs. That is correct, but it blurs the committee's internal dynamics and creates the mistaken impression that UNSCOP was cohesive and acted by consensus. The opposite was the case. The original mapping of its members, at the committee's inception, based on the assumption that the orientation of each geographical group would be uniform, turned out to be mistaken. Members enjoying full independence worked alongside others who acted in accordance with instructions from and the interests of their countries. Furthermore, the human dynamics in the group had an impact. Sandström, Rand, Blom, and Hood, hailing from the same bloc, had very little social contact with each other. Sandström conducted the committee's affairs as he saw fit. He scheduled meetings and conducted secret contacts behind his colleagues' backs, while presenting himself at meetings as a stickler for the rules. In fact, there were members of the committee whom the chairman did not trust. "That is the mentality of [the] men whom I have to discuss affairs with on this Committee," he wrote apologetically to MacGillivray in a letter in which he gossiped and joked about several of the other members.[117] Rand, who in many ways was a Sandström clone, often found himself defying the chairman. The two judges, who had come into the inquiry with ties to the British and without instructions from their home countries, sparred continuously.[118]

Hood was one of UNSCOP's saddest stories. His instructions from the Australian Foreign Ministry tied his hands and forced him to remain silent much of the time. Whenever his foreign minister, Herbert Evatt, received the impression that Hood wanted to voice an opinion of his own, he quickly made it clear to Hood that he was not to take any position without prior consultation, and that he had "never been authorised to do so."[119] Under the circumstances, Hood decided at least to have a good time. He and his alternate, Atyeo, got drunk most nights, and as a result missed the next day's activities. They returned to their hotel in the early morning hours, singing and making a din. One night Bunche, who was trying to sleep, lost patience. He called the police to put an end to the disorderly behavior.[120]

The Dutch representatives were also held at close rein by their Foreign Ministry. They engaged in research that supplied their superiors with extensive background material. But Blom had no luck during the inquiry. Soon after arriving in Jerusalem he fractured an ankle, which kept him from participating in almost all the trips the committee made. When his ankle healed, he was kept in bed by an illness.[121] Like his Australian counterpart, Blom tried as hard as he could not to take a firm position. Bunche thought he was "a lightweight."[122]

The situation was much the same in the other blocs. The representatives from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, who were expected to be in the pocket

of the Soviet Union, surprised everyone. The Yugoslavs asked many questions and were the subject of much speculation as they made a point of signaling their sympathy both for the Arabs and the Jews. That made everyone involved think that they were being manipulated by the USSR.[123] Karel Lisicky of Czechoslovakia kept his distance from his Yugoslavian colleagues, and from everyone else as well. He remained closed up inside himself; his head seemed to be at home, where the Communists were quietly taking over the government by pushing the members of the old regime out of positions of influence. His time was coming, he sensed. When the expense allowances provided to the committee members by the UN ran out and the members began to pay their expenses out of their own pockets, he protested loudly. The others knew that in the worst case their own governments would compensate them for their outlays; Lisicky could not be sure. He kept pursuing the matter until Secretary-General Lie intervened and approved further expense allowances for the committee.[124]

UNSCOP's two Muslims did not get along. Nasrollah Entezam of Iran took a moderate and conciliatory stance, while Abdur Rahman of India faithfully adhered to the position of the Arab Higher Committee. The real breach between the two took place over the question of testimony from the Arab states; the two men not only pursued opposing policies, but each concealed his activity from the other, sometimes by means of outright falsehoods. Rahman had other serious reasons to be concerned. At the beginning of June the British announced their plans for the partition of India, in the framework of their withdrawal from the subcontinent. Violent protests broke out there, spreading and worsening. In a personal letter he sent to Rand after the committee completed its work, he recounted the suffering his family endured at the time. They survived by the skin of their teeth by fleeing from Delhi to Lahore, but lost all their property.[125] As the inquiry proceeded, Rahman grew ever more torn between his duty to his work at the UN and concern for his family.[126] Furthermore, he was apprehensive about his status as the Indian member of the committee, and had doubts about whether he could carry out his mission given that the two countries produced by partition, India and Pakistan, would have to reestablish their standing as members of the UN. India's prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, did his best to allay his fears, which he said were baseless, but Rahman was not assuaged.[127]

The three Latin Americans began to take different paths during the initial days of the inquiry. Arturo Garcia Salazar of Peru resented his two counterparts because of their enthusiastic and uncompromising support for the Zionists and kept his distance from them. He said almost nothing at meetings. The other members knew that he was in touch with Roman Catholic Church officials in Palestine, but had no idea what his opinions were.[128] Granados and Fabregat were exceptional by any standard. They disobeyed the chairman's instructions with regard to the British and disregarded the committee's rules of confidentiality by systematically leaking internal information to the Zionists. Granados, who made fiery speeches at committee meetings, often

drove Sandström out of his wits. He frequently denied Granados the floor and sometimes cut him short (see Figure 5.4).[129]

The committee's closed meetings turned into verbal sparring matches. Rahman, Simic, and the two pro-Zionist South Americans spoke at length and made demands that were almost always quickly voted down. Others engaged in long futile debates, sometimes arguing over fine points in the wording of the committee's press releases. Sandström presented prepared statements to the committee, asking for their consent to release them; sometimes he did so without getting permission. At times he cut short debates while they were still in progress and made decisions himself. The meetings were tense and sometimes exasperating.[130]

It was clear to everyone that they had a long way to go before reaching a recommended solution that they could submit at the end of August. Sandström reported to the British that the committee was leaning toward partition, but that was only his best guess. In fact, it was something of a wager—and more in the nature of wishful thinking on his part—given the situation in the committee. As Granados put it, "We were not so much a committee of eleven men as eleven committees of one man each."[131] In other words, UNSCOP was divided and fragmented. Most of the members kept their real opinions to themselves. Hood and Blom found it difficult to predict, even in general terms, what the final recommendations would look like. Blom



Figure 5.4 UNSCOP at one of its sessions in the Jerusalem YMCA building, July 1947. Source: Central Zionist Archives.

explained that most of the members hoped to settle on a plan that would win broad support, and that it was thus difficult to predict where the chips would fall.[132] Sandström felt the weight of the responsibility on his shoulders. He did not wait for things to fall into place; without letting the committee know, he instructed Mohn and Bunche to prepare a partition plan. Mohn and Sandström had absolute confidence in each other, and Sandström gave much weight to Mohn's opinions. Bunche revealed himself to be diligent, talented, and, perhaps even more importantly, impartial and discreet.[133]

Jewish Agency evaluations of the positions of individual members were that "in general, each member of UNSCOP has his own preferred solution." As Walter Eytan commented sardonically, "There seems to be something psychological about the Palestine problem that compels everyone who touches it to come up with his own solution." Si Kenen pointed out an interesting fact: "A number of delegations, in fact those sympathetic to the Zionists, evince much interest in federalism, cantons, or other ideas." Granados was especially notable in this regard—he stuck to a cantonal formula he had developed. Chaim Weizmann did all he could to make it clear to Granados why the Zionists preferred partition, but without much impact. Nevertheless, the Zionist estimation was that partition would be the final recommendation.[134] But Robert Macatee, Bunche's confidant, and one of the men most familiar with the committee's work, thought at the end of the committee's inquiry in Palestine that "the [Jewish] Agency will fail to obtain its minimum demand, Partition [sic]."[135]

Notes

1 UNA S-608-1, 4th Meeting, June 6, 1947; S-609-1, "First Report of Subcommittee Two," June 27, 1947.
2 CZA S25/5374, Eytan to the Jewish Agency, June 27, 1947; *Hamashkif*, July 21, 1947; TNA FO 371/61781, MacGillivray to Martin, June 24, 1947.
3 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-2347, Macatee to S/S, June 23, 1947.
4 Motti Golani, *Tzion ba-Tzionut: Ha-Mediniyut ha-Tzionit be-She'elat Yerushalayim, 1937–1949*, Tel Aviv: 1992, p. 41; Crossman papers, Eban to Crossman, "Impression of the UNSCOP," July 22, 1947; Yossi Katz, *Partner to Partition*, London: 1998, pp. 180–181.
5 Yoav Gelber, *Jewish-Transjordanian Relations, 1921–1948*, London: 1997, pp. 205–221.
6 CZA S25/9037, Sasson to King Abdullah, May 12, 1947.
7 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 8–34.
8 Murray Gorfein, "A Footnote: the U.N. Special Committee on Palestine," in Allen Weinstein and Moshe Maoz (eds.), *Truman and the American Commitment to Israel*, Jerusalem 1981, pp. 63–71.
9 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 48, 55–56.
10 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 34–48, 94–103.
11 Ibid., pp. 48–49, 58–59. Blaming the British for the situation was an essential part of the Zionist strategy, intended to tarnish the committee's impression of them.

Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership truly believed that if the fact of a Jewish state was placed before the Arabs as an established fact, they would reconcile themselves to the situation and would know how to avail themselves of the benefit it could provide them with. See: Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy: Arab-Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate*. London: 1986, p. 151.

12 Michael Comay to Shertok, June 30, 1947, in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, pp. 426–428; ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, July 14, 1947.
13 ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, Kenen report, July 12, 1947; *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 218–222.
14 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 48–71.
15 TNA CO 537/2338 P. 1, Palestine to CO, July 4, 1947.
16 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 177–179.
17 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Discussion with Dr. Weizmann, 14 July 4.00 p.m, in Mr. Sandstrom's Flat at Kadimah House."
18 Ibid.
19 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 27, July 10, September 1, 1947.
20 Weizmann subsequently flew to Geneva, where UNSCOP was drafting its conclusions, hoping to influence the committee there as well. See: Motti Golani and Jehdua Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: Biografiyah, 1922–1952*, Tel Aviv: 2020, p. 948.
21 NA S-504-9, "Notes on Discussion at the Home of Mr. Shertok 14 July, 9.30 p.m."
22 OHD 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, 1993. The account appears also in the autobiography Eban published late in his life, Abba Eban, *Personal Witness: Israel through My Eyes*, New York, 1992, p. 101.
23 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Discussion at the Home of Mr. Shertok 14 July, 9.30 p.m."
24 Yemima Rosenthal, ed., *Te'udot le-Mediniyut ha-Ḥutz shel Medinat Yisra'el*, Vol. 4, May–Dec. 1949, Jerusalem, 1986, p. 574.
25 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, July 30, 1947, Blom report to Foreign Ministry.
26 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 165–168, 174.
27 Ibid., pp. 169, 172–173, 180–183.
28 *Mishmar*, July 5, 1947.
29 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 169–173, 184–187.
30 Ibid., pp. 174–175.
31 Joseph Heller, *Mi-Brit Shalom le-Iḥud: Yehuda Leib Magnes ve-ha-Ma'avak le-Medinah du-Le'umit*, Jerusalem: 2004, p. 90; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; TNA FO 371/61778, Cunningham to CO, July 19, 1947.
32 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 188–192.
33 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.
34 *Ha'aretz*, July 17, 1947.
35 UNA S-608-2, 34th Meeting, July 16, 1947.
36 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, p. 159.
37 Yehoshua Porath, "Ha-Ligah le-Shiḥrur Le'umi: Tekumatah, Mahutah, ve-Hitparkutah," *Hamizraḥ Hehadash* 14 (1964), pp. 354–366; Tūmā, *Yawmiyyāt Shaʿb*, p. 52.
38 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 204–205.
39 UNA S-608-1, 18th Meeting, 6 July 1947*; UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, p. 2.

40 Personal letters to the leaders of all the communities, dated July 9, 1947, can be found in UNA S-611-5.
41 TNA CO 537/2338 P. 2, MacGillivray to Martin, July 9, 1947.
42 UNA S-504-9, "Decisions Regarding Hearings Based on the Second, Third, and Fourth Reports of Subcommittee Two," August 12, 1947.
43 On Elyashar's testimony and on the memorandum sent by Sephardi communities to UNSCOP, see Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine*, Waltham, MA: 2016, pp. 40, 52–53.
44 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, pp. 130–133.
45 SNA ESA Box 5, "Suggested Questions to Be Put to Witnesses: Holy Places," [no date].
46 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 17, 1947.
47 Silvio Ferrari, "Ha-Kas ha-Kadosh u-Va'yat Eretz Yisra'el aḥarei Milhemet ha-'Olam ha-Sheniyah: Beinum Yerushalayim ve-Haganat ha-Mekomot ha-Kedoshim 1947–1949," *Yahadut Zemanenu* 3 (1986), pp. 187–189; CZA S25/5428, Lisicky to Eytan, June 20, 1947. On the Christian testimonies to UNSCOP and for a discussion of the internationalization of Jerusalem, see Dan Bitan, 'L'UNSCOP et l'internationalisation de Jérusalem en 1947," in Dominique Trimbur and Ran Aaronsohn (eds.), *De Balfour à Ben Gourion: les puissances européennes et la Palestine, 1917—1948*, Paris: 2008, pp. 477–479.
48 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–18.
49 Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 135–138.
50 UNA S-605-1, Armenian Patriarchate to Sandström, July 15, 1947; "Memorandum on the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem," June 5, 1947.
51 Abba Eban, *Daber el ha-'Amim*, Tel Aviv: 1959, p. 46.
52 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 17, 1958.
53 *Survey of Palestine*, Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, [Jerusalem]: 1946.
54 SNA ESA Box 5, "Proposed Questions to be Put to the Representatives of the Government of Palestine" [no date].
55 TNA FO 371/61781, Gurney to Martin, June 17, 1947; CO 537/2337, Minute by Martin, July 4, 1947.
56 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. IV, pp. 1–13.
57 TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 16, 1947; FO 371/61782, Cunningham to CO, July 10, 1947; CO 537/2338, p. 1, Colonial Secretary to Palestine, July 12, 1947.
58 TNA FO 371/61782, Cunningham to Colonial Secretary, July 5, 1947.
59 TNA FO 371/61877, FO to Washington, August 15, 1947; CO 537/2339, "Note of a Meeting in the CO on the 24 July 1947."
60 TNA CO 537/2338 P.2, Gurney to Martin, July 9, 1947.
61 Jones, *Failure in Palestine*, pp. 266–267.
62 Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, pp. 444–445, 460.
63 Shmuel Dotan, *Ha-Ma'avak 'al Eretz Yisra'el*, Tel Aviv: 1985, pp. 350–351.
64 Beeley later said as much in an interview. See Hadara Lazar, *Ha-Mandatorim: Eretz Yisra'el, 1940–1948*, Jerusalem: 1990, p. 142.
65 TNA CO 537/2337, Lloyd to Hollis, June 9, 1947.
66 TNA CO 537/2343, Cunningham to CO, June 10, 1947; CO 537/2336 Cunningham to CO, May 7, 1947.

67 A study on the partition plans implemented in Ireland, India, and Palestine finds that some British policy makers preferred this kind of solution, which they saw as advantageous to the Empire's interest in maintaining its patronage over these territories following their division. See: Arie Dubnov and Laura Robson, "Introduction: Drawing the Line, Writing beyond It: Toward a Transnational History of Partitions," in Arie Dubnov and Laura Robson, *Partitions: A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism*, Stanford, CA: 2018, p. 25.
68 Cohen, "Mediniyut Britaniyah," pp. 21–22, 35–41.
69 Ibid., pp. 41–66, 80; Golani, *Ha-Natziv ha-Aḥaron*, p. 255. It is important to stress that the supporters of partition in the British administration envisioned a very small Jewish state. The boundaries that the Zionists wanted were, in the view of these officials, excessive and absolutely unacceptable.
70 On Cunningham's and Gurney's positions, see Golani, *Ha-Natziv ha-Aḥaron*, p. 255. On MacGillivray's support for partition, see Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 160–161. On Martin's position, see CZA S25/5969, Eban report, August 5, 1947.
71 TNA CO 537/2339, Minute by Mathieson, July 21, 1947.
72 TNA FO 371/61875, Martin to Butler, July 18, 1947.
73 TNA CO 537/2338 P.2, MacGillivray to Martin, July 7, 1947; CO 537/2344, Mathieson to Garran, May 16, 1947; UNA S-609-1, "Palestin: A Study of Partition." Details on the contents of the memorandum can be found in Chapter 8.
74 TNA CO 537/2338 P.1, Martin to MacGillivray, July 8, 1947.
75 TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 16, 1947.
76 TNA FO 371/61876, Gurney to Martin, July 20, 1947.
77 TNA FO 371/61782, Cunningham to CO, July 10, 1947; Colonial Secretary to Palestine, July 12, 1947; Minute by Mathieson, July 10, 1947.
78 UNA S-608-2, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947.
79 HHA 115/58 Delphi, July 27–28, August 19, 28, 1947.
80 TNA CO 537/2338 p. 1, Cunningham to CO, July 5, 1947; CO537/2337, Minute by Mathieson, June 30, 1947; FO 371/61783, "An Interim Policy for Palestine," July 18, 1947.
81 TNA FO 371/61876, Gurney to Martin, July 21, 1947; *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. IV, p. 25.
82 *UNSCOP Report*, ibid., pp. 27–28.
83 Halamish, *The Exodus Affair*, pp. 66, 101, 152.
84 MEC Cunningham papers Box 2, "Monthly Report for July"; TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 18, 1947; CO 537/2339, MacGillivray to Martin, July 19, 1947.
85 UNA S-609-1, "Notes of an Address Given by the High Commissioner of Palestine to the Chairman and Delegates on UNSCOP at an Informal Meeting at Government House on Thursday 17th July 1947."
86 Ibid.
87 ISA 93/חצ/2266/38, Eban report, August 4, 1947.
88 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 266.
89 In addition to the Haganah and Etzel testimonies and the most important of the Arab testimonies, the Special Series also included covert testimony from Ben-Gurion, Weizmann, and Cunningham, and the testimony of Stanley Grauel, the minister who had been a passenger on the *Exodus*.

90 TNA FO 371/61780, Beeley to MacGillivray, 5 June 1947; UNA S-609-1, Bunche to Hoo.
91 UNA S-608-1, 4th Meeting, 6 June 1947; 18th Meeting, July 6, 1947; SNA ESA Box 4, "Irgun Zvai Leumi," June 22, 1947.
92 UNA S-605-4, "Notes on Arrangement for Meeting with the High Command of Irgun Zvai Leumi," June 24, 1947.
93 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, June 24, 1947.
94 In addition to Begin and Katz, Haim Landau was also present. See Shmuel Katz, *Yom ha-Esh*, Tel Aviv: 1966, pp. 293–295; UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Conversation with Menachem Begin of Irgun Zvai Leumi b'Eretz Israel."
95 Ibid. See also Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, Tel Aviv: 1983, pp. 294–301. Etzel's memorandums to the committee are collected in SNA ESP Box 4. Lehi also sent the committee a memorandum and publications, which are collected in SNA ESA Box 5.
96 Begin, *The Revolt,* pp. 302–304; TNA FO 371/61778, "Weekly Intelligence Appreciation," June 26, 1947; TNA CO 537/2338, p. 2, MacGillivray to Martin, July 5, 1947. Granados and Fabregat also managed to find Begin, see Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 146–160.
97 UNA S-605-5, Irgun Zvai Leumi to Bunche, July 16, 1947; SNA ESA Box 5, Begin to Sandström, July 8, 1947.
98 *Haboker*, July 8, 1947; the quite is from *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. III, p. 68.
99 UNA S-605-4, "Notes on Arrangement for Meeting with the High Command of Hagana," July 13, 1947. Galilee was flanked by Yigael Yadin and Yosef Avidar, members of the Haganah General Staff, and Ehud Avriel of Aliyah Bet, the operation to bring Jews without immigration permits into Palestine. Yosef Avidar, *Ba-Derekh le-TzaHa"L*, Tel Aviv: 1970, pp. 260–261.
100 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Conversation with Representatives of Hagana," [no date].
101 Ibid.
102 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
103 HHA 115/58 Delphi,, July 4, 10, 1947; UNA S-605-1, Bunche to Sandström, July 6, 1947; Bunche to Bushunag, July 17, 1947.
104 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Visit to the Arab Government College," July 5, 1947.
105 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, July 9, 1947.
106 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Discussions with Mr. Nasir at the Tea Party Given by Mr. Khālidī, Principal of the Arab Government College, at his Home on 9 July 1947." The speaker here was apparently Musa Nasir, although the record gives only his family name. More information on him and other figures cited here can be found in Khalil al-Sakakini, *Ka-Zeh Ani Rabotai: Mi-Yomano shel Khalil al-Sakakini*, trans. Gideon Shilo, Jerusalem: 1990.
107 HHA 115/58 Delphi, July 8, 9, 1947; ANA 852/20, p. 1, "Special Committee of Inquiry"; TNA CO 537/2337 Cunningham to CO, June 29, 1947.
108 SNA ESA Box 5, Abdur Rahman to Sandström, July 2, 1947.
109 UNA S-611-1, Sandström to Jamaal Husseini, July 8, 1947; Husseini to Sandström, July 10, 1947.
110 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, July 16, 1947.
111 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Conversation with Mr. Khalidy, Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee" [no date].

112 Tāyiʿ, *Ṣafaḥat Maṭwiyya*, pp. 134–135.
113 al-Khālidī, *Wa-Maḍā*, pp. 134–135.
114 Bunche's diary, July 16, 1947, UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5,
115 Theo Larsson, *Seven Passports for Palestine*, Pulborough: 1995, pp. 55–56.
116 ANA A1838/283 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, July 27, 1947.
117 TNA CO 537/2339, MacGillivray to Martin, July 19, 1947.
118 For example, see UNA S-608-1, 22nd Meeting, July 8, 1947.
119 ANA 852/19/1/1, FO to Burton, August 10, 1947.
120 HHA 115/58 Delphi, July 1, 1947; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 249.
121 CZA S25/5374, Eytan to the Jewish Agency, June 27, 1947; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to the Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, MacGillivray to Smith, August 7, 1947.
122 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 17, 1947.
123 Interview with Zvi Locker, Jewish Agency liaison with the Yugoslavian delegation, July 2000; NA 867.01/7-3047, Clark to S/S, July 30, 1947; TNA FO 371/61786, MacGillivray to Smith, August 20, 1947.
124 UNA S-608-1, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947; S-605-4, Hoo to Lie.
125 NAC MG30E77 Vol. 2, Abdur Rahaman to Rand, July 21, 1948.
126 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 9.
127 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, June 25, 1947; Nehru to Abdur Rahman, July 10, 1947.
128 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 29, 1947; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 55–62.
129 TNA CO 537/2339 MacGillivray to Martin, July 19, 1947. When the committee completed its work, Granados erupted against the chairman in the presence of the other members, accusing him of animosity. UNA S-608-2, Verbatim Record of the 50th Meeting (private), August 30 1947.
130 See, for example, UNA S-608-1, 23rd Meeting, July 8, 1947.
131 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 233.
132 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to the Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 7, 1947.
133 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to the Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; TNA FO 371/61782, MacGillivray to Martin, June 29, 1947; FO 371/61782, MacGillivray to Martin, July 7, 1947.
134 CZA S25/5991, Eytan to Shertok, July 10, 1947; ISA 93/חצ/2267/16, Kenen report, July 12, 1947; UNA S-611-1, Weizmann to Sandström, July 14, 1947.
135 NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2147, Macatee to Merriam, July 21, 1947.

6 The Testimony of the Arab States

UNSCOP's members were very concerned about the Arab boycott. They feared that submitting a report that did not take into account the Arabs' claims would call the validity of their recommendations into question and turn all their work into a futile exercise. As time ran out and the boycott continued, the committee relaxed one of its initial working principles—that the Arabs of Palestine could be represented only by themselves. It was Rahman, the Indian member, who took the initiative to bring the Arab states into the process. In fact, he maintained that, even without reference to the boycott, the Arab states needed to be involved in the inquiry, given their direct connection to the subject. Already at the start of their work, he proposed that UNSCOP visit the Arab countries that were Palestine's neighbors.[1]

The committee rejected his position, but Rahman persisted, pointing out that the Arab Higher Committee's refusal to engage with the committee left the Arab states as the only available Arab voice. His colleagues finally acceded, with the qualification that it was a one-time political gesture and that the Arab states were but surrogates for the local Arab body.[2]

But the members disputed how to do it. Rand maintained that the Arab countries should send representatives to Jerusalem to testify. Rahman, however, argued that the committee should travel to each of the neighboring Arab countries to hear testimony. The Iranian delegate offered a compromise—to hear the testimony of all the Arab countries in Lebanon, which was close by and had good weather. "I am wondering … if the atmosphere here would be considered favorable for such hearings," he mused. Rand did not give up. He proposed that the Arab countries testify in Geneva. In the end, the committee decided to ask the Arab countries to choose between Jerusalem, Geneva, or one of the neighboring countries. The next question was which Arab countries to solicit testimony from. This turned out not to be a simple matter. The members of the committee agreed that it was not possible to hear just the countries bordering on Palestine. Iraq was offered as an example of a state that did not share a physical border with Palestine, but was very much involved in what went on there. One possible way out was to authorize the Arab League to represent the Arab states before the committee. But the discussion of this proposal reached a dead end and the issue was handed over

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(once again) to the Iranian and Indian representatives, who were authorized to decide how the Arab countries would be called on to testify.[3]

Entezam and Rahman had to run an obstacle course to obtain the testimony they sought. Their decision was to invite all the member states of the Arab League—Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, and Yemen. Invitations were conveyed to these countries' consulates in Jerusalem.[4] It was a logical choice, and reasonable to expect that this bloc of states would together craft a Palestine policy, so that UNSCOP would not receive differing Arab positions. Indeed, the Arab League governments had intended to testify as one. But this did not, in fact, happen in full. Behind the unified front that the Arab states sought to display, different tendencies and conflicting interests battled.

The common position on UNSCOP declared by the Arab League states was formulated when the League met in Cairo on June 5. Following a discussion of the issue, they issued a vaguely-worded statement to the effect that "the Arab governments reserve the right to freedom of action in the matter of Palestine." Alongside this, they reaffirmed decisions made at their previous meeting, and declared that, despite their dissatisfaction, the Arab states would continue to operate within the UN framework. The reaffirmation of the previous decisions was meant to elucidate what they meant by "freedom of action." In other words, they would not join the boycott declared by the Arab Higher Committee. Following the meeting, the League secretary-general, ʿAbd al-Raḥman ʿAzām, told the British that the Arab states would not boycott UNSCOP.[5]

The statement's evasive nature patched over the different approaches of the Arab leaders who took part in the meeting. They voiced a large range of positions, from demanding a boycott of UNSCOP to calling to cooperate with it. The Syrians took the former position most adamantly, in particular the chief of the Syrian delegation to the UN, Fāris al-Khūrī.[6]

Iraq stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Syria. It had consistently taken uncompromising positions on Palestine. Iraq was motivated in part by its struggle against Egypt for dominance in the Arab League, along with intra-Iraqi political and social developments. Its prime minister, Ṣāliḥ Jabr, was locked in battle with nationalists at home and believed that taking a hard line on Palestine would shore up his position at home by gaining him prestige in the Arab world.[7] He was represented by his foreign minister, Fāḍil al-Jamālī, who made belligerent declarations that concealed his real and much more moderate position. He believed that the Arab states ought to cooperate with UNSCOP and that the conduct of Palestine's Arabs was counterproductive to their goals. In his memoirs, Jamālī regretted that the Arabs had not displayed more flexibility.[8]

Yemen and Saudi Arabia also took a hard line. But, unlike Iraq and Syria, which expended money on propaganda campaigns and expressed a willingness to make very real sacrifices, Yemen and Saudi Arabia only paid lip

service. Lebanon could be placed at the midpoint between the extremists and the moderates. It was swept up by the whirlwind in the Arab world, and sometimes led it by taking an especially heated position, but seems mostly to have done so in order to do its duty. The Lebanese position was largely an outgrowth of its demographics. The leaders of the Arab countries, all of them Muslims, accused Lebanon's Christians of secretly hoping for a Jewish victory. The government thus had to prove the opposite.[9]

Egypt and Transjordan were on the other end. Egypt, the dominant power in the League, had good reasons to seek to keep friction with the UN to a minimum. They wanted the UN to help further the evacuation of British forces from Egypt and Egyptian sovereignty in Sudan. Another factor in Egyptian policy toward UNSCOP was ʿAbd al-Raḥman ʿAzām, the Egyptian secretary-general of the Arab League, who sought for the League the standing of an internationally-recognized regional organization with official status at the UN. ʿAzām, more moderate in his opinions than most of his colleagues, declared that he supported cooperation with UNSCOP.[10] The claims made about his policy in the memoirs of contemporary Arab statesmen, and the accusations that Palestine was not his top priority,[11] indicate that his relations with other Arab statesmen with regard to the UNSCOP issue was not an easy one.

Transjordan's, or rather King Abdullah's, position was sympathetic. The king was quick to declare that he opposed the boycott, and to invite the committee to visit his country. He also wrote to the mufti, warning him that his position was detrimental to the interests of Palestine's Arabs. In fact, he had from the start refused to join a unified Arab front and pursued his own independent policy. He justified this on the grounds that his country was not a member of the UN, but it is clear that he also saw an opportunity to annex a part of Palestine to his kingdom, in keeping with his unconcealed expansionist ambitions.[12] At a meeting in Baghdad that included Foreign Minister al-Jamālī, the king voiced support for partition and for the annexation of the territory not included in the Jewish state to the neighboring Arab states. If the Arab states rejected partition, he declared, he would not abide by Arab discipline.[13]

The mutual distrust and internal intrigues within the Arab League did not bode well for the task of representing Palestine's Arabs before UNSCOP. It was into this stew that Rahman, Entezam, and Sandström dove. They already knew about King Abdullah's position. Rahman had met with him during the inquiry's initial days. He dined in the king's palace and met with Prime Minister Samīr al-Rifāʿī. Following the meeting, Rahman deduced that Abdullah would agree to partition,[14] and from that point onward sought to prevent any contact between the king and the committee.

Abdullah eschewed the mediation of the Indian representative. He asked High Commissioner Cunningham to arrange for him to meet the committee. Given that the king was the first Arab figure to agree to cooperate with

UNSCOP, Sandström was eager to have him. But the chairman was also aware of the problems involved, and thus sought to avoid making a visit to Transjordan. He argued that it would not be right to visit one Arab state when the committee had no intention of visiting the others. He proposed that the king come to Jerusalem for an informal discussion. Sandström acted just as he did with other sensitive subjects. He did not brief the other members, neither about the king's letters nor about his counter-proposal.[15]

Rahman, who had initially advocated hearing testimony from the Arab states, now embarked on a new initiative to obtain Arab testimony of the type he thought necessary. Following the contacts with Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī, he was convinced that the only way to gain the cooperation of the Arab Higher Committee was to speak to the mufti himself. He sought to lead the committee and the Arab states toward meeting in Egypt, where Hajj Amīn would also appear before the committee, signaling the end of the boycott. The sources offer no indication that the mufti gave his consent to the plan. Rahman apparently flew to Egypt to speak with him personally. Sandström, eager enough to end the Arab boycott that he was willing to risk angering the British by talking to the mufti, seems not to have rejected the idea out of hand. He indicated his preference for meeting the representatives of the Arab states in Egypt and began to make the necessary arrangements with the Egyptian consul in Jerusalem.[16] But Entezam maintained that granting this extremist leader recognition as representative of the Arabs of Palestine would be bad for them, and did his best to frustrate it. He met with Sandström several times in an effort to dissuade him, and urged the Lebanese consul to shift the venue to his country.[17] The rest of the committee also wrestled with the issue, which also required them to take a position on the mufti's actions during the Second World War. Blom sent his Foreign Ministry material about war crimes the mufti had been involved in. He added that the British could not bring al-Ḥussaynī to trial, but voiced "fierce opposition" to him.[18] In the end, Entezam succeeded. At the committee's meeting on July 16, Sandström announced that, with the exception of Transjordan, all the invitations sent to the Arab states to provide testimony had been accepted, and that it had been decided to hear them in Lebanon.[19]

King Abdullah tried to set up an alternative channel that would enable him to present his position alone. A letter the Transjordanian consul sent to the committee indicated that the country would not send a representative to testify in Lebanon because it was not a member of the UN. Nevertheless, the Transjordanian government would be happy to host the committee. Sandström read the response to the committee. Rahman declared that, in his opinion, there was no reason to engage in any further contacts with Transjordan. The chairman mumbled something about considering the possibility of a visit, but no one responded.[20] The confrontations, intrigues, and power plays all ended up moving the arena in which testimonies were heard to a place chosen in part because of its distance from the unchallenged leader of Palestine's Arabs.

"The Arabs Will Not Stand By and Do Nothing": The Testimony in Lebanon

UNSCOP wanted to present the testimonies of the Arab states in Lebanon as a reasonable surrogate for the Palestinian Arab testimony they had been unable to obtain. Apparently as part of this effort, and because of the desire to stress the formal nature of the visit and the fact that it was in no way different from the hearing of testimonies in Jerusalem, the committee decided to travel to Lebanon with all its support staff and office equipment.[21]

Three days were allotted to the stop, with the technical arrangements to be handled by the Lebanese government. On July 21, before the committee arrived, the Arab foreign ministers who were to represent their countries conferred with the prime ministers of Lebanon and Syria to prepare for the visit. Iraq's foreign minister did not attend, as he arrived the next day. The rest agreed that a collective Arab position would be presented, to be formulated in a single memorandum. They also agreed that none of them would separately provide the committee with any further material. They lauded their unified stand and expressed their concern that the committee's members would come into contact with Lebanese opposition figures and moderate Christians who would not abide by the compact. To avert such unwanted developments, the visit was planned with a rigorous timetable that included official receptions each evening.[22]

Two Arab Higher Committee emissaries, Emīl al-Ghūrī and Rafīq al-Tamīmī, joined Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī in Lebanon. Their job was to allay the mufti's concern that the Arab states would present a moderate position. The mufti wrote a position paper to be used by the representatives of the Arab states, reiterating his position.[23] He termed the Jews' demands "brazen" and "borderline insane." Using his familiar rhetoric and style, al-Ḥussaynī made it clear to the Arab states that the Arab Higher Committee continued to demand that all Jews who had entered Palestine after 1917, the year of the Balfour Declaration, would have to leave when the state of Palestine was established. This had been the major point of contention between him and the Arab states at the London Conference, after the latter agreed to grant citizenship in the future Arab state to all the Jews in Palestine whom the British Mandate considered legal citizens.[24] The Arab representatives read the mufti's memorandum in preparing for their testimony, but chose not to refer to it in their testimony. They offered a more moderate position. At the same time, they met and consulted with Rahman about their presentation.[25]

The official opening meeting in Lebanon was held on July 22, at the Foreign Ministry in Beirut. The Lebanese hosts, Prime Minister Riyāḍ al-Ṣulḥ and Foreign Minister Hamid Frangieh, welcomed the committee. In his speech, Ṣulḥ stressed his country's special interest in the subject, and said that his country was unrelentingly apprehensive about the spread of Zionism, which lay in ambush on its doorstep.[26] Frangieh was given the honor of reading out the joint memorandum composed the day before. If anyone had hopes of hearing

something other than the familiar Arab litany, they were immediately dashed. "The Governments of the Arab States will not under any circumstances agree to permit the establishment of Zionism as an autonomous State on Arab territory, towards which hundreds of thousands of foreign immigrants would stream." The statement reiterated the familiar historical and legal arguments. Frangieh began by calling for an immediate cessation of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the establishment of an independent and democratic Arab government. The document made it clear that, while the Arab states were serving as spokesmen for the Arabs of Palestine, that the problem impacted them directly as well—as, it claimed, the Zionists had territorial ambitions in Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon. A solution that would grant the Jews an independent country of their own "on Arab land" would be "the final stop for a flood of hundreds of thousands of aliens and a place from which the Zionists could plot to expand into neighboring countries whenever the opportunity presents itself … The Jewish state will lead to riots and war in all the Middle East." The memorandum stressed that, as an offer of compromise, the Arabs were willing to grant civil rights to any Jew who had "obtained legal Palestinian citizenship" (that is, not to illegal Jewish immigrants). This directly contradicted the mufti's position. According to the statement, these were the maximum possible concessions the Arabs could offer.[27]

Beyond the solution it proposed, the fear for Middle Eastern peace that it laid out in great detail, and the warning about the irredentism that a Jewish state would bring in its wake, the statement focused on what it termed the natural rights of the Palestinian Arabs and the cynical policies of the Allies, who had broken their promise to the Arabs and thanked them for their rebellion against the Ottoman Empire by imposing imperialist mandates. The Palestine Mandate was the worst of these, as its entire purpose was to establish a national home for the Jewish people and encourage their immigration into a land that is not theirs.[28] The tone toward the British was surprisingly conciliatory and stood in stark contrast to the Zionist strategy of a final battle that threatened to burn bridges with the Mandate power. The Arab states, in contrast, preferred not to damage their relations and as such directed their fire against the Zionists.

The final part of the statement addressed the future and included a set of threats, implied and explicit. The Arabs could not be expected to continue to stand by idly and not use force to defend their natural interests, it maintained. A Jewish state, if established, would not last long. The foreign entity would provoke the hatred of the Arabs, who would exploit every opportunity to retake what they had lost.[29] A member of the Syrian delegation, ʿĀdl Arsalān, who recounted the Lebanon meeting in his diary, wrote that the Lebanese representatives did a good job of presenting the Arab position. Beyond the substance, which had been agreed on in advance, he was impressed with their style and their fluent French, which made translation unnecessary for most of the members of UNSCOP. At the end of the session, the committee's

members gave the Arab representatives a list of questions to which they requested answers, and requests for material and data that they still lacked.[30]

The main testimony of the Arab states was heard the next day at the Grand Hotel in the resort town of Sawfar, and was presented behind closed doors at the request of the hosts. The questions and answers lasted for two sessions, almost a full day long. But, despite the long hours, the sessions did not cast new light on the Arab position. On the contrary, the disparity between the Arab and Jewish positions grew all the starker. It was clear that there was no way to bridge between the two. Nine witnesses appeared before the committee with replies in writing that had been given to them the day before. The first subject the committee sought to plumb was the fate of the illegal Jewish residents of Palestine in the future state that the Arabs wished to establish. The members of the committee sought a clear answer. Frangieh, who served as spokesman at this meeting as well, declared that they would be expelled. "Do any of the representatives have a different answer to the question?" Sandström asked. Frangieh quickly responded that the answers he was reading out represented a consensus, and therefore "there will be no answers from individuals." As a result, the members of the committee sought to get to the same point by phrasing themselves more indirectly and to lean on the Arab representatives. The result was often fairly ridiculous.[31]

The UN representatives soon realized that none of the people appearing before them were willing to assume the role of offering unambiguous positions on some of the issues at hand. Rahman asked if the Arab positions presented at the London talks were still in force. He knew in advance that they were, as the secretary-general of the Arab League had said as much in a private meeting with him.[32] He posed the question simply to make the point to his colleagues. Arsalān and al-Jamālī, the primary spokesmen at the session, evaded a clear affirmative answer. The formulation finally extracted from the latter was that the Arab states reserved the right to step back from the positions they had voiced in London.[33] The somewhat milder tone that the Arab states sought to take in their official statement dissipated under cross-examination. Even though the Arab leaders realized that a more moderate stance would better serve their purpose, none of them dared voice one in the presence of his colleagues. "There is nothing more extreme than to meet all the representatives of the Arab world in a single group … with each one trying to show that he is more extreme than the other," Mohn wrote.[34]

A fruitless debate ensued about the Arab Higher Committee and its chief. Granados wondered what Palestine would look like under the rule of that body, many of the members of which had displayed, he said, "Nazi tendencies" during the Second World War. The Lebanese foreign minister came to Hajj Amin's defense. He emphatically denied that there had been any ties between the mufti and the Nazis; the British had no proof of it, he claimed.[35] UNSCOP's members did not contradict him, even though they had documentary evidence of those ties.

One of the important points that UNSCOP sought to explore during the session was how the Arab states intended to respond to the establishment of a Jewish state, which was addressed at length in the Arab memorandum. Sandström quoted at length the memorandum's threats about "a Jewish state established by violence." "Would you consider even the Jewish state constituted under the auspices of the United Nations as established by violence?" he asked. None of the Arabs offered a clear answer. Some said that the question was moot because the UN would never approve such a decision. The nearest thing to a clear answer was the statement that the establishment of a Jewish state would contradict the UN Charter, meaning that if such a decision were indeed made, the Arab states, as members of the UN, would need to consider how to respond.[36]

The general threats made in the memorandum seemed, at the session, to have little behind them. The representatives of the Arab states, which belonged to the UN, preferred not to state boldly to representatives of that organization that they would violently oppose a decision made by the General Assembly. Arab historians have rightly noted this as a balancing act. Their seats at the UN and interests in ties with the West placed constraints on their claim to represent the Arabs of Palestine.[37] While the statement they presented just a day before was replete with threats, when its authors were asked to repeat them orally, they squirmed and avoided doing so.

Toward the end of the session, several members of UNSCOP tried to appeal to the logic of the Arab representatives. Sandström enumerated several possible solutions: a binational state with limitations on Jewish immigration, a single federal state consisting of two autonomous units, and partition into two states that would make their own decisions about immigration. The chairman tried to elicit a more explicit statement from the Arabs by warning that all these options were on the table and were supported by some members of the committee. Were they all equally bad as far as the Arabs were concerned? It was to no avail. The Arabs simply reiterated the demand for an independent Arab state.[38]

A moment before the meeting adjourned, al-Jamālī asked for the floor and, in contradiction of the decision made by his colleagues, asked to present the Iraqi government's position. He read out a long statement that repeated what had already been said, but with the addition of harsher language, such as a comparison of Zionism to Nazism.[39] The members of UNSCOP, who had been waiting impatiently for the recreational tour that had been promised them at the end of the day of testimonies, had no choice but to hear out the Iraqi foreign minister. But al-Jamālī's colleagues seem to have been even more put out. The Iraqi move opposed the compact they had made prior to the meeting and infuriated them. The members of UNSCOP, who had repeatedly heard the Arabs say proudly that they would speak in a single voice, were taken by surprise.[40]

Al-Jamālī's speech, like the one that Fuʾād Ḥamza, the Saudi representative, quickly offered—having, apparently, prepared for the eventuality that

individual statements might be made in the end—was not the only crack in the unified front. Outside the conference room an intra-Lebanese campaign of accusations and vilifications was in progress, brought on by the outcome of the parliamentary elections held at the end of May. Former President Émile Eddé and the Maronite archbishop of Beirut, Ignace Mobarak, leaders of the Lebanese Christian community, accused the serving president, Bechara Khoury, of fixing the election. UNSCOP's visit was an opportunity to step up the battle against the elected government.[41] The leaders of the opposition fostered the illusion that the UN representatives would intervene, going so far as to send UNSCOP a cable warning that the elected government was unlawful and could not represent the country's citizens before the committee.[42]

The committee's arrival was also an opportunity for the country's Christians to display their sympathy for Zionism. Asher Lutzky, an emissary of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, who had come to Lebanon at the beginning of July for this purpose, helped harness Lebanon's intrigues to Zionist needs.[43] On July 22, Eddé conferred at his home with a few members of UNSCOP and its staff. Also present were senior members of the National Bloc, Eddé's party, which advocated a Maronite Lebanon. The former president told his guests that "the pressure of the League and the government does not permit the Christians in Lebanon to state their true opinion … most of the inhabitants of Lebanon agree to partition and to a Jewish national home."[44]

Paul Mohn and A.I. Spits, the Swedish and Dutch alternates, met with the Maronite Patriarch, Anthony Peter Arida and other senior church officials to discuss the religious aspects of the problem. Arida told them that Islam and Judaism could never coexist, and that partition was called for. Sandström had a similar meeting with Elias Rababi, editor of *al-Amal*, a noted intellectual who belonged to the National Bloc. He told UNSCOP's chairman that "ninety percent of the Lebanese Christians want a Jewish state in Palestine, [which is] the only means to ensure the integrity and survival of a Christian Lebanon."[45]

Journalists and other Lebanese figures who did not have an opportunity to meet with UNSCOP sent written statements. Elias Harfouche, editor of *al-Ḥadīth*, sent the committee a pro-Zionist memorandum, and Archbishop Mobarak sent one of his own that linked Lebanon, the "national home" of the Christians, to the Jewish national home to be established in Palestine. The two national homes would support each other and serve as sanctuaries for the persecuted, he wrote. Mobarak lauded Zionism, which he said had brought culture to the entire Middle East and spurred the development of Lebanon.[46]

The Lebanese officials who organized UNSCOP's visit tried to prevent expressions of support for Zionism, in part by planning a tight schedule. But the members of the committee were already well-versed in how to conduct their inquiry. From the moment of their arrival they sought out a range of sources and begged out of some of the activities that had been planned for

them. Neither did threats leveled at Arida, the patriarch, produce the results they hoped for.[47]

The government also pressured Archbishop Mobarak to withdraw his support for partition, including an appeal to the pope, holding back funds designated for Mobarak, and a hostile media campaign. The government contradicted local press reports that opposition figures had met members of UNSCOP; the National Bloc confirmed the reports.[48] These attempts to silence the Christians gave members of the committee the impression that the unified front presented in the official session was counterfeit.

Sandström, who was aware of the conflicting interests of the Arab states but also realized that he would have a hard time getting straight answers to his questions from their representatives, found an alternative in Rababi, the editor of *al-Amal*.[49] The Zionist liaison officers (who did not accompany the committee to Lebanon) told Sandström that, according to an Arab representative they had spoken to in Cairo, the Arabs tacitly supported a solution "along the lines of our proposals," and that the position taken by the Arab representatives in Lebanon was a bargaining position. The Arabs would, so the liaison officers said, "accept fifty percent or less" of their demands. Eban and Horowitz explained that that was how Arabs conducted negotiations: "Demand more to get a part." Sandström told them that he knew that.[50]

These talks reveal the frustrating situation in which the members of UNSCOP found themselves at the end of the testimony in Lebanon. The official position of the Arab states "has no conception of compromise," as Blom put it. The committee's members heard other voices under the surface, but had difficulty evaluating them. Differences among the Arab states, expressed behind the scenes, put paid the united front they sought to project. UNSCOP's members were left with the impressive reception that Lebanon organized for them, and for the thirty crates of sweets that the Syrian and Lebanese governments provided. At least they could celebrate that the Arab boycott that had dogged their work thus far had been broken. Now that Arab spokesmen had presented their case in Lebanon, the committee could claim that the Arab position had been presented just as well as the Jewish stand.[51]

But the testimony presented by the Arab states was not just a fig leaf for covering up that lack of cooperation from the Arabs of Palestine. It brought UNSCOP one step closer along its rocky road to reaching its conclusions. If, up to this point, the members of the committee themselves had played the role of the Arab side, offering arguments they thought the Arabs would make, the Arab position was now clear and on record. UNSCOP's members could now move on in the role of arbitrators between the two sides.

Divide and Annex: The Visit to Transjordan

King Abdullah, as already noted, was the first Arab leader to make contact with UNSCOP. He declared at an early stage that he wanted to speak before

the committee, but declared that he was prepared to do so only in Transjordan itself. The explanation he gave for his independent stance was that Transjordan was not a member of the UN, and as such had no standing to appear before the committee. The message was clear—if the committee wanted to hear the king, it would have to come to his country.[52] Sandström was apprehensive about acceding officially to the condition the king had made. While he very much wanted to hear what Abdullah had to say, he preferred to do so discreetly, without risking the delicate relations that the committee was in the process of establishing with the other Arab states. Abdullah disregarded a proposal to make an incognito visit to Jerusalem and once again invited the committee to come to him. His refusal to take part in the hearing in Lebanon, along with Sandström's concern about a separate official meeting between UNSCOP and the king, led to a dead end. UNSCOP resolved that the discussion of Transjordan would be postponed at least until after the visit to Lebanon. Under these circumstances, Rahman, the Indian delegate who was already aware of Abdullah's territorial ambitions and had sought to keep him away from the committee, thought that the danger that the committee would meet with the king had passed and scheduled a vacation visit to Syria following the Lebanon sessions.[53]

But his optimism was premature. Abdullah and Sandström both really wanted to meet. It is not clear who was the more eager—the king, who sensed an opportunity to realize his dreams, or the chairman, who hoped to find a lifeline to save the inquiry. In fact, Sandström had never abandoned his plans to hear out Abdullah. He did not share that with his Indian colleague, but he did take some other members of the committee into his confidence. As Sandström saw it, there was a logical connection between the principle of partition, which was gaining support among UNSCOP's members, and Abdullah's ambitions. The fundamental principle behind it had already appeared in the Peel Commission report of a decade previously. That had recommended partition of Palestine, with the parts of Palestine not included in the Jewish state to be attached to Transjordan. Donald MacGillivray, the British liaison officer, reported that, with the possibility of a visit to Transjordan on the agenda, some committee members studied the Peel report and were impressed by the solution it proposed.[54]

Sandström intended for the committee to visit Transjordan after its stay in Lebanon, and coordinated the trip with that country's government. Nasrollah Entezam, the Iranian delegate to the committee, seems to have played a central mediating role behind the scenes. He himself supported the principle of partition and compromise (although he did not give voice to these ideas during the committee's meetings) and worked assiduously, as already noted, to ensure that the position presented to the committee by the Arab states be as accommodating as it could be. Abdullah chose to send at least some of his messages to the committee through Entezam.[55]

During the hearings in Lebanon, Sandström spoke individually with members of the committee to put together a group that would travel to

Transjordan to meet the king.[56] The press reported that the committee would be visiting Abdullah. The leaders of the other Arab states tried an original ploy to avert the meeting. Before the adjournment of the session in Lebanon, Foreign Minister Frangieh announced that a telegram had "just" arrived from the king of Transjordan, which he proceeded to read to the meeting. The essence was that, even if the committee had been slated to visit Transjordan, there was no longer any reason to do so. Abdullah, the cable said, had waited for the committee to visit his country but had lost hope. Furthermore, Transjordan's position was no different from that voiced by the Arab states.[57] When the members of UNSCOP who decided to make the trip arrived in Amman told their hosts that they had decided to come despite the message, they discovered that the latter knew nothing about it. No such message had ever been sent, the shocked Transjordanian officials said. Sandström asked Frangieh for clarification. The foreign minister said that the king himself had signed the telegram. But the committee was inclined not the believe him and to see it as an attempt to stymie the visit with a falsehood.[58]

On July 24, three light airplanes sent by King Abdullah ferried an UNSCOP delegation the short distance from Lebanon to Transjordan for a one-day visit. The group consisted of seven members of the committee—Sandström, Rand, Blom, Simic, Lisicky, Salazar, and Entezam—along with the Swedish and Czechoslovakian alternates, Paul Mohn and Richard Pech, and staff members Ralph Bunche, Victor Hoo, and Alfonso García Robles. They were received at Amman's airport by an honor guard, one of many that the delegation would encounter during its brief sojourn in the country. Prime Minister Samīr al-Rifāʿī also greeted them upon their arrival. Sandström, for whom the visit was a personal coup, sought to emphasize that this was not an official UNSCOP visit and that the committee members who had made the trip had done so at their personal initiative. Al-Rifāʿī was indignant, claiming that the king was certain that he would be giving official testimony to the committee. Indeed, the king insisted that the members hear testimony in the framework of a hearing according with the rules that had been used in its official sessions.[59]

Sandström put an end to the argument. He ruled that the record of the testimonies would state the hosts' demand, and promised that the rest of the committees' members would be informed of the fact. Now, after all the preparations, preliminaries, and maneuvering, the committee members found themselves face to face with King Abdullah, waiting to hear what he had to say. They knew that the king was in the position he had sought for himself from the start—he had an UNSCOP delegation in his palace alone, far from the prying eyes of other Arab leaders. They were disappointed. While the king had consented to reply to every question he might be asked, he was often evasive. With regard to Palestine's future, he said that there were many possible solutions. Whichever one was decided on would have to take into account the rights of the Arabs, who would find it difficult to accept a Jewish state in even part of Palestine. On the other hand, when he was asked whether the Arabs

would react harshly if partition was the solution adopted, he replied: "The Near East already has much trouble."[60]

In the large picture, the position that Abdullah took at the meeting was not much different from that voiced by the Arab states in Lebanon, although it was somewhat more flexible and accompanied by winks and smirks. For example, the king displayed empathy for the plight of the Jewish refugees. But when he was asked if his country would be prepared to take in refugees, he replied indignantly: "That would be asking me to cut my own throat." Mohn said that the meeting was like a game of hide and seek, referring to the king's incomprehensible account of his good relations with high-placed Jews in Palestine. Abdullah ended the meeting by declaring that he was certain that the committee would recommend the best solution.[61]

Beyond their audience with the king, the members of the delegation conferred with several other figures. In the afternoon hundreds of consuls, government officials, and other VIPs gathered to hear the prime minister present (in English) the Jordanian government's official position on the Palestine question. The statement, later provided to all UNSCOP's members during their stay in Geneva, constituted the clearest and most cohesive Arab document submitted to the committee. Eschewing threats, it enumerated five possible solutions, laying out the disadvantages of each, until it reached the only acceptable proposal—an independent state with a government made up of both Jews and Arabs, in accordance with the relative sizes of their populations. Such a state, Prime Minister Rifāʿī stressed, would bar further Jewish immigration, as the majority wished. According to Rifāʿī, partition was possible in theory but impossible in practice. Proof of this was provided by the Woodhead Commission which, charged with implementing the recommendations of the Peel Commission, reported back that it could not be done. As such, the UN could end the crisis by providing a solution for the displaced Jews in Europe with the cooperation of other countries, such that they did not come to Palestine and exacerbate the situation there.[62]

After issuing the statement, the prime minister retired to a side room with the UN delegation and added what Blom termed "interesting things."[63] Rifāʿī maintained that the Jews would oppose any solution that did not grant them a Jewish state, and stressed that Transjordan and Palestine had many ties and shared interests. Despite this assertion and other similarly broad hints, Rifāʿī made a point of reiterating the solution proposed in his public statement. He repudiated, however, the position the Arab states had taken in Lebanon with regard to the rights of the Jewish minority in the Palestinian Arab state. There the Arabs had insisted that some of the Jews currently residing in Palestine would be allowed to stay, while others would be compelled to leave. Rifāʿī said that all the Jews in Palestine would be granted equal rights. Another fundamental difference was that the representatives of the Arab states had threatened to use force if the UN were to decree the establishment of a Jewish state. That was a very serious statement to make, Rifāʿī said, tantamount to declaring war on the United Nations, "if the Arab representatives really

meant it." Transjordan, he maintained, would not "take an attitude of such an extreme nature." According to the report on the visit, the delegation had other opportunities to speak individually with senior Transjordanian figures.[64]

Following the visit, a number of articles in the Arab press claimed that the king and delegation had discussed a partition and annex plan. They accused Abdullah of consenting in principle to dividing Palestine.[65] Transjordan quickly denied the allegation, and some Jewish Agency officials believed that the meeting, far from serving Jewish interests, had actually been detrimental. The Zionist tactic had been for King Abdullah to recommend the partition and annex idea to UNSCOP. Yaacov Shimoni and Eliyahu Sasson of the Jewish Agency's Political Department had just been in contact with an Iraqi figure close to Abdullah, Fuʾād al-Sharīf, with whom they had reached agreement and even agreed on a draft treaty. While the documentation of these contacts is fragmentary, and historians have doubted whether al-Sharīf had any authority to speak on behalf of the king, Abdullah clearly disappointed the Jewish Agency, which was hoping for quite a different outcome.[66]

In fact, the picture the Jewish Agency received about the meeting in Transjordan was much gloomier than facts implied. It suffered from a paucity of information about what had transpired there. The information that reached Shertok (apparently from Granados and Fabregat) was that Sandström had denied that he had conducted private conversations during the visit. But if that was what he had indeed told them, he was not telling the truth. Speaking to an American official after the committee had completed his work, he related that in Transjordan it was "made clear" to him that the king's ambition was, after partition, to annex the Arab part of Palestine.[67] A British report of this same meeting claimed that Abdullah had told Sandström that partition was the only feasible solution to the conflict, and that he would support partition if that was what the UN decided.[68] The rest of the members of the delegation also received the impression that the official statement did not in fact reflect the king's full position.[69] Reporting on the visit to his Foreign Ministry, Blom maintained that Transjordan's goal was to join the Arab parts of Palestine to its territory, "even though this was not stated explicitly."[70]

The king's testimony was doubly significant. On the one hand, he signaled to UNSCOP what his intentions were and made it clear that he would depart from his Arab counterparts. On the other hand, in public he paid his pan-Arab debt by adhering to the unified stance voiced in Lebanon. It would seem that all the question marks surrounding the visit need to be examined in light of Abdullah's careful walking of the tightrope between the policy he wanted to pursue and his need not to sabotage his relations with his Arab allies in the region. That would also seem to explain the insistence of Transjordanian officials that the committee's visit be designated an official one. The king did not want a meeting with the delegation that would not be made public, as the other Arab countries would believe he was undermining the joint position. Sandström, who made it possible for Abdullah to organize a large gathering at which his government would state his position, enabled him to make display

of Arab solidarity. Rahman, the Indian delegate, was furious that the visit was made behind his back and accused Sandström of an illegal maneuver. He opposed the chairman's proposal to update the entire committee at an official meeting, and did not calm down until he received a promise that the report of the visit would be disseminated solely within the committee and would not be included in its final report.[71] Abdullah for his part, was quick to provide the visit with a closing cadence by sending the British foreign secretary a clear message that his government thought that partition was the only solution to the Palestine question. He hoped that every effort would be made to facilitate partition. The official position he had voiced during the visit had been necessary for political and tactical reasons, he claimed, given that his government could not publicly take a position that departed from that of the other Arab countries.[72]

Before UNSCOP flew to Geneva, and as a practical step toward ending the Arab boycott, the Arab states acceded to a request made to them at the end of their testimony in Lebanon by appointing a liaison officer. In theory, this person could seek to improve the state of Arab representation precisely at the critical stage of formulating the committee's recommendations. In practice, however, doing what was beneficial gave way to other considerations when the appointment had to be made. The representatives of the Arab states decided that 'Adl Arsalān, a member of the Syrian delegation to the UN, should hold the post. Arsalān had a knack for persuasion and was an experienced negotiator. George Wadsworth, the UN ambassador to Iraq with whom the Arabs consulted on the matter, recommended Arsalān. The decision was made and reported in the press.[73]

In the end, however, Camille Chamoun was sent as liaison officer to Geneva. Arsalān, who coveted the position, wrote in his diary that, with elections impending in Syria, the country's president ordered him not to go to Geneva and to devote himself to the country's internal affairs.[74] Arsalān enjoyed higher standing in the Arab world than did Chamoun, a Lebanese Christian whose ability to faithfully represent the collective position of the Arab League states was doubtful. Chamoun was known to be a moderate, and in private conversations had even permitted himself to take conciliatory positions. Some observers therefore speculated that Chamoun was given the post precisely so that the Arab states could later repudiate the proposals that he would make, on the grounds that he did not represent them. The choice of Chamoun remains a puzzle, and the deliberations that led to his appointment undocumented.[75] The members of UNSCOP left the Middle East for Geneva.

Notes

1 UNA S-608-1, 10th Meeting, June 20, 1947; 22nd Meeting, July 8, 1947.
2 UNA S-608-1, 23th Meeting, July 8, 1947.
3 Ibid.

4 The invitations and the replies to them can be found in UNA S-608-1.
5 Al-Dabās, *Al-Qaḍiyyah*, p. 78; *Filasṭīn*, June 6, 1947.
6 *Filasṭīn*, May 19, 25, 26, 29, 1947. On al-Gouri's activity in Palestine, see Chapter 3.
7 Michael Eppel, *The Palestine Conflict in the History of Modern Iraq*, Essex: 1994, pp. 148–164.
8 Al-Jamālī, *Dhakriyat wa-'Abr*, pp. 71–72; TNA FO 371/61875, Campbell to FO, June 16, 1947; NA 867.01/6-1047, Wadsworth to S/S, June 6, 1947.
9 Elath, *Ha-Ma'avak 'al ha-Medinah*, pp. 88–90.
10 Sela, "She'elat E"Y ba-Ma'arekhet ha-Bein-'Aravit," pp. 326–327; ISA 93/חצ/2270/5, Epstein to the Jewish Agency, June 20, 1947; ISA 93/חצ/170/8, "Tamtzit ha-Do"H shel 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azām Pāşā 'al Nesi'ato le-ARH"B u-Vritaniyah," October 10, 1947; NAI F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, June 25, 1947.
11 See, for example, Tāyi', *Ṣafaḥat Maṭwiyya*, pp. 106–107.
12 TNA FO 371/61875, Pirie Gordon to FO, June 25, 1947; FO 371/61875, Pirie Gordon to FO, June 30, 1947; Cunningham to CO, July 3, 1947.
13 NA 501.BB Palestine/6-2347, Wadsworth to S/S, June 21, 1947.
14 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, July 15, 1947; TNA FO, 371/61875, Pirie Gordon to FO, June 30, 1947.
15 TNA FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, June 7, 1947; FO 371/61875, Cunningham to CO, July 3, 1947.
16 HHA 115/58 Delphi, July 14, 16, 1947; *Filasṭīn*, July 12 1947; *Ha'aretz*, July 13, 1947; *Davar*, July 11, 1947.
17 HHA 115/58 Delphi, July 3, 13, 20, 1947.
18 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.
19 UNA S-608-1, 34th Meeting, July 6, 1947.
20 Ibid.
21 UNA S-611-5, "Supplies for Beirut," [no date].
22 CZA S25/54, "Siyur ba-Levanon (2.7.1947–2.8.1947)," August 4, 1947; ādl Arsalān, *Mudhakarāt al-Amīr 'ādel Arsalān*, Beirut: 1973, p. 687; NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2347, Beirut to S/S, July 22, 1947.
23 Eliyahu Sasson, *Ba-Derekh el ha-Shalom*, Tel Aviv: 1978, pp. 391–392; al-Ḥūt, *Al-Qiyādāt*, pp. 569–570.
24 From the PLO Archive in Cairo, quoted by al-Ḥūt, *Al-Qiyādāt*, p. 570. On the Arab Higher Committee's opposition to the program of the Arab states as presented in London, see Sela, "She'elat E"I ba-Ma'arekhet ha-Bein-'Aravit," pp. 290–291.
25 Arsalān, *Mudhakarāt*, p. 687.
26 Ibid., p. 687; al-Dabās, *Al-Qaḍiyya*, p. 80.
27 The Arab states' statement was submitted in French. The original can be found in UNA S-613-1. An English translation appears in the minutes of the meeting, UNA S-608-1, 38th Meeting, July 22, 1947.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Arsalān, *Mudhakarāt*, p. 687; UNA S-611-5, "Documents or Data Which Representatives of Arab States Agreed to Supply to the Special Committee on Palestine," [no date].
31 UNA S-608-2, 39th Meeting, July 23, 1947.
32 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, June 25, 1947.
33 UNA S-608-2, 39th Meeting, July 23, 1947.

34 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 266.
35 UNA S-608-2, 39th Meeting, July 23, 1947.
36 Ibid.
37 al-Ḥūt, *Al-Qiyādāt*, pp. 571–572; Khalidi, "The Arab Perspective," p. 114.
38 UNA S-608-1, 39th Meeting, July 23, 1947.
39 Ibid. Al-Jamālī's memorandum can be found in UNA S-609-1.
40 Arsalān, *Mudhakarāt*, p. 677; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, June 30, 1947; TNA FO 371/61876, Beirut to FO, July 24, 1947.
41 CZA S25/5434, "Siyur be-Levanon (2.7.1947–2.8.1947)," August 4, 1947.
42 UNA S-605-1, Akl to the Chairman and UNSCOP Members [no date].
43 CZA S25/5434, "Siyur be-Levanon (2.7.1947–2.8.1947)," August 4, 1947; Eyal Zisser, "Niputzan shel Ashlayot: Ha-'Edah ha-Maronit ba-Levanon u-Medinat Yisrael: Meni'im u-Kesharim Rishonim," *Iyyunim Betekumat Yisrael* 6 (1996), pp. 47–84.
44 The quote is from CZA S25/5434, "Mikhtav mi-ha-Levanon me'et A. Lutzky," July 29, 1947; see also Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 198–201.
45 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Spits report to Foreign Ministry, July 31, 1947; the quote is from CZA S25/5434, "Siyur be-Levanon (2.7.1947–2.8.1947)," August 4, 1947.
46 Ibid. Both memorandums can be found in UNA S-611-5.
47 CZA S25/5434, "Siyur be-Levanon (2.7.1947–2.8.1947)," August 4, 1947.
48 Reuven Erlich, *Be-Svakh ha-Levanon*, Tel Aviv: 2000, p. 39.
49 CZA S25/5434, "Siyur be-Levanon (2.7.1947–2.8.1947)," August 4, 1947.
50 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, Report of meeting between Horowitz, Eban, and Sandström, August 1, 1947.
51 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947; ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, July 27, 1947.
52 TNA CO 537/2339, "Message delivered to Irani delegate on U.N.S.C.O.P through Transjordan Consul-General in Jerusalem," June 23, 1947.
53 al-Dabās, *Al-Qaḍiyya*, p. 80; NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2347, Meminger to S/S, July 30, 1947; TNA FO 371/61876, Martin to Wright, July 24, 1947.
54 TNA FO 371/61875, MacGillivray to Martin, July 15, 1947.
55 HHA 115/58 Delphi, June 17, July 13, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Pirie Gordon to FO, June 25, 1947.
56 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 195–196.
57 Ibid., pp. 211–212; UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, July 24, 1947.
58 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Minister, July 30, 1947; UNA S-608-2, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947. The committee staff apparently decided not to record in the minutes of the committee's meetings in Lebanon the announcement made by Frangieh (the minutes were edited and typed a few days after the meeting).
59 UNA S-609-10, "Program of UNSCP'S Visit"; UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Visit of Some Members of the Committee to Amman, Transjordan," July 24, 1947.
60 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Visit of Some Members of the Committee to Amman, Transjordan," July 24, 1947.
61 Ibid.; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 267.
62 "Mr. Chairman, Honorable Members," [no date], in UNA S-609-1.
63 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.

64 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Visit of Some Members of the Committee to Amman, Transjordan," July 24, 1947.
65 CZA S25/3300, "Va'adat ha-ḤḤakirah shel ha-U"M be-'Ever ha-Yarden" [undated].
66 CZA S25/395, Sasson to Sherf, August 23, 1947; a draft of the contract can be found in CZA S25/3909; Freundlich, *Mi-Ḥurban le-Tekumah*, p. 108; Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*, Oxford 1988, pp. 90–91.
67 INA 93/חצ/ 2270/ 3, Shertok to Myerson, July 31, 1947; NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström– Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
68 Gelber, *Jewish-Transjordanian Relations*, p. 223.
69 Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, 149.
70 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP Division, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.
71 UNA S-608-2, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947.
72 TNA FO 371/61876, Pirie Gordon to Bevin, July 30, 1947.
73 Arsalān, *Mudhakarāt*, p 693–694; *Ha'aretz*, July 28, 1947.
74 Arsalān, *Mudhakarāt*, p. 694.
75 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 198–199; NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Mr. Chamoun–Mr. Paul Alling," September 29, 1947.

7 The Inquiry in the DP Camps

The Decision to Visit the Camps

UNSCOP convened for its first meeting in Geneva on July 28, 1947. The Geneva leg of its journey was meant to be devoted entirely to drawing up the conclusions of its inquiry. The committee's members knew, however, that they would first need to make a decision about whether to take their inquiry to the displaced persons (DP) camps. This hot-potato issue was among the most difficult and complex they had faced. The relevance of the displaced Jews of Europe to the Palestine question had been debated since the special session of the General Assembly, when UNSCOP's terms of reference were drafted. The resolution at that time had been a general directive that authorized the committee "to conduct investigations in Palestine and wherever it may deem useful." In other words, the committee could, if it believed it to be relevant, consider the refugee issue. The inclusion of that provision, which the Zionists viewed as a victory, did not run counter to the general sense of the special session, where most member states preferred to avoid taking a clear position. The DP issue, like that of Palestine as a whole, was placed on UNSCOP's doorstep without recommendations. Yet the committee was well aware that the United States and Britain both had clear positions on what should be done with the Jewish refugees—and that these positions contradicted each other.

Since the 1930s, in response to Arab resistance to Zionism, the British government had pursued a policy of restricting Jewish immigration. This policy did not change after the Second World War, which ended with large numbers of Jews displaced from their former homes. The Zionist movement and the Yishuv responded with a clandestine operation to bring Jews lacking immigration permits into Palestine; the British in turn did all they could to counter it. The British campaign, pursued in the territories it occupied in Europe after the war, refused to recognize any common interest among the displaced Jews. The Foreign Office instructed the country's UN delegation to separate the Jewish refugee problem from the Palestine question and to address it only as one aspect of the general postwar refugee issue.[1]

The major obstacle to the British approach was the United States, which demanded that Britain immediately allow 100,000 DPs into Palestine. The

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Americans based their position on the study and recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee and the work of Earl Harrison, whom President Truman assigned to study the refugee issue in the summer of 1945. Unable to accept the American demand, the British in the end preferred to refer the issue to the UN and to accuse Truman of seeking to gain Jewish votes. Whatever Truman's motives, political or humanitarian,[2] the members of UNSCOP knew what the US position was.

Indeed, it could be said that the entire British initiative to refer the Palestine issue to the UN, leading to the establishment of UNSCOP, was a product of Anglo-American dissension on the DP issue. In doing so, the British sought to evade having to choose between the American demand to allow DPs to immigrate to Palestine and the Arabs' refusal to compromise on this subject. Nevertheless, both the American and the British refrained from intervening in UNSCOP's work and did not seek to influence its decision about carrying its inquiry into the DP camps. The Arabs and Jews, for their part, made every effort to sway the committee in their respective directions.

The Arabs made it clear that they found any connection between Palestine and the DP problem unacceptable. As the special session approached, observers reported that the Arabs would endeavor to remove the DPs from the agenda. When it became clear that the terms of reference would allow UNSCOP to include the DP camps in its inquiry, the Arabs threatened to boycott the committee if it were decided to do so. But that threat was rendered moot when they decided to boycott the committee no matter what. Having lost that leverage, the Arab states warned that an UNSCOP visit to DP camps would ignite a wave of Arab violence.[3]

During the course of its work, the committee's two Muslim members strove to stymie such a visit. They sought to drag out the inquiry in Palestine, so that the committee would not have time to go to the camps if it intended to meet its deadline.[4] Rahman sent a letter to his colleagues on the committee explaining why the committee should not do so, reiterating the claim that the DP problem required action on the part of all members of the UN, and the solution should not come at Palestine's expense.[5]

The Zionists inundated the committee with thousands of petitions, memoranda, and protests about the displaced Jews. Some were handwritten messages from individual DPs, others official missives from the representatives of the inmates at the major camps and from Jewish organizations involved in the issue. Representatives of Jewish communities that had been destroyed sent accounts of what they had endured in the Holocaust, calling on UNSCOP to mitigate the suffering of the displaced Jews. Some of these were accompanied by chilling maps marked with the percentage of survivors in each city and town occupied by the Nazis and their allies. They detailed the harsh conditions in the camps, and the inmates' anxiety about enduring another European winter. All these messages stressed that the residents of the camps would agree to go to nowhere else but Palestine.[6]

The most important of these documents was one signed by almost all the representatives of the DP camps. It was the product of the efforts of Jewish Agency emissaries Gideon Ruffer (later Rafael) and Shalom Adler-Rudel, who traveled to Europe to prepare the ground for an UNSCOP visit. They organized the meeting that approved the joint message.[7]

The first battle in the Jewish Agency's campaign to get UNSCOP to visit the DP camps involved getting the committee to make a stop in Cyprus, where the British were confining Jews who had attempted to enter Palestine illegally. At a meeting at the beginning of July, the committee received a cable from the committee representing the detainees in Cyprus stating that the 11,000 inhabitants of the detention camps there had declared a hunger strike, demanding that they be freed immediately. It also called on UNSCOP to make a trip to Cyprus at the earliest possible opportunity in order to "investigate the crimes inflicted on us." Granados made an impassioned speech in favor of acceding to the request. His friend Fabregat seconded his motion, but no other members of the committee voted in favor. The proposal came just as relations between the committee and the British were improving, following the initial bad feelings between them, and most of the members feared that a visit to the detainees in Cyprus, who had been arrested for violating British law, would cause unnecessary friction.[8]

At a later stage of the inquiry, the Jewish Agency's representatives changed their tactics. They advised Granados and Fabregat not to push the issue. Abba Eban later described it as a tactical move based on the thinking that giving up on a visit to Cyprus might increase the chances that the committee would visit the DP camps. Jewish Agency officials feared that if the committee went to Cyprus, it would reduce the chances that it would visit the DP camps. As the Zionists saw it, the DP camps would be a more dramatic and painful experience, and the decision was to focus on them, according to Eban.[9]

It was thus not until UNSCOP arrived in Geneva that it held its first significant and thorough discussion of a visit to the DP camps. The subject had arisen several times before, but each time there was general agreement that a decision should be put off until then. The reason for the delay was the need to reduce friction with the British, who opposed it, and especially because out of concern that such a decision would put an end to any possibility of engaging the Arabs. When the committee reached Geneva, its members no longer felt bound to be considerate of the British, and after the hearings in Lebanon they no longer feared angering the Arabs.

Sandström led the discussion of the issue at UNSCOP's first meeting in Geneva. He advocated conducting an inquiry into the DP camps, on the grounds that "certainly this question of the Jews in the concentration camps and in Europe has a certain connection with the Palestinian question." The Indian, Australian, and Peruvian members denied that there was any such connection, and opposed such an inquiry. Salazar was the most strongminded opponent. If UNSCOP were to acknowledge that the Jewish DPs had a right to immigrate to Palestine, it would imply that every Jew in the world had such

a right. Yet the territory of Palestine was simply not large enough to take in all the world's Jews. Setting such a precedent would make it impossible for UNSCOP to solve the problem it had been sent to study.[10]

Granados, who very much wanted the committee to see the camps, depicted it as a true challenge for the committee. He questioned whether the displaced Jews really wanted to go to Palestine, and thus maintained that UNSCOP needed to go to the camps to divine the real wishes of the DPs. The committee could offer the DPs options of other countries that would take them in, as a way of determining whether the refugee issue really was linked to that of Palestine. His case was persuasive. His argument for making such an inquiry did not assume that the DP and Palestine issues were connected. Rather, he argued, the point of investigating the issue was to see whether there was indeed such a connection.

Some of the other members countered with the findings of the comprehensive study of the DP camps conducted by the Anglo-American Committee, which indicated that the refugees by and large preferred to go the Palestine. Hood, for his part, seconded Granados's approach, perhaps in the hope that the DP and Palestine issues could be kept separate, which would make solving the Palestine problem much easier. He lauded the work of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and suggested that conditions in the DP camps had improved since the Anglo-American Committee's time. Hood presumed that, following the IRO's rehabilitation work, and given the long time that the DPs had spent in the camps, they had by this time come to view the situation differently. The Zionist claim that, overall, the refugees wanted to go to Palestine was a distortion, he argued. In light of the lack of consensus on visiting the camps, Hood summoned Søren Christian Sommerfelt of the International Refugee Organization (IRO), who was working for the organization in Lausanne, to Geneva to brief UNSCOP on the subject, which could help the committee reach a decision.[11]

Hood's suggestion was accepted, and at the next meeting the IRO provided the committee with a comprehensive survey of the likelihood that the DPs could be absorbed in other countries, and the conditions that these countries had declared for allowing DPs in. To the astonishment of UNSCOP's members, Sommerfelt told them that no serious study had been conducted on the refugees' intentions, and that he could only offer an estimation. IRO Secretary Arthur Altmeyer said the same. It became more apparent to the committee that the subject needed to be studied, and a proposal to visit the DP camps passed by a margin of two, with six members voting in favor and four (Peru, Iran, Yugoslavia, and India) opposing. The Czechoslovakian representative abstained.[12] The decision was made by the members themselves, without guidance from their home countries. No instructions about how to vote are to be found in the papers of the Australians and Dutch members. The Peruvian member, as already noted, had reached his own firm conclusions on the subject and voted accordingly. His government, which leaned toward the Zionist side, did not intervene.

Lisicky did not receive any firm instructions from his superiors and thus chose not to take sides.

There is no evidence to back up the claim that the committee was persuaded to visit the DP camps as a direct result of the *Exodus* affair,[13] although it may well be that the harsh sights that some of the members saw there created an atmosphere amenable to making such a decision. In any case, there can be no doubt that the terms of reference, which gave the committee the discretion to investigate the situation of the Jewish refugees, implied that UNSCOP would have to take a position on a matter of policy and principle—whether the DPs, as Jews, had a connection to Palestine that granted them some sort of right to settle there. Some of the committee's members, who did not need to voice an opinion until a very late stage of their work, were not eager to do so. Some tried to see it not as a statement but rather simply as a procedural or technical decision, but others saw it as a first step towards formulating the conclusions of their inquiry. The four who voted no were not voting against the need to investigate the DP camps as much as they were voting in favor of a pro-Arab solution. Those who voted yes were not a solid front. Each had different motives. The sense that the battle over the final recommendations had already begun did not permit the members who would have preferred not to see visits to the DP camps as declarative acts the luxury of doing so. In its trip to Lebanon, the committee had made a gesture to the Arabs above and beyond what was required of them. After that, a decision not to visit the DP camps, when the UN had given it the freedom to do so, would have been met with raised eyebrows. It could have been interpreted as a sign that the committee's conclusions would reject any connection between the Palestine question and the plight of the Jewish refugees. In other words, it would have led to expectations that its recommendations would be pro-Arab. Most members of the committee did not want to give such an impression when they arrived in Geneva.

"I Was in Hell Tonight": UNSCOP Visits the DP Camps

One of the arguments against visiting the DP camps was that UNSCOP faced a tight deadline. Sandström thus proposed that a subcommittee be sent to the camps, comprising only some members of the committee or, alternatively, a subcommittee made up of all the alternate members, so that UNSCOP itself could carry on its work and move forward. The committee approved the subcommittee proposal in the end, combining the two ideas. Each member was authorized to join the mission himself, or to send his alternate. Salazar, of Peru, declared that his country would not participate, while Fabregat and Granados announced that they would represent their countries. The rest of the members of the subcommittee were alternates.[14]

That is, except for John Hood of Australia, who joined at the last minute and was elected chairman of what was officially designated as Subcommittee Three. Several sources, taken together, indicate that his appointment was also

the subject of drama. Hood's appointment, Granados charged, was meant to keep the post from him and Fabregat, the only two full members of UNSCOP who declared that they would participate. It would thus only have been natural for one of them to chair the delegation. Granados's and Fabregat's accounts are reminiscent of their versions of how Sandström was elected UNSCOP's chairman—when a backroom deal blocked the Guatemalan representative from receiving the post.[15] As it turns out, something similar ensured Hood's election. Sandström persuaded Hood to join the delegation, and to head it. Hood refused at first, but in the end came around, offering himself for the chairmanship at the last minute.[16]

Granados called it a "rebuke," but Fabregat acknowledged that if either he or Granados had been elected, it would have rendered the inquiry into the DP camps pointless. Fabregat admitted that, as chairman, Hood would be seen by observers as a guarantee of objectivity.[17] And Hood turned out to be the right man at the right time. There was no suspicion that he was pro-Zionist or anti-British—indeed, the opposite was true. He also believed that it was essential to find out what the feelings of the refugees were. Hood did the job with utmost gravity and efficiency.[18]

Determined to lead a fact-finding mission and not just one in which the participants would find confirmation for their preconceived views, Hood, together with the staff, prepared a detailed itinerary and set of procedures.[19] The staff also arranged the flights, as both the British and Americans, in whose military occupation zones the camps were located, refused to allow the members to fly on their military aircraft. In the end, Trygve Lie approved rental of a private plane at UN expense, and on August 8 the subcommittee landed in Munich, in the American zone of occupation in Germany.[20]

The tour of the DP camps lasted for a week, covering sites in the areas of Germany and Austria occupied by American and British forces.[21] The subcommittee sought testimony from camp officials and residents. The first person who spoke to the panel was Rabbi Philip Bernstein, adviser on Jewish affairs to the American army. Conditions in the camps were harsh and getting worse, he stressed. He estimated that there were about 250,000 displaced Jews in Europe, most of whom had arrived at the camps during the previous year. Beyond the overcrowding created by this influx, he reported, despair was spreading among the refugees because they saw little chance of getting out of the camps. He also painted a dark picture of the care the inmates of the camps were receiving. American military personnel were well-meaning, Bernstein said, but had not been trained to provide assistance to refugees and were unable to respond to the demands made by the DPs. Indeed, the army and welfare institutions were crumpling under the burden of caring for the refugees.[22]

As for the future, Rabbi Bernstein provided the subcommittee with a survey the American army had conducted of the German population. It showed that there was no change in German antisemitic attitudes, and that most Germans would attack Jews physically if given the chance. As such, resettlement of

the Jewish refugees in Germany was not an option. Bernstein claimed that if Palestine were to open to Jewish immigration, some ninety percent of the refugees would take advantage of the opportunity. Were the United States to allow them to immigrate, about a quarter of the refugees would prefer to go there and the rest would choose Palestine. His opinion was that half the refugees would refuse to give up their aspiration to go to Palestine even if it they were legally barred from doing so for a long time. This group would not be put off by long-term suffering and would be willing to incur personal risk to achieve this goal.[23]

During the days that followed, the subcommittee met with the military governors of the occupation zones and a number of officials responsible for the refugees. Nothing they learned from these people went much beyond what they had heard from Rabbi Bernstein. The officials, both military personnel and those from welfare organizations, complained of inadequate resources in the face of the flow of refugees flooding the camps. Because of antisemitism, the inmates could not leave the camps to work. The IRO turned out to be nearly helpless under these circumstances; there was clearly no hope for any dramatic improvement in the camps. Everyone the subcommittee spoke to acknowledged that conditions were steadily worsening.[24]

Everyone repeated the assertion that the deteriorating conditions in the camps were reinforcing the DPs' desire to go to Palestine. Senior British officers told the subcommittee that only five Jews responded to the Norwegian government's offer to take in 150 refugees. General Brian Hubert Robertson, deputy military governor of Germany, said that, just a year earlier, such an offer would have been taken by many more candidates. His estimate was that ninety-eight percent of the Jewish refugees wanted to go to Palestine.[25] American officers offered a similar estimate; some of them added their personal opinions on the political debate about the DPs. Colonel Henry McFeely, chief of the DP Division in the US Zone in Austria, sent a broad hint to the UN panel, telling them that "When I was in Palestine I saw a large area there that was deserted." General Lucius Clay, who held the same post in Germany, justified the DP's desire to go to Palestine given the dead end they found themselves in because of anti-semitism in Europe.[26]

The members of the subcommittee asked the officials to what extent they thought the refugees' desire to go to Palestine was the product of the public relations campaign that the Zionist movement was conducting in the camps. The officials confirmed that the Zionists were indeed doing their best to persuade the DPs, but maintained that the desire to go to the ancestral Jewish land was part of Jewish culture. Furthermore, Zionist values were an integral part of education and social activity in the camps. In the camps, the UNSCOP delegation encountered posters emblazoned with the slogan "Palestine for the Jews," and others bearing the photograph of a child who was killed during the battle to take control of the *Exodus*, accompanied by the slogan "We shall follow in his footsteps." The members of the subcommittee brought his

"Zionist propaganda" to the attention of the authorities, but quickly realized that it was not of prime interest to them.[27]

The subcommittee also interviewed refugees. It was provided with special rooms to which randomly chosen residents came to and filled out a questionnaire. Each one was asked to offer honest answers. In addition to personal details—country of origin, sex, age, family status, and occupation—the questionnaire was worded in a way that required clear and unequivocal answers. The subcommittee made sure that the sample (100 refugees from all the camps together, according to the subcommittee's report) was representative of the DPs as a whole. The replies were submitted in a variety of languages—German, Russian, Yiddish, Romanian, Hungarian, and Polish—and every one of them said they wanted to go to Palestine. Mohn, who wanted to make sure that the subjects had been chosen properly, set out himself to gather respondents. All the dozens of people he interviewed for the questionnaires, he discovered, wanted to go to Palestine.[28] The questionnaires were filled out by means of individual interviews with the subjects, in which the camp residents related their personal tragedies to the members of the subcommittee. Ostensibly prosaic questions, such as "married or single" or "number of children," turned out to be traumatic. Some of the subjects gave two answers, one regarding the past and the second depicting a very different present time. Others let the questioners record the number of their children and their ages, but then added: "They were taken to Auschwitz, they're dead now." The questionnaires, printed in Geneva, were not adequate for the purpose. In the margins around the single line provided for an answer to each questions, the interrogators were compelled to summarize the decimation of once large families.[29]

The subcommittee filled out the picture by strolling on their own around the camps. They explained to the refugees they encountered who they were and why they had come. In many cases, the conversations ended in tears. Fabregat recorded a long and horrifying series of such encounters: orphans telling what they had endured, adults left only with photographs of their loved ones, and one old man who refused to talk. "I have no strength for more lies," he shouted as he walked away. "I have been asked these same questions many times in the past—I want to go to Palestine."[30]

In many ways, the climax of the mission came at the Rothschild Hospital in Vienna. In normal times it had eighty beds, but was now caring for no less than 4,000 refugees. Despite the appallingly overcrowded conditions, refugees continued to arrive. Antisemitism and hunger forced many Jews to leave Romania and the Balkan countries, but the DP camps in Austria were already packed and refused to let anyone in. The hospital, run by the Joint Distribution Committee ("the Joint"), a Jewish-American welfare organization, became a haven for masses of these refugees. The intake doctor briefed the members of the subcommittee on the severe condition of the patients. Half of them suffered from malnourishment, and more than a thousand of them had tuberculosis. He took them inside so that they could see with their own eyes. The stench and the sight of the emaciated patients made them sick.

Refugees told them of boundless hunger, their unfamiliar ailments, and their despair. The shocked members found themselves surrounded by a mob of patients screaming that they wanted to go to Palestine; only with difficulty were they able to extricate themselves, some of them on the verge of collapse.[31]

Some of the members returned to the hospital that night. They saw two trucks dump human cargo at the hospital entrance and drive away. These were refugees who had crossed the Romanian frontier and found no place that would house them. The hospital guards refused to allow them in; the refugees screamed and climbed the hospital walls. In the end they were permitted to enter, accompanied by the subcommittee members, who watched as they went through the initial stages of intake into the facility. "I was in hell tonight," Fabregat recounted.[32]

The subcommittee returned to Germany for its final stop, to visit a DP camp located very near what had been the Bergen-Belsen death camp. A British officer who had been one of the first to enter the camp when it was liberated from the Nazis, took some of the American journalists who accompanied the mission to the camp and told them of the atrocities committed there. Fabregat, who reported that he had investigated the subject before joining UNSCOP, acknowledged that, before he saw it with his own eyes, he presumed that the Jews were "exaggerating in relating their drama."[33]

A day after the delegation returned to Geneva, Hood reported the subcommittee's experience to UNSCOP. The meeting was an informal one, which was not meant to be documented, and as such he did not parse his words. He stated unambiguously that the facts were that "one hundred percent" of the Jewish refugees wanted to go to Palestine, and that it made no difference whether they were "inspired by propaganda or not." He stressed that the issue was of the utmost urgency.[34]

The subcommittee submitted a final report on its work to UNSCOP on August 20. It grappled with the subcommittee's impressions and the conclusions the experience led its members to, while at the same time seeking to avoid making statements that would go beyond the boundaries of their investigation into the DP camps. The results of the questioning of the refugees, which was the most important task the delegation was responsible for on its trip, showed that, for all intents and purposes, all the Jews in the camps in Germany and Austria wanted, with whatever level of resolve, to go to Palestine. There was no option to resettle the refugees in Europe, the report maintained, given the virulent antisemitism pervading the continent. Neither was resettlement in the West, for example in the United States and Canada, an attractive option, given that an overwhelming majority of those questioned declared that they would refuse to be relocated anywhere but Palestine, even if it meant spending a long period in the camps. No more than twenty-five percent of the residents of the DP camps would agree to go to the USA, the authors of the report cautiously predicted.[35]

The report touched on the Zionist education that the inmates of the camps were receiving, and described the Zionist public relations campaign advocating

immigration to Palestine. According to the subcommittee, the combination of these two factors with the memory of the horrors committed by the Nazis and the economic, political, and social condition of the refugees impelled them to set their faces toward Palestine. Offering a lengthy account of the frustration felt by the refugees, it cited the crisis of confidence that the war had produced between the Jews and the rest of the world's nations. This, too, drove the refugees to advocate a Jewish state as the only acceptable solution to their plight. The problem of the displaced Jews required urgent treatment, it said, with the refugees in Vienna as a top priority, a "state of emergency."[36]

At the meeting of UNSCOP that discussed the report, the subcommittee stressed that there was a direct connection between the problem of the DP camps and Palestine. While the report did not state this explicitly, it was certainly implied. Hood demanded the immediate publication of the report so as to arouse world opinion. UNSCOP did not agree, but impressed on the members just how serious he believed the situation to be.[37] Hood, who set out for the DP camps to conduct an impartial investigation, had seen things he had never imagined, and which made him take the Zionist side. Shertok said that the trip had been "exceptionally successful,"[38] while MacGillivray wrote: "I think the whole committee is glad that they sent this sub-committee; they now realise that the D.P. camps are an integral part of the problem."[39]

Previous studies of UNSCOP have offered conflicting views of just how imbued with Zionism the Jews in the DP camps were. Some have argued that these people had a profound Zionist consciousness and a very real desire to go to Palestine, in keeping with the impression that UNSCOP's subcommittee received.[40] Others have been skeptical of this claim and argued that the refugees were used by the Zionist movement to achieve its goal of establishing a Jewish state. In keeping with this position, these writers have portrayed UNSCOP's inquiry as unsound. The refugees the subcommittee interviewed were instructed in how to respond by Jewish Agency emissaries, in this view.[41]

In fact, there is no evidence that the refugees interviewed by the subcommittee were briefed in advance, and there are solid reasons for believing that they were not. It is true that two Jewish Agency emissaries went to the camps to prepare for the subcommittee's visits, but most of their work involved coordinating between the senior figures in the different camps to produce the joint statement submitted to UNSCOP. The instructions these two emissaries received were clear and explicit: "The entire purpose of the trip is to investigate if we are telling the truth about the situation in the camps." As such, they were not to prepare testimonies in advance. Rather, they were "to remain behind the scenes, and let the simple people speak, and not to evince annoyance if someone is not entirely in line, etc. Trust the people."[42] The people did not disappoint them; they stuck to the Zionist message without having been told to. The imperturbable Mohn returned from the trip appalled and passionate. He laid out the measures taken to preclude the possibility any possibility that the subjects chosen for the interviews would know in advance

about the questions they were to be asked. Among other things, the subcommittee did not announce its arrival in advance.[43]

The end result seemed promising for the Zionists. But as the hour approached when the results of the subcommittee's investigation would need to be translated into practical political substance, it became clear that nothing was certain. Despite the persuasive information they had received, the members of UNSCOP were still apprehensive about making a firm decision on an international issue, and they began to engage in impressive contortions to avoid doing so. In the end, the committee tried to perform a balancing act, at least on the declarative level. It indeed accepted the Zionist claim that the issues of the DP camps and Palestine could not, in practical terms, be kept separate, but it refused to state that as a matter of principle. In its recommendations it proposed a Jewish state with borders broad enough to absorb the refugees, and recommended that 150,000 displaced Jews be allowed to settle in Palestine (according to a quota) even before the arrangement it proposed was put into effect, but it also stated in its report that Palestine could not solve the global Jewish problem.[44]

Notes

1 Arieh J. Kochavi, *'Akurim u-Politikah Ben-Le'umit*, Tel Aviv: 1992, pp. 11, 41.
2 John Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel*, Stanford, CA: 1974, pp. 16–18; Michael J. Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, Berkeley: 1990, pp. 140–146, 275–280.
3 *Filasṭīn*, May 2, June 11, 1947; NA 867.01/4-747 Wadsworth to S/S, April 7, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Sinclair to Bromley, June 2, 1947.
4 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, June 25, 1947; TNA FO 371/61875, Pirie Gordon to FO, June 25, 1947.
5 SNA ESA Box 5, Abdur Rahman to Sandström, July 2, 1947.
6 This material can be found in the UN archive and in Sandström's archive in Sweden, SNA ESA Box 3–6.
7 ISA 93/חצ/65/1, Ruffer to Shertok, July 1, 1947; CZA S25/5465, "Meeting of Representatives of the Central Committees of the Displaced Persons with Representatives of the Jewish Agency (Geneva, July 15)." The memorandum, dated July 22, 1947, can be found in SNA ESA box 6.
8 UNA S-608-1, 23rd Meeting, July 8, 1947.
9 OHD 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, 1993.
10 UNA S-608-2, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947.
11 United Nations Yale Oral History Project, Interview with Søren Christian Sommerfelt, Yale University, Institution for Social and Policy Studies.
12 Ibid.; NA S-608-2, 42nd Meeting, July 30, 1947.
13 Quigley, *The International Diplomacy of Israel's Founders*, p. 67.
14 UNA S-608-2, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947; 43rd Meeting, July 31, 1947.
15 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 228–229; Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 23–24, 216–217.
16 TNA FO 371/61876, Geneva to FO, July 31, 1947.
17 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 228; Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 23–24.

18 Howard Adelman has stressed the importance of Australia's immigration policies as dominant in that country's thinking on the issue. See: Howard Adelman, "Australia and the Birth of Israel: Midwife or Abortionist," *Australia Journal of Politics and History* 38 (1992), pp. 365–366. This might well explain Hood's approach to the DP issue.
19 SNA ESA Box 5, Hood to Sandström, August 1, 1947; Hood to Sandström, "Draft Proposed and Outline of Programme for the Visit of UNSCOP to Assembly Centres for Jewish Refugees Displaced Persons," [no date].
20 TNA FO 371/61876, Cunningham to Colonial Secretary, August 2, 1947. This file brings together all the correspondence on the arrangements for the visit and for the flights. See also Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 214–215; Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 24–25.
21 The delegation's itinerary can be found at 93/חצ/ 2270/ 12, "UNSCOP–Subcommittee Three."
22 UNA S-611-5, "Summary Record of Talk by Rabbi Bernstein, Official Advisor to General Clay, Military Governor, U.S Zone, Germany, and to General Keys, Military, Governor, U.S Zone, Austria, Friday Evening," August 8, 1947.
23 Ibid. In its report, the subcommittee cited the figures provided by Rabbi Bernstein. UNA S-611-5, "Special Committee on Palestine, Subcommittee Three, Second Report," August 20, 1947, p. 4.
24 UNA S-611-5, "Summary Record of Meeting Held in the PCIRO Conference Room, Stalinplatz, Vienna, Monday, 11 August 1947."
25 UNA S-611-5, "Conference with British Officials, at Berlin, 13th August 1947."
26 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 226; UNA S-611-5, "Summary Record of Meeting with Gen. Lucius Clay, Military Governor of Germany, U.S Zone, August 14, 1947, at 3:00 p.m."; "Summary Record of Meeting Held in the PCIRO Conference Room, Stalinplatz, Vienna, Monday, 11 August 1947."
27 TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 15, 1947; Fabregat, *Sion*, p. 40; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 217.
28 CZA S25/5970, "Meeting: D. Horowitz – P. Mohn (Geneva)," August 14, 1947; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 218–219; the completed questionnaires can be found in UNA S-61-5.
29 From an examination of the questionnaires found in UNA S-611-5.
30 Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 26–40.
31 Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 40–46; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 222–225; UNA S-611-5, "Visit to Rothschild Hospital, Monday," August 11, 1947; "Rothschild Hospital: Information Received During tour of the Camp," August 11, 1947.
32 Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 51–52.
33 Fabregat, *Sion*, pp. 22, 53–54; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 231–233; OHA 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, 1993.
34 UNA S-605-4, "Ninth Informal Meeting, Friday," August 15, 1947.
35 UNA S-611-5, "Special Committee on Palestine, Subcommittee Three, Second Report," August 20, 1947.
36 Ibid.
37 UNA S-608-2, 45th Meeting, August 22, 1947. In the end, the subcommittee's report was included as an appendix to UNSCOP's final report.
38 ISA 93/חצ/2270/3, Shertok to Meyerson, August 18, 1947
39 TNA FO 371/61786, MacGillivray to Smith, August 20, 1947.

40 Zeev Mankowitz, "Ha-Tziyonut ve-She'arit ha-Pleitah," in Israel Gutman and Adina Dreksler, eds., *She'arit ha-Pleitah, 1944–1948*, Jerusalem: 1985, pp. 189–206.
41 Yosef Grodzinsky, *ḤḤomer Enoshi Tov: Yehudim mul Tziyonim 1945–1951*, Jerusalem: 1998, p. 121.
42 CZA S25/5991, Shertok to Meyerson, August 5, 1947.
43 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 184.
44 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 44–46, 48; Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories*, Chichester: 2010, p. 108.

8 Decision Point

Drafting the Report

In Geneva, UNSCOP sat down to draw up its recommendations. Following its intensive period of inquiry, replete with experiences and incidents, the members found themselves in the desolate rooms of the Palace of Nations, formerly the home of the League of Nations. The serenity of Geneva was a sea change from the tension of Palestine, but it did not fool them. It was clear to all that the committee's moment of truth had arrived.

At this stage, most of the members had yet to form a firm opinion about what sort of solution they were to recommend. Sandström, for his part, prepared a general plan for reaching a decision and writing the report. At the first meeting in Geneva he told his colleagues that he wanted to invite a senior British official to speak before the committee. It was one more in a long series of requests he had previously sent to the Mandate power, without the knowledge of the rest of the group. Sandström enumerated the subjects that such testimony could help clarify, remarking on the importance of hearing a British response to "various proposals which have been made in previous investigations and which are before us now for the solution of the problem of Palestine." Justice Ivan Rand of Canada suspected that what the chairman really wanted was for the committee to hear what Britain's preferred solution was, and to see how committed they were to implementation, should the committee recommend it. He thus vociferously opposed the idea. He argued that the British should not be given any privilege over the other parties, and that the committee already had all the information it needed, and simply needed to make a decision. During an exchange between them, Sandström argued that "the report will not be complete" until a British representative was called before the committee. The positions of the Arabs and Jews were clear and known, Sandström argued, while the British position remained obscure. After a debate that led nowhere, the chairman realized that he did not have support for his move, and suggested postponing the decision on the issue.[1]

That firm opposition to this attempt to move toward the British came from Rand, who represented a British dominion, demonstrated just how much his thinking had changed since lending the British unconditional support at the beginning of the inquiry. In the event, however, Sandström's proposal was rendered moot by the British themselves. The foreign and colonial secretaries,

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along with senior officials in their offices, weighed the idea and offered their opinions. It even reached the prime minister's desk. The supporters, who were in the minority, believed that by accepting it they could help ensure that UNSCOP's plan would be balanced and properly structured. The opponents worried that any British representative who appeared before the committee would find himself facing "embarrassing questions" and would be "pressed to say whether various hypothetical solutions would be acceptable to His Majesty's Government." The debate showed, once again, just how disparate the views on Palestine were among British policy makers. Both sides admitted that if it were to become public that a British official had made an appearance before the committee, it would be likely to rouse suspicions that UNSCOP's recommendations had been "concocted" (as Colonial Office Assistant Undersecretary John Martin put it) by the British.[2] That was the major argument made at a joint meeting of the Colonial and Foreign Office staffs on July 24, convened to reach a decision. The concern about creating the impression that the British government was cooperating with the committee in preparing its report led the officials to refuse out of hand to send a British representative to give secret testimony in Geneva.[3]

Consonant with this decision, MacGillivray conveyed to Sandström a detailed document declaring that the British had no more they wished to say, beyond what had already been communicated to the committee. "In particular," the message stated, "there is no specific solution of the Palestine question which His Majesty's Government would wish to advocate."[4] The British liaison officer had an easier time passing on the message after inquiring and finding that the request for British testimony came from the chairman personally, and had not received the committee's support.[5] Upon receiving it, Sandström announced at a committee meeting that he was setting aside the idea once and for all.[6]

Sandström received another slap in the face at this same session. Since the committee's arrival in Geneva, he had promoted an agenda of his own, stage by stage. He first drafted a working paper to serve as a basis for the debate over a solution. Later, he asked for and received the sanction of the other members to involve the committee staff in preparing UNSCOP's report. At this point, at the committee's fourth meeting in Geneva, he tabled a memorandum he thought could serve as a basis for the final report. Abdur Rahman, the Indian representative, objected, on the grounds that no such document could be placed before the committee before it had conducted a preliminary discussion of the results of its inquiry. Rand joined Rahman's attack on Sandström, and the two of them compelled the chairman to back down. The forty-five-page document composed with great labor by the chairman was set aside.[7] MacGillivray reported to his superiors that the other members of the committee were concerned that Sandström intended himself to draft the report with the staff's assistance and then impose it on them.[8]

As an alternative to Sandström's plan, Rand and Abdur Rahman proposed conducting a series of informal conversations in which the members would,

really for the first time, reveal their positions to their colleagues. To guarantee a free and open discussion, Rahman suggested that no minutes should be recorded. Sandström opposed the idea at first, but then relented, and the committee approved it.[9] Having hoped that the discussions would be guided by the final result he thought they should reach, Sandström was gradually disabused of his illusion that drafting the report would be easy and, in particular, that it would reflect his own views.[10] All the signs indicated that the process of producing the report would be long, exhausting, and nerve-wracking.

The Members Reveal Their Views

UNSCOP held eleven informal discussions of the conclusions that the individual members drew from the inquiry in Palestine. The discussions were based on a working paper that merged three similar proposals composed by Sandström, Rahman, and Simic, each of which laid out the issues to be addressed.[11] At this point, the rules remained flexible. The discussion was rigorous and serious, but members were not required to offer categorical responses to the questions posed, and no position any of them took was considered binding; they were free to retract anything they said.

The first of these meetings, which the participants later recalled as "the most useful and important one so far," took place on August 6.[12] Despite the decision not to keep a record of the discussions, Bunche took notes as an aid in drafting the report that provide a sense of how they proceeded. The goal of the first meeting was to get a sense of whether the members believed that the current regime in Palestine should continue or whether change was needed—in other words, what was the future of the British Mandate. Each member spoke in turn on the legal basis for the Mandate; no one disputed that the British regime derived its authority from the League of Nations decision to grant it a Mandate in Palestine. A further round showed that all the members agreed that the Mandate's time had come and that it could not continue. Each member justified this claim in a different way. Salazar argued that the Jewish national home was already well-founded, and as such the Mandate had achieved its purpose. Others noted that even the British officials with whom the committee had engaged had clearly implied (without stating explicitly) that the Mandate, in its current form, was not sustainable. The members who had from the start sought to vilify the British noted the injustices being committed by the Mandate regime and argued that the present immoral situation contravened the Mandate's claim to legitimacy.[13]

Lisicky would later claim that the decision to end the Mandate "was satisfactory to everyone," but it is important to keep in mind that this was the first time the committee members voiced their opinions about the subject, and that for some of them it was a reverse of their initial inclination. The Dutch and Swedish representatives, who had joined UNSCOP with pronounced pro-British leanings, and the Canadian and Australian members, whose sympathy for the British was almost obligatory, given that they represented

Commonwealth nations, revealed their cards for the first time. If their colleagues thought up to this point that these four would do all they could to defend the Mandate, they were disabused of that assumption at this meeting.[14]

But the sense of relief was premature, because ending the British Mandate meant that an alternative had to be proposed. Most of the members did not go beyond the questions put to them at this meeting and thus did not offer a solution. Nearly all of them, however, referred to "independence" and "self-determination" as goals, although some of them saw independence as a distant rather than an immediate one. Hood and Lisicky spoke of a trusteeship that would then reevaluate the situation. Blom also spoke of a long transition period. The others did not offer a firm program. In fact, only two members proposed a comprehensive solution in this initial discussion—Rand, who proposed partition into two states with economic ties; and Sandström, who proposed full and complete partition, to be accomplished after a brief transition period.[15]

The next informal discussion sought to clarify what was meant by independence. It began with a round in which the members addressed "extreme solutions," meaning either a Jewish or Arab state comprising all of Palestine. It quickly emerged that there was a near consensus on this point as well. With the exception of Rahman, who tied himself into knots but in the end said that despite his personal opinion he would not "press for an Arab state" in all of Palestine, everyone rejected the maximalist positions of both sides.[16]

Up to this point the members went through the steps laid out in the working paper with ease and speed. But the next two issues—a binational state or a federal state—saw the beginning of a long and grueling debate that the committee bogged down in over the weeks that followed. When the members were asked to offer their thoughts on a binational state, some admitted that they did not understand what the term meant, which opened the door to different interpretations. Granados maintained that the absolute equality that such a state would guarantee would mean that Jewish immigration would not be limited, and as such said he supported the idea. Hood, Blom, and Lisicky said that they had no opinion. Entezam offered a binational program in which Christian church personnel would be given authority to arbitrate tensions between Jews and Arabs. Rahman was alarmed by this, going back on what he had said previously and stating that he supported the position of the Arab Higher Committee, namely a single state in which the Jewish minority would enjoy protection and the right to self-determination. Salazar, Fabregat, Rand, and Sandström opposed the idea, each for his own reasons.[17]

At the next meeting, at which the idea of a federal state was discussed, things started getting more complicated. Rand declared his support for a federation of two states. He proposed establishing both a Jewish and an Arab state, both of which would enjoy representation at the UN. However, the economic and social policies of both states would be conducted by a single central authority composed of three Jews, three Arabs, and three Christians

who were not residents of Palestine. Some of the members sought to combine different models, such that a welter of specific solutions were proposed.[18]

Partition was meant to be the last solution brought up for informal discussion. Sandström may deliberately have arranged the schedule in this way, hoping that once a majority of members had ruled out a majority of the proposals, they would support the last solution left standing. In the end, however, he found himself almost alone. The only other member who supported a total and absolute partition was Salazar. The Peruvian member's partition plan had two legs: Palestine should not solve the problem of all the world's Jews, and Jewish immigration to Palestine had to be extremely limited. Furthermore, the two peoples needed to be separated utterly—that is, no Arab minority should remain in the Jewish state, and vice versa. Another important element of his plan involved Jerusalem, all of which he believed should be placed under an international regime. Salazar was honest enough to say that, given these principles, the Jewish state would be far smaller than the Jews sought. They would, he suggested, be bitterly disappointed and might even abandon the idea altogether. Granados said that he did not oppose partition in principle, but he offered a long list of reservations, and as such he saw a lot of advantages in Rand's proposal for two states in an economic union.[19] Once the members had shown their cards in the informal talks, no two of them were able to agree on a single solution.

This being the case, almost every one of the members composed a memorandum, that is, a draft report based on his personal views. The circumstances surrounding the writing of these documents is not entirely clear. Apparently, with the discussion seemingly at a dead end, members were asked to put their position in writing in a clear way, in the hope that within this mosaic of documents there were some matching hues. At future points of crisis some would suggest that, instead of submitting a joint report, they submit this collection of memoranda. Perhaps it was such a concept that prompted this initiative.

Simic was the first to produce such a document; most of the others soon followed. Rahman gave Sandström a personal cover letter to his own memorandum. On August 15, the British were slated to evacuate India, which would be partitioned into two states. Rahman feared that this political development might undermine his position on the committee, so he was quick to submit his conclusions, while reserving the right to change his mind.[20] The memoranda of these two representatives, who a few days later would submit a joint paper (along with Entezam of Iran, who did not submit an individual memorandum), were entirely different. Rahman proposed an Arab state with a Jewish minority, whereas Simic and his staff proposed a complex binational state composed of an unspecified number of self-governing cantons.[21]

Seeking to be persuasive, the Indian and Yugoslavian memoranda painted Palestine's future in rosy colors, but nearly all the other papers submitted by members of the committee evinced unease and anxiety. Blum, Salazar, and Sandström stressed the friction between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, and

the conflict to a large extent dictated their disparate proposals. Blom warned against chaos and focused on the transition period and the implementation of any future solution. From his experience as an experienced administrator, he had said during the informal sessions that without a strong implementation plan, all the castles in the air that his colleagues were building would not stand. Blom indicated that the British were practically the only actor who could put any new arrangement into place. He left many questions hanging in the air.[22] Salazar and Sandström, advocates of partition in its purest form, also warned that any unsuccessful arrangement could lead to a bloodbath. Both categorically rejected plans based on one or another level of imposed cooperation between Jews and Arabs.[23]

The starting point for Sandström's memorandum was his desire to calm the waters. He did not disregard the difficulties of implementation, nor the opposition that a partition plan would elicit. He gave much space to computations of strength, and concluded that partition would be acceptable to most Jews and thus the surest way of pacifying the region.[24] Salazar, while also seeking stability, proposed the establishment of a Jewish state on a small territory that contained the fewest possible number of Arabs. This would be the best way to avert conflict between Jews and Arabs, he maintained.

A comparison between what the members said in the informal talks and the positions they took in their memoranda shows that some of them had moved toward Rand's principles. Salazar, who in the informal talks had insisted on absolute partition, stated explicitly that he saw advantages in Rand's idea of economic union, on condition that the ties between the two states would be limited to a minimum of necessary issues. Blom also indicated that the economies of the two states would have to be connected in both a partition and a federation plan. Another supporter was Fabregat, who missed the discussion of partition because of his participation in the delegation to the displaced person (DP) camps. He proposed an especially original idea, the partition of Palestine into no less than five parts—two independent states, the holy places, the southern Negev, and the port of Haifa.[25] In fact, the only member other than Rahman and Simic who opposed Rand's principles was Sandström, who maintained that the two new states had to be based on "complete separation with nothing in common."[26]

Rand also had insights from the informal talks. There he used a variety of terms—federal state, confederation, cantons—but in his memorandum he proposed "partition of Palestine which preserves its economic and social integrity." According to his plan, the country would be divided into a Jewish state, an Arab state, and a State of Jerusalem. They would each enjoy full sovereignty, but a central authority would stand above them. This authority would be responsible for assuring and managing the common interests of the three states in areas such as transport, communications, and customs arrangements.[27]

The common denominator among all the memoranda seemed a bit broader than it had been in the informal talks. In fact, however, the members did not

in the end read each other's memoranda, which Bunche, at their instigation, placed in his personal file.[28] Bunche had doggedly gained so much power that in Geneva he operated alongside the chairman as the chief official responsible for producing the UNSCOP report. The members were less anxious about the staff taking control of the committee's work than they were about their colleagues. In the memoranda they took clear stands, which in some cases went along with stating the boundaries of their willingness to compromise. If these positions were made available to their colleagues, there would be less room for bargaining among them. Sandström was the only member who read them. He composed a document in which he offered his opinion of some of the proposals. Neither he nor Bunche believed in Rand's program. In his document,[29] and in the informal conversations Sandström explained why. Bunche panned Rand's idea (although never in his presence), which he thought impossible to carry out.[30] Neither of them was eager to try to unite the committee around Rand's central idea.

In short, the only thing the members agreed about at this stage was that the British Mandate had to be brought to an end. At least three members were prepared to admit that they had not the slightest idea of what the solution should be. Another group took a broad gamut of positions. The Jewish Agency officials who were closely following UNSCOP realized that UNSCOP's position remained uncertain.[31] MacGillivray wrote that the situation was still "fluid."[32] UNSCOP's impotence prompted the parties to the conflict, whose fate was in the balance, to try to influence it.

Arabs, British, and Jews: The Home Stretch

One journalist called Geneva in August 1947 a "capital of intrigue." When UNSCOP arrived there, so did many others who sought to be close at hand. Most of them were Jews—from Etzel, Hashomer Hatza'ir, Agudat Yisra'el, and other movements and political parties. And, of course, there was a large Jewish Agency delegation. Alongside them were several senior British officials. What was new was that there were also Arabs.[33]

Under the circumstances, the latter had a chance to wield considerable influence. A document or oral testimony that would indicate consent to a solution of a federative sort, for example, could have tipped the balance. Rahman, the Arabs' confidant, could have promoted in their name a solution that would restrict Jewish immigration and seek to maintain an Arab majority in the future state. But the representatives in Geneva did not budge from the maximalist position voiced by the Arabs up to this point, and refused to cooperate even with those who sought to help them. Camille Chamoun, the Arab liaison officer, went to speak to the mufti in Cairo before continuing on to Geneva. Any hope of a change in the Arab position seems to have been laid to rest there. To make sure that Chamoun toed the line, al-Ḥussaynī sent two of his own men, Rāsim al-Khālidī and Maʿarūf al-Dawālībī to Geneva as well. MacGillivray reported that al-Khalidi bore a message for UNSCOP, and

the Jewish Agency feared that the two of them sought to promote a solution that both the Arabs and Jews would reject. But they did not come to offer a plan, only to oppose any plan inconsistent with the declarations made in Lebanon. Presumably the two men had also been ordered to keep close tabs on Chamoun.[34]

Chamoun's work was in fact limited to a three-page memorandum that he submitted to UNSCOP. It does not bear a date, but presumably it was submitted following the informal discussions. It was aimed at a weakness that vexed the committee members. The memorandum asserts that partition contradicted the Arabs' right to democratic self-determination in Palestine as a whole, and especially the rights of those Arabs who would find themselves under Jewish rule. Any binational or federal arrangement would also be imposed on the Arabs against their will. Allowing Jewish refugees to immigrate, according to Chamoun's memorandum, was tantamount to saying that the Palestinian Arabs would be made to take responsibility for Hitler's deeds. The document ended by declaring that if UNSCOP were to recommend a program that was unacceptable to a majority of Palestine's inhabitants, there would be "every reason to fear that their answer would be fierce resistance—for which the United Nations and its various component organs would be primarily responsible."[35] Chamoun, who apparently wrote the document himself, knew very well that it was not a life raft. He told an acquaintance that he was depressed because he felt that he could do nothing to influence the committee. He was apprehensive about what awaited the Arabs at the General Assembly in New York. If the mufti and his men continued to set policy, "it's all lost," Chamoun said.[36]

Another leading Arab statesman involved with UNSCOP in Geneva was Mūsā al-ʿAlamī, who headed the Arab Office, a Palestinian Arab public relations organization. He was a former member of the Arab Higher Committee and, at this juncture, an opponent of the mufti. Huge headlines in the Arab world's media alleged that he had appeared before UNSCOP along with the pro-British former Prime Minister Nuri al-Said of Iraq and Chaim Weizmann in an effort to achieve a compromise.[37] The false reports were the climax of an ugly battle between al-ʿAlamī and his former colleague, the mufti. Al-Ḥussaynī had ordered that the most important mission for the Arabs in Geneva was to keep al-ʿAlamī away from the action.[38] Al-ʿAlamī could have been of great help to the Arab representatives. Sandström asked to meet with him to discuss a number of issues. Al-ʿAlamī considered doing so, but the mufti continued to disseminate lies about him to the Arab press and to slander him. Furious, he changed his plans, ended his political mission, and returned to Palestine intending to clear his name.[39] He would later blame the mufti for the Arab failure, claiming that al-Ḥussaynī's hatred of him made him lose his sanity.[40]

In Geneva the British ended their silence with regard to the future of Palestine in the only memorandum they submitted to UNSCOP, entitled "Palestine: A Study of Partition." Its author was Sir Douglas Harris. Bringing

together all the partition plans considered for Palestine, the study had been written to be used only if it became clear that the committee was leaning toward recommending a division of the country. The document stated at its top that it was not intended to answer the general question of whether partition was the correct solution for Palestine, but rather to discuss and analyze what the consequences of such a decision would be. It offered a comparative discussion of four different partition plans—the Peel Commission plan, two revisions of that plan, and the Jewish Agency's partition proposal. The two revisions of the Peel plan were at its heart. The first had been crafted in 1943, with the aim of tempering the difficulties that had arisen from the Peel plan. The second, Harris wrote, had been "an attempt to meet, so far as is possible, the main objections which would probably be raised by the Arabs," while at the same time establishing a viable Jewish state. In fact, both proposals had been aborted British attempts to grapple with the issue. The 1943 version was the work of a Cabinet committee headed by Home Secretary Herbert Morrison, which submitted its recommendations in January 1944. The second revision had been crafted by Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones, who a few months before the UNSCOP began its work had tried to promote the idea that the establishment of a miniature Jewish state would be a way out of the Palestine problem. His proposal excised from the Jewish state the highlands, Negev, and Galilee, as well as a coastal strip (so as to make Jaffa part of the Arab state). What was left was less than a third of the Jewish state proposed by the Peel Commission. The Jewish Agency plan had been taken from a map indicating general lines that Ben-Gurion had traced out during the London talks and which he had certified later, when British officials who had been in the room with him drew a map along those lines. Horowitz wrote that this map "closely resembled those which were eventually established as an outcome of the war of liberation and the armistice agreements of 1948–9."[41]

In addition to maps, the memorandum included tables offering a comparison of data for all four plans. Statistics on the number of inhabitants and lists of settlements on each side of the proposed borders pointed clearly to the advantages of a small Jewish state. In light of the number of Arab inhabitants who would remain within the bounds of the state proposed by the Jewish Agency, which took in a majority of Palestine's territory, that plan was presented as excessive and unjustified. The Agency, the memorandum noted, argued that such borders were needed to make the state sustainable, but that goal was also achieved by the two revised plans. "It is improbable that the [UN] will be prepared to support any recommendation which can be clearly shown to be unfair to Arab interests," Harris wrote. The document's bottom line was that "the main difficulty likely to arise will be to produce a plan which, while not demonstrably unfair to the Arabs, will in any way satisfy Zionist aspirations."[42] In fact, the proposal that the Negev be awarded to the future Arab state (or Transjordan) rather than the Jewish state was also prompted by Britain's intention of maintaining a military presence there, so that it would serve as a strategic land bridge between Libya and Egypt to the

west and Transjordan and Iraq to the east. But of course the memorandum made no mention of that.[43]

Recall that MacGillivray had already provided Mohn with this crucial document. Now, on August 11, with the approval of the senior officials of the Foreign and Colonial Offices, it was presented to all the members of the committee. The British liaison officer reported that Jewish Agency officials "have been very shaken by the effect on the Committee of a reading of the facts contained in Palestine: 'A Study of Partition'. This arrived at a time when the Agency was pressing for an even larger share of the country than previously demanded, including Jerusalem for their capital."[44] MacGillivray's account was confirmed by Horowitz, who wrote in his memoir that the British memorandum was a catastrophe that threatened to demolish everything the Zionists had tried to construct over the previous weeks.[45] While the memorandum indeed continued to trouble some of the Jewish Agency representatives in Geneva until their work was completed, it soon became clear that the memorandum had not had the effect the British had hoped for. By the time the memorandum was provided to the committee, UNSCOP had already progressed quite a distance down a road that, while it did not necessarily lead toward partition, certainly took them farther and farther away from the British position. London no longer played a decisive role.

The British submitted the memorandum only when they were persuaded that the committee was heading in the general direction of partition. They sought at the very least to promote a partition plan that would hurt the Arabs least and keep the Negev out of the Jewish state. But the British were wrong. At the time, only two members, Sandström and Salazar, supported an absolute partition of the type the British were most concerned about. The drift toward partition did not take place until after the memorandum had already been placed before the committee. As such, the document may well not only have achieved its purpose, but may well have had a contrary effect. In not rejecting the option of partition and showing that there were different ways of accomplishing it, it may well have placed partition at the center of the debate.

Why were the British so certain that the committee was going to decide on partition? It turns out that nearly all the information they received was based on ongoing and inaccurate reports from Sandström. UNSCOP's chairman had, as early as mid July, told the British liaison officer and other senior British officials whom he met, that a clear majority for partition was taking form in the committee. The British operated according to this information.[46] Had the British known the actual state of affairs, they almost certainly would not have placed "Palestine: A Study of Partition" before UNSCOP.

The Zionists were exponentially more active in Geneva than the Arabs or the British. They also conveyed written material to the committee's members, but unlike the other two parties, each of which submitted a single document, the Zionists provided no less than a dozen. The Jewish Agency's lobbying efforts to steer the committee in its direction were not, however, entirely successful. UNSCOP's final report shows that in some cases it did not accept

the Zionist arguments. Furthermore, even when the committee decided to act as the Zionists wished, it is not always clear that the memorandums played an important role. But the work was not only done in writing. In fact, it focused on personal and informal contacts of many kinds.[47]

More concrete results came from the personal relations that Jewish Agency officials fostered with some members of the committee. The most prominent examples were Granados and Fabregat. The former continued, until late in the game, to advocate a division of Palestine into cantons. His unwillingness to budge from this position turned into a real problem. Shertok tried to persuade him during a personal meeting, but without success. Indeed, the encounter ended unpleasantly. It took several more conversations, and Fabregat's assistance, to bring Granados around to the Jewish Agency position.[48] The Latin Americans would later switch roles, with Granados mobilizing to press his colleague to set aside certain principles so as to create a broad group united behind a common proposal.

Another move was to engender pressure from their home countries on some of the committee members. The most notable of these efforts was targeted at the Yugoslavians, who during the inquiry evinced sympathy for Zionism, but who in Geneva began to play a major role in consolidating a group of members to support a binational state. Shertok traveled to Belgrade in an effort to persuade the Yugoslavian foreign minister to instruct his representatives to revise their position.[49] A similar initiative was taken with the Czechoslovakian foreign minister in the hope that he would speak with his representative on the committee, who was trying to play both sides.[50]

"There has been no other committee for which we have had such access to its members and officials," Shertok claimed. The close relations that the liaison officers crafted with the members of UNSCOP indeed paved the way for many personal encounters in Geneva, especially with members of the committee's staff, whose influence rose as the hour of decision approached. It was obvious that this situation was not to the liking of UNSCOP. During the final two weeks of their work, the most critical time, they did their best to avoid being seen with Zionist representatives.[51] The members turned inward, seeing outside influences as undesirable.

It was thus all the more exceptional that the Zionists succeeded in arranging a meeting between UNSCOP and Richard Crossman, who had been one of the British members of the Anglo-American Committee, and was a supporter of the Zionist cause. He was highly influential. Beyond the fact that he had grappled with the same issue in a similar forum, he was a prominent member of Parliament for the governing party.[52] Jewish Agency officials beseeched Crossman to go to Geneva. Eban sent him a comprehensive survey of the committee's work,[53] and Horowitz had a long meeting with him. Crossman later spent several hours with Bunche, a meeting that paved the way for an informal appearance before the committee.[54]

Crossman made a long presentation. He provided information about British politics behind the scenes and the work of the Anglo-American Committee.

Bevin, he said unequivocally, was "definitely anti-Semitic and pro-Arab," and that he was dictating policy on Palestine in opposition to the British public, who were urging the government to get its troops out of Palestine and bring them home. Most of the House of Commons would support partition, Crossman claimed, but Bevin, who was dragging Prime Minister Clement Attlee behind him, would try to present a plan of his own liking and to persuade others to support it. Crossman offered enthusiastic support for partition and the establishment of a Jewish state in "the area proposed in the Peel Report plus the Negev." He proposed that the Arab state, for which he saw no need, should not be established, and that the territory not included in the Jewish state be annexed to Transjordan.[55]

Crossman excoriated the Anglo-American Committee he had served on and did his best to explain why it had reached conclusions different from the solution he was promoting. That committee, he charged, had not truly intended to find a solution to the Palestine problem; it had been established only for the purpose of gaining time. He disparaged some of the other members of the committee, and claimed that partition had been taken off the table in advance. Another subject Crossman expanded on was the transition period between the end of the Mandate and the implementation of the solution. He stressed its great importance and recommended against allowing the British to take charge of it. Instead, the task should be assigned to an international force. He warned that allowing Bevin to carry it out would be a catastrophe, as the foreign secretary would use the interim period to perpetuate the British presence in Palestine by creating turmoil that would force the British to remain.[56]

Horowitz wrote that Crossman's presentation left an "unforgettable impression" on the members of UNSCOP, and that it was "of superlative importance." The impact was indeed evident. In the two informal discussions that took place after the members heard him speak, they addressed the issue of implementation and who would be responsible for putting whatever plan was decided on into action. The committee members conducted an incisive discussion of this aspect before deciding what the plan would be. It was a strange thing to do, but apparently they did so because of the emphasis Crossman had placed on the interim period.[57] As the members frequently referred to Crossman's approach to this subject, it seems reasonable to assume that his other recommendations did not fall on deaf ears either. At the end of the last round of opportunities for the parties to affect the proceedings, the committee took one more step forward in the direction of partition.

"Stuck in the Mud": A Consensus Proves Elusive

In mid August, Bunche wrote in his diary that UNSCOP was "badly bogged down" and "wander[ing] in circles."[58] None of the proposed ideas managed to get off the ground, and the necessary internal mediation never took form. The British memorandum that rejected the division of Palestine that the Zionists preferred, and Crossman's warning that a failure in the transition period

would lead to civil war, along with the sense that they had reached a dead end, created an atmosphere of anxiety and debilitation. Hood and Blom began calling for a long-term trusteeship of a decade or so in length, leading in the end to the establishment of a single state. The advocates of this arrangement sought to prevent a British evacuation and the descent into violence that it would bring in its wake.[59]

The Indian and Iranian representatives tried to ride this wave, creating a loose grouping of two different currents that supported a temporary trusteeship. The pro-Arab pair had an endpoint in mind—a single state with an Arab majority—while the others were concerned with the starting point, seeking a long waiting period that would put off a painful decision. The differences between the two groups made it difficult to further the idea, as did the absence of Hood, who had joined the tour of the DP camps. Hood wrote to his Foreign Ministry on August 18 (after returning from the trip) that the trusteeship proposal was still in play, but had not been submitted in writing.[60] This delay was to the detriment of the idea, as in the meantime other ideas gained momentum. In the end, the trusteeship idea fizzled out. Rahman and Entezam found another partner, Simic, and abandoned it. Others turned their attention to the various partition proposals. But the indecision that afflicted some of them continued until they completed their work.

But the committee did move forward, thanks to its staff. This small group, which had displayed considerable independence during the inquiry, now received a significant boost in the person of the American economist John Reedman and Henri Vigier, a French senior official from the UN's Political Department who arrived from New York to help draft the report. Reedman joined the staff at Bunche's request; Vigier had been considered for the staff from the start but had been left behind because he was suspected of sympathy for Zionism, but the need for his talent and experience now trumped that.[61]

Reedman's appearance added an important dimension to the committee's work. Astonishingly, until his arrival, the only source of expertise on economic issues available to UNSCOP had been Horowitz. When the members sat down for an informal meeting with Reedman, they asked for his opinion on the economic viability of an Arab state created by partition. The Jewish Agency's experts, led by Horowitz, had asserted that such a state would be able to provide for itself, but one of the central arguments Rand made in favor of an economic union of the Jewish and Arab states was that the viability of an Arab state was doubtful. The establishment of a Jewish state was liable to lead to crisis for the Arabs of Palestine, whose interests had been looked after by the British Mandate administration and would now be bereft of support. Reedman had a firm view on the subject. "The Arab state in a partition arrangement," he asserted, "would definitely *not* be viable without a customs union" unless it shared services and infrastructure with the Jewish state. Reedman singled out transportation and currency as well.[62] Reedman was considered an impartial expert, so it was clear that the supporters of pure partition would have to show some flexibility.

Bunche got the message. He imagined a cross between Sandström's complete partition and Rand's two states joined by a large number of common systems, and began writing draft proposals in which he examined the implications of combining the two ideas.[63] The assumption of the supporters of complete partition was that relations between Jews and Arabs were so bad that there was no way of maintaining any sort of common framework. At Reedman's behest, they now had to create a connection between the two states, even if they did not think that it could actually work.[64] The working papers that Bunche composed spoke of mutual economic responsibility and common fabrics of life, but the news from Palestine was of bloody riots between the two peoples on the border between Tel Aviv and Jaffa and on other similar violent clashes.[65] The threats the Arabs were making to the committee also grew more and more menacing. Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, an Arab nationalist and military leader who had gone to Syria to prepare for an armed confrontation, declared in an interview in the Arab press that if UNSCOP decided in favor of the Jews, the Arab governments would declare "total war." He added that "We will murder, wreck and ruin everything standing in our way, be it English, American or Jewish." He offered broad hints about the equipment and weapons he had collected for this purpose.[66] This grim atmosphere did not help UNSCOP make progress on a joint economic arrangement. The harsh picture they had seen with their own eyes in the Middle East was being reconfirmed day by day.

The paralysis that overcame the members of the committee drove the staff to take action. They did so of their own volition, serving as mediators, trying to put together a plan that might have some chance of being accepted by all sides (or at least one that would arouse minimal opposition), while also looking fair and balanced to the participants in the upcoming session of the General Assembly. To this end they resumed contact with the Jewish Agency. Vigier, Bunche, and Reedman felt out the Zionist liaison officers in an effort to see where things stood. They suggested that the Zionists might agree to a compromise in which they would give up independent sovereignty and accept a form of joint rule that would place at the disposal of the Jews a larger territory than they could receive as an independent state. Vigier and Reedman advised the Zionists that, under the circumstances, a federative solution was preferable, as it would enable them to receive a state of generous proportions and would not, according to the plan Vigier presented, be detrimental to the absorption of new immigrants.[67]

It is difficult to determine whether this was a shrewd attempt to get the Zionists to reveal what, in fact, were the minimal boundaries they were willing to receive, or rather an effort to get the Zionists to abandon the dream of a sovereign state and accept a federation. Whatever the case, the Zionists stood fast. After an exhausting round of talks in which they agonized over the question, during which Eban and Horowitz traveled to the Swiss village where Chaim Weizmann was vacationing to consult with him, and Shertok went so far as to consider giving "the signal to retreat" (meaning consent to a

federal plan), the Jewish leadership sent a letter to Sandström stating that the Zionists were not backing down from their demands. The Jewish Agency was apprehensive that insisting on the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine would "give rise to the impression that the Jews would be prepared to accept any … partition plan provided only it gave them statehood." Shertok warned that "There could be no graver misconception of the position." The primary Jewish need was for a territory that would enable the Yishuv to develop and take in the homeless Jewish refugees in Europe. In other words, Shertok wrote, the Negev, in particular its northern part, and the Galilee had to be included in the Jewish state.[68] The hope that a solution would come from outside was set aside; the committee and its staff would have to do the work themselves.

On August 15, Sandström asked Bunche to draft a partition plan that would include elements of cooperation between the two states.[69] Bunche came up with a proposal, but when it was placed before the committee the discussion went nowhere.[70] Bunche despaired. In his diary, he sharply criticized Sandström's handling of the crisis; on August 18 he threatened to leave.[71] Two days later, just eleven days before UNSCOP was scheduled to submit its report, the committee had still not made any significant progress. The staff decided to take matters into its own hands and to prompt the committee to move forward. Bunche and Hoo met with Sandström and "almost forced" him, as Bunche put it, to convene the committee and begin writing the report. Bunche suggested dividing the committee into three subcommittees, each of which would work on a different subject. The proposal was accepted.[72]

The division into subcommittees (which were sometimes referred to as "working groups") turned out to be an important move. Up to that point, despite the very clear divisions of opinion among the members, the committee had sought to reach a consensus on a single plan. The consequence was that no progress was possible because, for example, the Indian and Iranian representatives, who opposed partition in principle, voted against every partition plan, no matter what borders it proposed. Breaking into subcommittees eliminated that barrier. The committee now declared that it was divided between two principal positions: the establishment of a single federal state made up of two autonomous regions, and the establishment of two independent states joined by an economic union. The Indian, Iranian, and Yugoslavian delegates supported the former, while all the other members lined up behind the latter. This was pretty much the split in the final vote.[73]

The working group on the federative proposal sought to offer a plan that could present a realistic alternative to partition. Samuel Atyeo, the Australian alternate, joined the Indian, Iranian, and Yugoslavian to work out a proposal that would be attractive to other members of UNSCOP who had difficulty with partition of the type the Zionists were demanding. The Yugoslavian representative was under constraints from his home country, where the principle of independence for minority groups was anathema and the binational idea was seen as according with Communist principles. The Iranian and Indian members had been disappointed by the hesitancy of their Australian

and Dutch colleagues to support a trusteeship and now gambled on the Yugoslavian as their best ally. The latter had displayed initiative and diligence during the inquiry; the hope was that he could be a strong voice in the final stretch.[74]

The negotiations in this subcommittee were quick and to the point. The Yugoslavians held fast to their binational principles. On the other side was Rahman, who advocated a single independent Arab state in all of Palestine. Entezam successfully mediated between the two. Representatives of Hashomer Hatza'ir, who were in close contact with the Yugoslavians, were taken by surprise when the latter "quickly shed any pretense of favoring Zionism." Rahman also indicated a willingness to compromise.[75]

The plan they formulated was for a federal state consisting of two autonomous regions. There would be two houses in its legislature, one in which there would be an equal number of Jews and Arabs and a second that would be apportioned according to population—meaning that it would have a clear Arab majority. Substantive issues, such as immigration, would be decided by majorities in both houses. In other words, the Jews would not be able to pass legislation that was not acceptable to the Arabs, and as a consequence the Jewish minority would not be able to turn into a majority. Following two days of discussion, the subcommittee summed up its position and asked Bunche to put its ideas into writing. The question of the holy places was set aside for the moment, pending the committee's consideration of other plans. The proposal for a federal state was now ready.[76]

The eight members who took up the proposal for partition with economic union divided into two subcommittees. One, consisting of Rand, Sandström, Blom, and Granados, was given the task of shaping a constitutional structure for such an arrangement. The second, consisting of Salazar, Fabregat, Hood, and Lisicky, addressed the issues of borders and immigration. The composition of this latter group, responsible for the two most fraught issues, made failure almost a certainty. Salazar and Fabregat held to two diametrically opposed positions—the first insisted that the Jewish state needed to be very small, while his Uruguayan colleague had already presented to the subcommittee a map drawn up by a member of his delegation that gave the Zionists nearly everything they asked for. The Australian and Czechoslovakian members held the balance of power, but were far away from taking a position. Hood was constantly receiving new and sometimes contradictory instructions from his foreign minister, while Lisicky had taken the position that UNSCOP did not have the wherewithal to decide on borders and thus should not do so. Both thus preferred to sit on the subcommittee as observers rather than active members.[77]

The vast differences between Salazar and Fabregat regarding the size of the Jewish state were not the only problem for this subcommittee. Salazar was not satisfied to address only the border issue. He also plunged up to his neck into the cauldron of the disposition of Jerusalem. On August 19 a working group within this subcommittee, consisting of all the alternate members of

UNSCOP, was set up to address this issue. As he had no alternate, Salazar participated in this group as well, where he advocated making Jerusalem an international enclave assigned neither to the Jewish nor the Arab state. For Salazar, who was his country's delegate to the Vatican, this was a goal of supreme importance. As such, he refrained from taking a position on the border issue so that he could use his vote as a bargaining card in exchange for endorsement of his position on Jerusalem.[78]

Salazar and the ten alternates assigned to the Jerusalem question knew that the general direction they were expected to go was to recommend that the city, in all or in part, would become an international enclave. UNSCOP's terms of reference, which instructed the committee to "give most careful consideration to the religious interests in Palestine of Islam, Judaism and Christianity," hinted as much. The witnesses who appeared before the committee frequently referred to the issue of the holy places, almost always using the terms "international oversight" or "special arrangement." Even the testimony from the Jewish Agency indicated that it would not oppose the internationalization of the city in any major way. The Zionists did not state this explicitly, but it was implied by their relative silence on the issue, as opposed to the vocal campaign they conducted on other matters. This made it easier for the committee to move forward on the subject.[79]

In fact, when the working group met for the first time, all of its members knew that there was a clear majority for internationalization, and that most of their discussion would be devoted to this arrangement and what the boundaries of the enclave should be. Since the Peel Commission report, all British plans had stipulated that Jerusalem would be neither Jewish nor Arab but would rather remain under British rule. All that was needed at this point was to choose one of the plans from the past and change it from a British-ruled zone to one under international rule. Nevertheless, there were three distinct opinions in this subcommittee. The three supporters of the federal solution opposed internationalization—the Indian and the Iranian demanded that Jerusalem be assigned to the Arab state, while the Yugoslavian member preferred an arrangement in which only the holy places would be under international rule. The representatives of Peru, Sweden, Canada, Holland, and Australia supported the internationalization of all of Jerusalem. The Czechoslovakian, Uruguayan, and Guatemalan representatives sided with the Jewish position that the enclave should encompass only Jerusalem's Old City. Granados admitted in his memoirs that he took this position to retain bargaining power for later, and this was probably Fabregat's motivation as well. While both their countries were devoutly Catholic, the two men were able, by joining the three federalists, to block the internationalization proposal agreed on by five of their colleagues.[80]

On the subcommittee on the constitutional structure of the two-state plan, Rand and Sandström did their best to draft a joint document that would nevertheless enable them to give expression to their differing principles. Blom and Granados also tried to find common ground, even though the differences

among the subcommittee's members were not simple to resolve. Rand stuck to his positions on a large number of issues, seeking to defend the idea of a centralized authority, in opposition to others who wanted to divide powers among a number of professional committees.[81]

It looked, on August 26, as if the group of eight supporters of partition, which had from the start suffered from a lack of internal cohesion, was about to fall apart. The only subcommittee that had completed its work was the one that proposed a federal solution. The members of the other groups had not managed to reach any understandings. Disillusioned, several members simply walked out of the meeting rooms. Some of them declared that they would endorse the federative plan, or that they would abstain from voting and refuse to sign the final report.[82] There seemed to be no way to bridge the interpersonal conflicts and the differences on matters of principle. It was hard to see how the committee could submit its recommendations on Palestine just five days hence.

The Vote

On August 27, UNSCOP convened for two official sessions that lasted all day—its forty-sixth and forty-seventh. They were of paramount importance, as at the end of the day the committee conducted its final vote, in which a plan to establish two independent states in Palestine was approved by a large majority. The minutes of the meeting show that a real drama played itself out behind the doors of the conference room. They chronicle a pitched battle between those who wanted to make clear recommendations by the deadline day and an opposing group that sought to avoid making a judgment and to suffice with an informative report that would merely survey the different alternatives.

That morning, when the meeting began, the intention was not to make a decision of any sort during the coming hours. UNSCOP's looming deadline, and the fact that no common decision seemed to be on the horizon, prompted the committee to put the individual conclusions of each of its members, which up until now had been heard only during the informal discussions, into writing. The meeting was very tense and the members chose their words carefully. Up to this point, all the conversations in Geneva had been exchanges of ideas, but now what the members said was recorded in the minutes. That forced the chairman and other members to state their views lucidly and in detail. Sandström summed up the situation: a few members had already managed to cast their opinions in the form of one of the proposals that had already been presented, that of a federal state, whereas the others, the so-called group of eight, remained divided. Sandström now tried to find common ground among those who claimed to lean toward supporting partition.[83]

The first speaker was the Peruvian representative, who startled his colleagues by declaring that he had changed his mind and now supported the federal plan. Salazar, who had been among the earliest advocates of

partition, said that in principle it was an appropriate solution to the problem, which is why he had exerted such great effort to promote it. Unfortunately, these efforts, and in particular his study of how borders should be drawn, had convinced him that partition could not be implemented. He also noted that even without accepting the territorial demands of the Zionist—which he believed were inflated, and meant to solve the global Jewish problem and thus lay outside UNSCOP's purview—the facts on the ground were that any Jewish state would have a large Arab minority. That fact, as far as he was concerned, meant that partition was not an option.[84]

It was a pleasant start for the advocates of a federation, who now numbered four. Salazar had announced his change of heart the previous day, but it had been taken as no more than histrionics.[85] Now he dictated it into the record as his official position. When Salazar concluded, Sandström asked Rand to state his position and present the understandings reached by the various proponents of partition.[86] Rand offered an amalgam which he termed a form of partition that would, on the one hand, grant "a sense of national independence" to the two peoples, while on the other hand maintaining an economic union in all of Palestine. He explained the advantages of this "confederative plan," as he termed it. Some of the other members remarked that it was not a confederation but a partition with a dose of economic unity. Rand accepted the criticism and agreed that his proposal was a partition plan.[87]

Fabregat and Granados voiced their support for partition. Granados dictated a long speech into the record in which he declared that the Jews had a right to a state in Palestine and that such a state was the only way to safeguard the survivors of the Holocaust and the Jews of the world. These considerations provided the basis for determining the size of the territory on which the Jewish state would be established. He added an innovative claim, that a Jewish state established on a small territory would not be able to provide economic assistance to its neighboring Arab state. He offered a rosy picture of the Middle East's future, according to which the Jewish state and its Arab neighbors would engage in flourishing trade. This would encourage the Jews to develop further innovations in agriculture and industry that would enable it to supply Arab demand.

The final supporter of partition was the chairman himself. In a sober tone of voice, Sandström presented a position on partition that could serve as a common denominator for a maximum number of committee members. He raised doubts about an economic union, which would not "continue forever." As he saw it, the partition needed to be clear and absolute, and that needed to find expression when it came to drawing borders. An effort needed to be made to provide territorial continuity to each of the two states, so that they could maintain themselves separately without dependence on ties between them.

The most difficult differences among the supporters of partition were on display when each of the four supporters were asked to state his views on the borders of the Jewish and Arab state. This led to a furious debate between Fabregat, who displayed a map that was very generous to the Zionists, and

Sandström, who rejected Fabregat's map. The debate showed just how complex and sensitive the issue of borders was; indeed, it was the main obstacle that the committee would run into again and again in the final moments before it completed its work. Then Hood surprised his colleagues by suggesting that the problem be attacked from a different angle. He noted the lack of agreement in the committee about the desirable solution, and forecast that "there is to be no substantial—certainly no decisive majority in favor of any particular course." That being the case, he said, the General Assembly should be presented the maximum number of options and programs that UNSCOP had discussed, and all the arguments made about them in its discussions—without recommending any one of them. The committee, Hood said, should provide the General Assembly with all the tools it needed to make further inquiries so as to reach a solution that would gain broad support. That would be UNSCOP's contribution.

Hood's proposal provided an escape hatch for other members as well. The first of these was Blom, who was immediately joined by Lisicky. The Dutch and Czechoslovakian members preferred to refrain from making unequivocal recommendations, and Hood's proposal let them off the hook. His arguments seemed sincere, balanced, and thoughtful, although what lay behind them was not his own uncertainty but rather the instructions he had received two days earlier from his Foreign Ministry. The report, Foreign Minister Herbert Evatt told him, should contain "fact and alternative solutions and not recommendations … most important, we should not be committed to any recommendation."[88] Evatt aspired, as already noted, to play a key role at the coming General Assembly session, and wanted to project an objectivity on the issue. Were his representative to take a clear stand, it would interfere with his plans.

Sandström rejected Hood's position. He argued that the General Assembly was expecting a clear recommendation. Submitting theoretical proposals without recommending a specific solution would be an utter failure. The chairman proposed that if the members could not reach a consensus, each one should at the very least submit an individual report.[89] Granados wrote that the Australian proposal would have rendered the committee's work of "no value," but, given the situation, none of the advocates of partition was able to offer an idea that would extricate UNSCOP from its dilemma.[90]

Deliverance came, ironically, from the federalists, and in connection with another important set of developments during the meeting. The committee's unclear rules left some room for maneuver with regard to the format of its final report. The chairman, for example, had in mind a report that would offer but a single program, with the federal solution being submitted separately, not as a part of UNSCOP's report. Others maintained that the federal plan was part and parcel of the committee's recommendations, such that the whole committee had the right to modify it in its details. Rahman demanded that his plan be submitted as a separate component, as it stood, with no interference. Entezam, who grasped the potential latent in UNSCOP's fragile state, suggested the idea of a minority report. The supporters of a federal state

were in a minority in the committee, he explained, but it was important to them to ensure that their voice was heard and that their proposal appear in the final report. Other members supported this approach, which accorded with the hesitancy felt by some members. Paradoxically, once the idea of a minority report gained traction, the federalists found it to their advantage to promote partition, as it was as an adjunct to a partition plan that their proposal would be presented to the General Assembly in New York. Simic condemned the flight from decision that Hood had encouraged, demanding that the committee recommend a solution. Entezam called on the supporters of partition to unite, despite the differences among them, so that the committee could provide the General Assembly with a report that offered two alternatives. Granados concluded the meeting with a fiery speech. He urged his colleagues to "face our responsibilities" and not to dodge the need to make clear recommendations. "This is not a kind of game where we can say that this thing was discussed, this other thing was discussed, but we recommend neither," he declared. After four nerve-wracking hours of debate the members adjourned for lunch, agreeing to convene again two hours later.[91]

The chairman seems to have had trouble believing that the committee would be able to unite behind two specific recommendations.[92] Hood was also over-quick to report that the committee would not recommend partition.[93] Both were wrong. The afternoon session progressed entirely differently than the morning session had. The committee members seem to have resigned themselves to their duty and invested much effort in bridging their differences. It was not just a result of the pincer movement of Granados's rebuke and the fervor of the federalists. During their two-hour lunch break, the members engaged in productive conversations. The first to announce a change in his position was Salazar, who said he would be willing to support partition, but would adhere to his principles—limitations on Jewish immigration and a Jewish state of minimal size.[94] It was Granados who had budged the Peruvian member away from his previous position—by coming toward him on Jerusalem, namely, agreeing that the entire city would be internationalized.[95] Another point of agreement came in response to the pressure exerted by the Australian, Dutch, and Czechoslovakian members to submit a report that included two proposals. This satisfied the latter two, and made it easier for them to discard the idea of not making any recommendation at all. (Hood also agreed to the idea, even if, as will be seen, he abstained when the decision came up for a vote.)[96]

The afternoon session was conducted on the basis of a working paper prepared by the staff, which laid out those recommendations that all the members had agreed on during the informal meetings. Sandström navigated the discussion with care, but it quickly became clear that the previous sense that the members were holding to their positions had given way to one of cooperation. Sensing this, Fabregat suggested a vote on what had already been agreed on, meaning on partition as a general idea, without going into details or drawing specific borders. Rand seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, the proposal was adopted and the chairman proceeded to bring up

for votes those points that had been discussed in the informal meetings and on which there was a consensus.[97]

Most of the votes went quickly, presenting no particular problems. The exception was a discordant debate over the connection between the world's Jews and Palestine. The conclusions of the discussion on this sensitive issue now had to receive their final formulation. Other points of dispute were the interim period and, in particular, who would implement the future arrangement. So, with the Jerusalem question still undecided and the borders of the two states seemingly irresolvable, the members of UNSCOP proceeded to a vote on the basic issue. Three members supported the minority recommendation, seven supported the majority, and Hood abstained on the grounds that the committee had not been able to reach a consensus on a single solution, and was thus duty-bound to present the two positions to the General Assembly without recommending either.[98]

While UNSCOP still had several more turbulent days to go before completing its work, its grueling sojourn in Geneva, so full of changes, can be summed up at this point. They were a diverse group, but came together to decide that they must decide. Two days before the vote, MacGillivray reported the differences among the supporters of partition. He enumerated the points of dispute and said they were serious, but ended with the statement that "although the committee seems further away from agreed decisions than ever, they are apparently determined to sign some kind of report on 1st September."[99] The British liaison officer was right. Most of the members, Eban said, felt that they would fail at their mission if they produced a report that merely punted the problem forward for a time without offering a real solution. Bunche put it simply when he said that the principal goal of the committee's members was "to ensure that there should be no need for another commission."[100] On the day of the vote, several members remarked that the committee was almost out of time. The General Assembly would not offer an extension if they did not meet the deadline, and as such they were concerned that all their work would go to waste.[101] Most of the members preferred compromise to failure.

Why was this the case? Two factors came together to create this atmosphere. The first was that some members of the committee believed that a failure for the committee would be a personal failure for them. The chairman was one; others were Rand, Granados, and Fabregat, all of whom the Zionists counted on their side. These men felt that a great responsibility had been placed on their shoulders and they did all they could to steer the committee in the way the Zionists wanted. Other members also felt a sense of mission and wanted to live up to it by providing the General Assembly with a recommendation. What was true of the committee members, who had been enlisted for a specific assignment at a specific time, was doubly true of the committee staff. UNSCOP was the first real test of the United Nations, and the staff worked hard to ensure that the committee met its goals.

But there was one other factor that united the members—the British. The strange alliance that emerged during the committee's final days of work between the pro-Zionist Latin Americans and the group that supported a federal solution was based on a common goal—getting the British out of Palestine. Other members of the committee felt the same way, with varying degrees of intensity. Indeed, this was the single conclusion that all the members, without exception, had reached by this point—British rule had to come to an end.

The Guatemalans and Yugoslavians had been of this opinion even before setting foot in Palestine. But the representatives of Canada, Sweden, Holland, and Australia began with a pro-British slant, to one extent or another, but it eroded as their work progressed. The Zionist lobbying offensive, which focused on impugning the Mandate power, along with what the members saw and heard in Palestine outside the confines of their meeting room and the unexpected hands-off British attitude toward the committee, together led the committee to view the British as a problem, not a part of any solution. The same could be said of the news, received on August 21, that the horrific journey of the *Exodus* had ended with the would-be immigrants landing in Germany, and the harsh British reprisals that followed Etzel's hanging of the two British sergeants it had abducted.[102]

The situation was complicated and the feeling was that only an unequivocal recommendation from UNSCOP could cause the British to leave Palestine. Evading such a recommendation by offering a range of proposals would have rendered the report meaningless and might very well have perpetuated the British Mandate. If UNSCOP's eleven members were unable to unite behind a single proposal, there was every reason to believe that the same thing would happen in the General Assembly. The committee was not prepared to allow that to happen.

Notes

1 UNA S-608-1, 41st Meeting, July 28, 1947.
2 TNA FO 800/487, Bevin to Attlee, July 14, 1947; CO 537/2338, p. 2, Butler to Martin, July 15, 1947; Mathieson to Beeley, July 16, 1947; Minute by Martin, July 10, 21, 1947.
3 TNA FO 371/61877, Minute of Meeting, July 24, 1947; CO 537/2338 P.2, Minute by Martin, July 30, 1947.
4 SNA ESA Box 5, Downing Street, S.W.1., July 30, 1947.
5 TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 1, 1947; FO 371/61786, Geneva to FO, July 31, 1947.
6 UNA S-608-2, 44th Meeting, August 5, 1947.
7 Ibid., Sandström's working paper presented a ranking of subjects for discussion. UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by the Chairman on the Future Work-Program of the Committee" [no date]. The document that Sandström set aside is SNA ESA Box 2, "Memorandum by the Chairman," August 4, 1947. Sandström did not indicate a solution in the latter document. Rather, he analyzed data that led to what he

considered necessary conclusions. This latter memorandum must not be confused with an entirely different document with the same title that he submitted at a later stage, which offered a solution.

8 TNA FO 371/61877, MacGillivray to Smith, August 8, 1947.
9 UNA S-608-2, 44th Meeting, August 5, 1947.
10 Sandström had informed MacGillivray of his intentions for the memorandum in mid July. TNA FO 371/61875, MacGillivray to Martin, July 15, 1947.
11 UNA S-608-2, 43rd Meeting, July 31, 1947.
12 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, "MEETING OF UNSCOP, 6 August," report by Tov.
13 UNA S-605-4, "First Informal Private Meeting," August 6, 1947.
14 Ibid.; TNA FO 371/61877 E7422, MacGillivray to Smith, August 6, 1947.
15 UNA S-605-4, "First Informal Private Meeting," August 6, 1947.
16 UNA S-605-4, "Second Informal Private Meeting," August 7, 1947.
17 Ibid.
18 UNA S-605-4, "Third Informal Meeting, Chairman's Office," August 7, 1947.
19 UNA S-605-4, "Fourth Informal Meeting," August 8, 1947.
20 CZA S25/8012, Abdur Rahman to Sandström, August 14, 1947.
21 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by Sir Abdur Rahman"; "Statement by Simic," August 10, 1947.
22 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum Submitted by Mr. Blom," [no date].
23 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by Mr. Garcia Salazar" and "Memorandum by the Chairman," [no date].
24 Ibid.
25 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by Mr. Rodriguez Fabregat," [no date]. The southern Negev was to be placed under a mandate given to a special committee composed of representatives of the Jewish and Arab states, a representative of the Arab states, and a representative of the UN.
26 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by the Chairman," [no date].
27 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by Mr. Rand," [no date]; NAC RG 25/4219, Canadian Trade Delegation to Secretary of State for External Affairs, August 9, 1947.
28 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947. All the memorandums, except for Simics's, bear Bunche's signature and the date on which he filed them, August 12, 1947.
29 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by the Chairman," [no date].
30 CZA S25/5970, "Meeting: D. Horowitz and A. Eban – R. Bunche (Geneva)," August 22, 1947; NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Bunche–James Frederick Green," September 24, 1947.
31 CZA S25/3965, Ruffer to Sherf, August 11, 1947.
32 TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 13, 1947.
33 AKA 19.90 (1), Eliezer Frei to members of the editorial staff of *Mishmar*, August 28, 1947.
34 CZA S25/6644, Sasson to Sherf, August 23, 1947; MEC Cunningham papers Box II, "Weekly Intelligence Appreciation," August 2, 1947; TNA FO 371/61786, MacGillivray to Smith, August 20, 1947.
35 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum Submitted by Monsieur Camille Chamoun, Delegated by the Arab Countries to Geneva as Their Representative to the UNSCOP," [no date].
36 CZA S25/3965, "Siḥah ʻim ʿUmar Dajānī," August 27, 1947.

37 Items from *al-Maṣri*, August 26, 1947, quoted in *Davar*, August 27, 1947; *Filastin*, August 27, 1947; TNA FO 371/61876, MacGillivray to Smith, August 7, 1947.
38 Arsalan, *Mudhakarat*, p. 694.
39 CZA S25/3965, "Siḥah 'im ʿUmar Dajānī," August 27, 1947; MEC Cunningham papers, Box II, "Monthly Report for July 1947" [no date]; TNA FO 371/61876, MacGillivray to Smith, August 7, 1947; FO 371/61877, MacGillivray to Smith, August 8, 1947.
40 Nāṣir al-Dinn Nashāshībī, *Aākhir al-ʿamāliqa Jāʾ min al-Quds: Qiṣṣat al-Zaʿīm al Filasṭīnī Mūsā al-ʿAlamī*, Madrid: 1986, p. 93.
41 TNA CO 537/2344, Mathieson to Garran, 16 May 1947; UNA S-609-1, 'Palestine: A Study of Partition' [no date]. On Creech-Jones's map see Amitzur Ilan, "Matai Heḥelitu ha-Britim Latzet?," in Yaacov Shavit, ed., *Ma'avak, Mered, Meri: Ha-Mediniyut ha-Britit ve-ha-Tziyonit ve-ha-Ma'avak 'im Britaniyah 1941–1948*, Jerusalem: 1987, p. 126; on the Jewish Agency map, see Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 141; Tom Segev, *A State at Any Cost: The Life of David Ben-Gurion*, New York: 2019, p. 394.
42 UNA S-609-1, "Palestine: A Study of Partition" [no date].
43 Efraim Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History: The "New Historians,"* second edition, London: F. Cass, 2000, pp. 156-157; Ronen Yitzhak, *Shutfut ve-'Oynut: 'Abuallh, ha-Legiyon ha'Aravi, ve-Milḥemet 1948*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: 2005, p. 5.
44 TNA CO 537/2340, MacGillivray to UNSCOP, August 11, 1947; FO 371/61786, MacGillivray to Smith, August 20, 1947; FO 371/61877, Report of Meeting in the CO, July 24, 1947.
45 David Horowitz, *Besheliḥut Medinah Noledet*, Tel Aviv: 1951. (The English translation of Horowitz's memoir omits this language.)
46 TNA CO 537/2338, p. 2, Martin to Beeley, July 15, 1947; FO 371/61875, MacGillivray to Martin, July 15, 1947; FO 371/61876, Gurney to Martin, July 20, 1947.
47 CZA S25/3965, Shimoni to Meyerson, "Siḥah 'im ʿUmar Dajānī," August 27, 1947.
48 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, "Conversation with Dr. Granados," August 19, 1947; Tov, *El Murmullo*, pp. 63–66.
49 CZA S25/3965, Kohen to Meyerson, August 18, 1947.
50 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 198.
51 CZA S25/5991, Shertok to Meyerson, September 7, 1947.
52 To remove any doubt, the British told UNSCOP that Crossman's appearance was a private initiative. TNA FO 371/61875, Beeley to MacGillivray, August 13, 1947.
53 MEC Crossman papers, Eban to Crossman, "Impressions of the UNSCOP," July 22, 1947.
54 CZA S25/5970, "Meeting: D. Horowitz and A. Eban – R. Bunche and R. Crossman (Geneva)," 13 August, 1947; Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 202–206.
55 UNA S-504-9, "Notes on Conversation with Mr. Richard Crossman, M.P.," August 13, 1947.
56 Ibid.
57 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 207; UNA S-605-4, "Seventh and Eighth Informal Meeting," August 14, 1947.
58 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364), Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 18, 1947.
59 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 18, 1947.
60 Ibid.
61 UNA S-611-5, Lie to Hoo, July 2, 1947.

62 UNA S-605-4, "Sixth Informal Meeting, 13 August, 4:00 p.m."
63 Several such documents can be found in UNA S-609-1. See, for example, the memorandum entitled "Notes on Outline of a Possible Confederation Scheme," August 18, 1947.
64 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 24, 1947.
65 In August 1947, Arabs attacked the Hawaiian Garden Café in Tel Aviv, setting off clashes that lasted for several days.
66 TNA FO 371/61877, "Activities of Fawzi Kawakji in Syria," August 15, 1947.
67 ISA 93/חצ/2267/15, "Meeting: D. Horowitz – J. Reedman," August 20, 1947; CZA S25/3965, "Meeting: M. Shertok and M. Kahany – H. Vigier (Geneva)," August 8, 1947; "Meeting: L. Kohen and A. Eban – R. Bunche (Geneva)," August 14, 1947.
68 CZA S25/3895, Shertok to Meyerson, August 11, 1947; Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 199; UNA S-611-1, Shertok to Sandström, August 23, 1947.
69 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 15, 1947.
70 It is not clear which of the many drafts in Bunche's files and in Sandström's archive in Sweden is the one referred to here. None of them are dated.
71 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 18, 1947.
72 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Ralph J .Bunche–James Frederick Green," September 24, 1947.
73 ISA 93/חצ/ 2270/ 1, "MEETING OF UNSCOP, 19.8.1947"; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947.
74 ANA 852/20, "Special Committee of Inquiry"; TNA FO 371/61784, MacGillivray to Smith, August 11, 1947.
75 AKA 117.90(4), Speech by Arye Gelbard and Yaakov Chazan to a meeting of Hakibbutz Ha'artzi Executive Committee and the party Central Committee at Ein Hahoresh, September 4, 1947; AKA 19.90(1), Ya'ari to Hakibbutz Ha'artzi Secretariat, [no date]; Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 215.
76 "Sekirah be-Yeshivat ha-Va'ad ha-Po'el ha-Tzioni," August 26, 1947, in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, pp. 605–608; UNA S-605-4, "Report of the Informal Working Group on a Federal State Solution," August 22, 1947; UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 20, 1947.
77 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, "Meeting of Sub-Committee No. 1," August 20, 1947; ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 24, 1947.
78 ISA 93/חצ/ 2270/ 1, "Talks about Jerusalem," August 19, 1947; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947; TNA CO 537/ 2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 25, 1947.
79 Golani, *Tzion be-Tzionut*, pp. 42–43. In a later interview, Abba Eban acknowledged that he and his colleagues had realized that it was not realistic to demand or to expect "both a Jewish state and a Jewish Jerusalem." OHA 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, 1993.
80 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 212; Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 243; NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947.
81 TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 25, 1947; UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 22, 1947.
82 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 26, 1947.
83 UNA S-608-2, 46th Meeting, August 27, 1947.
84 Ibid.
85 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 26, 1947.

86 These understandings are summed up in UNA S-609-1, "Plan on Partition–Discussed by the Working Group on Constitutional Matters," August 27, 1947.
87 UNA S-608-2, 46th Meeting, August 27, 1947. All the following references are from this same meeting.
88 ANA 852/19/1/1, Evatt to Hood, August 25, 1947.
89 UNA S-608-2, 46th Meeting, August 27, 1947.
90 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 244.
91 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947; UNA S-608-2, 46th Meeting, 27 August, 1947. All the quotes are from the minutes of the meeting.
92 This is the impression from the way he led the first half of the 47th meeting that afternoon.
93 TNA CO 537/2342, Inverchaple to FO, August 27, 1947.
94 UNA S-608-2, 47th Meeting, August 27, 1947.
95 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 245; UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 27–28, 1947.
96 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947; ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 28, 1947.
97 UNA S-608-2, 47th Meeting, August 27, 1947.
98 Ibid.
99 TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 25, 1947.
100 CZA S25/3965, "Meeting: D. Horowitz and A. Eban – R. Bunche (Geneva)," August 3, 1947; CZA S25/5970, Eban report, August 4, 1947.
101 UNA S-608-2, 46th Meeting, August 27, 1947.
102 The day after the hanging, British policemen rampaged through Tel Aviv, killing four Jews, injuring fifteen, and causing damage to Jewish stores.

9 UNSCOP's Report

The Fight over Borders and the Signing of the Report

The day after the vote it looked as if everything was going in the direction of partition. The committee accepted the name the chairman proposed for the majority's plan: a "partition plan with economic union." It won out over the vaguer "confederation plan" and simply "partition plan." Now that Granados had withdrawn his opposition to the internationalization of Jerusalem, bringing Lisicky and Fabergat in his wake, the subcommittee charged with that issue could submit its report to the full committee. It granted the city a special status under international protection; it would not be part of either the Jewish or the Arab state.[1]

However, both the vote already taken and the willingness of some of the members to reach a compromise did not succeed in getting the border-drawing project off its sandbar. The subcommittee charged with this task announced that it was unable to complete its assignment and that it was referring the matter back to the full committee. At the end of a meeting that approved the draft of the report's introductory chapters, Sandström acceded to Granados's request that he remain in the room with him and the members of the subcommittee.[2] The Guatemalan representative claimed in his memoir that he took the matter into his own hands because, under the circumstances, each member of the majority had been assigned to write up his own position on the territorial questions. This was a step backward, implying that UNSCOP would deliver to the General Assembly not a single recommendation but rather "half a dozen alternative boundaries."[3]

With regard to borders, the situation was indeed dire. The committee had conducted futile and interminable debates about the constitutional aspects of the arrangement, but had neglected geography and borders. All the experienced people involved, such as the Jewish Agency staff and the British, understood the subject's enormous importance, and from time to time sent hints in that regard to the committee members. The British were explicit when they sent their memorandum on partition plans. The message was clear: the decision to recommend partition was not nearly as important as determining what the partition lines were. Shertok, who said that drawing the borders was

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fundamental, said at the beginning of August that "the question of territory remains entirely in the dark."[4] Yet the committee seems to have grasped the real significance of the issue only at the very end of its time in Geneva.

The first to get into the thick of it were, of course, the members of the subcommittee on borders. They very quickly realized that they lacked even the minimum tools they needed to discuss it. Fabregat was responsible for the first map presented to the committee. He was assisted by Edmundo Sisto, the secretary of the Uruguayan delegation and an urban engineer. He drew the map on the basis of information received from the Jewish Agency.[5] On this map, the Jewish state included the entire Galilee, the northern Negev (the rest, the Uruguayan delegation proposed, would be under the joint control of the Jews, Arabs, and an outside actor), and the western part of Jerusalem. Sandström said the map was "immoral." It provided, he said, for a Jewish state with a larger territory than the Jews themselves were asking for.[6] The other members of the subcommittee proposed other ideas, but no one could translate them into a map. Lisicky censured the committee for taking up the border issue too late. Sandström acknowledged that the situation was "sad."[7]

The notable exception to this sorry approach to the finish line was Mohn, who had expertise in drawing borders, as the British, Jewish Agency, and UNSCOP's members and staff all realized. It was only natural, then, that Granados, after volunteering to mediate among the very different views of what sorts of borders the Jewish state should have, immediately turned to the Swedish alternate.[8] Horowitz would later write that Mohn was the man "who had more responsibility than any other person concerned in demarcating the frontiers of the future Jewish state."[9] He knew that it had been Mohn who had actually drawn the line on the map. In fact, the Swedish alternate's contribution was even more important than Horowitz knew, and was key to the decisions about what parts of Palestine would be included in the Jewish state and exactly where the boundaries would run. Entries in Mohn's diary, confirmed in Blom's reports to his Foreign Ministry, describe just how the map UNSCOP finally recommended was drafted, and put some order into the more familiar versions of how this happened.[10]

According to Mohn, he began to address the details of a partition plan at an early stage in the inquiry. The term "partition" had been in the air from the start, he wrote in his diary, but UNSCOP lacked people who could lay out a geographical solution. He was aided by the British liaison officer in his initial perusal of the issue. MacGillivray provided him with the material the British had assembled, including demographic data and precise and large-scale maps. Mohn took it all to his room and spent a long time processing the information. He cut and colored and pasted pieces of paper and other aids that added the necessary parameters to the maps. The result was no fewer than thirty different partition plans.[11]

Mohn could be sarcastic in describing the way the committee went about its business. Even when the whole committee took up the subject of partition, he wrote, "while I was busy with the maps, they litigated the political,

administrative, and economic aspects of the partition plan." Then, "about a week before the report was to be submitted, it suddenly dawned on them that it had to include some sort of sketch of the borders."[12]

The starting point for the advocates of partition was the need to separate Jews from Arabs. The Jewish state needed to have as small an Arab minority as possible, and vice versa. But, beyond placing regions with Arab and Jewish majorities on either side of the border, the members also wanted the boundaries to be clear and simple, so as to maintain territorial contiguity and to reduce points of friction between the two nations. Another consideration was the desire to provide the Jewish state with sufficient space for agricultural development and the absorption of the immigrants who would arrive in the country following independence.

When the members looked at the maps with these parameters in mind, they encountered difficulties. Most of the country's Jews and Arabs were concentrated in the country's center and along the coastline, such that there was no possibility of laying out the territory of a Jewish state in a way that it would not have a large Arab minority. Neither the northern Galilee nor the southern Negev regions had large Jewish and Arab populations, meaning that including them in the Jewish state would not make much difference in the size of the Arab minority. The Jews argued that their state required both these regions to make the state viable and to allow future development; under Arab rule, they claimed, most of the Negev would remain desolate, and the Galilee's potential for settlement would not be exploited. Dividing the Galilee and Negev between the two states in accordance with areas of Jewish and Arab settlement violated the principle of simplicity. As such, most of the members thought that the two reasons should balance each other out, meaning that only one of them should be granted to the Jewish state. The model was the partition map produced by the Peel Commission, which assigned the entire Galilee to the Jewish state, along with the Jewish centers of population along the coast, such that the territory of each state was contiguous and the border between them clear and simple. But there had been significant demographic changes during the decade since the Peel map was drawn—the Jewish population had grown and many settlements had been established in the Negev. Another new factor was the problem of the displaced persons (DPs) in Europe. If the Jewish state were to take them in, it would need much larger territorial resources than the Peel Commission had proposed for it.

The members of the committee took different positions on the Negev and Galilee. The most generous to the Jewish state was Rand, who maintained that it should include all of both regions. Fabregat and Granados suggested that the entire Galilee and the northern Negev be given to the Jews. The former proposed that the southern Negev be placed under joint Jewish, Arab, and international rule, whereas the latter at first maintained that the region should not be assigned to the Jewish state. Lisicky proposed giving the entire Negev to the Jewish state but not the western Galilee, whereas Sandström, Blom, and Salazar did not want to assign the Negev to the Jews. Sandström

advocated compensating the Jewish state by granting it the entire Galilee; Salazar at first left the Galilee out of the Jewish state but then came over to the chairman's position after the latter acceded to his position on Jerusalem.[13] Blom was inclined to give the Jews only the eastern Galilee, meaning that he was the minimalist among them.[14] In other words, not even two among the seven supporters of partition agreed on the same general contours of how the borders ought to run.

Granados asked Mohn on August 28 to help get UNSCOP out of its rut.[15] In his diary, Mohn wrote of the heavy weight of responsibility he felt when he stood alone in his room facing the different maps he had drawn and debating which one to choose. Given the delicate situation in the committee, he resolved to submit the map he thought best and to try to convince his colleagues to accept it without revisions. Before presenting it to the committee as a whole, he met individually with each of the supporters of partition to discuss it.[16]

None of them was satisfied at first with his explanations. Sandström and Blom, for example, raised doubts about Mohn's insistence on including the entire Negev in the Jewish state. But Mohn lectured, elucidated, and persuaded them. He had an important advantage over the rest—during the course of the inquiry he had been careful not to align himself with either side, and was thus perceived by and large as an objective professional.[17] The members seem to have seen the final map only on August 30, the day before the report was submitted, at a nighttime meeting that went on until 2 a.m. Sandström asked Mohn to explain how the map he had presented addressed the concerns of the supporters of partition. At this point the discussion was not recorded in the minutes, which merely state in parentheses "(Maps shown to the delegates)."[18]

"No one was really satisfied with my proposal, but neither did anyone have a better one," Mohn wrote.[19] What was at stake, once again, was the desire to avoid failure and to put Palestine on a new track without a British engine. The members agreed to the map and decided to give their final approval the next day, when they signed the report. Shertok described these events as a "dramatic about-face," but had trouble explaining how it had happened.[20] Mohn termed it "relative agreement growing out of desperation."[21] According to Sandström, "the sense of responsibility and the short time at our disposal prepared the ground for accepting the map despite its obvious drawbacks."[22]

The map, which admittedly looked strange, divided the country into seven parts: the Jerusalem enclave, three areas assigned to the Jewish state, and three assigned to the Arab state. The map's innovation was what were called "kiss points," places where two of the areas assigned to the Jewish state and two to the Arab met at a single point, like four triangles sharing an apex. It provided territorial contiguity to the sections assigned to each state. From the Jewish point of view, it was the most generous partition proposal that any non-Zionist actor had offered. It provided for a Jewish state that covered sixty-two percent of Palestine (in comparison, the Peel proposal offered the Jews only twenty percent). It included the Negev, the coastal plain from Be'er Tuvia in



Map 9.1 The UNSCOP majority proposal.

the south to Acre in the north, most of the valleys, the lower Galilee and the entire eastern Galilee, including the Kinneret and Hula lakes.

UNSCOP's final meeting was meant to be a ceremonial occasion, but it was also devoted to the final approval of the details of the plan and the map by the supporters of partition. Each of them signed the report. Most of them did so wordlessly. Entezam took upon himself the task of summing up. "We have done the maximum that could be expected of any investigating committee," he said, "having to investigate in a very short time one of the most difficult problems in the world."[23] A few minutes before midnight, the time at which the committee was to submit the report to the UN, the members emerged from their meeting. Fabregat approached Horowitz, who had been waiting in the corridor, and embraced him with tears in his eyes. "It's the greatest moment in my life," he said. In his memoir, Horowitz wrote that, after the report was signed and they learned what it contained, it gave him and his Jewish Agency colleagues "a feeling of victory."[24] The Zionist delegation that had worked alongside UNSCOP in Geneva celebrated that night with a bottle of champagne. The next day Horowitz and Eban went to give the news to Ben-Gurion, who was in Zurich for a meeting of the Zionist Executive. "We have come to tell you that UNSCOP has recommended a Jewish state … and they have included the Negev," they told him emotionally.[25]

The Decisions: Why They Were Made and What They Meant

The three chapters devoted to recommendations were the core of UNSCOP's reports. Some of the recommendations passed unanimously and others by a majority; in the latter case the minority submitted its own recommendations. They were preceded by four introductory chapters that described the roots of the conflict in general terms, as well as the opposing demands of each side. Previous proposals for resolving the Palestine issue were also presented. Most of the material in these initial chapters was based on the data provided by the information the British provided to the committee, in particular its *Survey of Palestine*, and there were many quotes from the Peel Commission report. Ten years later, the categorical conclusions reached by that previous report, which led it to recommend partition, seemed all the more correct and essential. In providing these quotes, UNSCOP implied that it had been a British committee of inquiry that had laid the foundations for the partition solution that the United Nations panel now endorsed.

Chapter 5, Section A, is entitled "Resolutions approved unanimously." The first of them was "The Mandate for Palestine shall be terminated at the earliest practicable date." In support of this premise, the committee members briefly enumerated the reasons for the failure of British rule. The wording finally approved spoke of "the clash between Jews and the mandatory Power on the one hand, and on the other the tension prevailing between Arabs and Jews." It showed that the members had not been impressed by the Zionist attempt to downplay the Jewish conflict with Palestine's Arabs and to place

all the blame for the situation on the British. UNSCOP included in its reasons for the recommendation the fact that the British themselves had admitted that there was no way for them to achieve the goals set by the Mandate.[26] The committee made a point of stressing that the British had asked the UN to step in to help when they felt that they had reached a dead end. The end of the Mandate was thus depicted as something the British desired.

The second recommendation was that "Independence shall be granted in Palestine at the earliest practicable date." In justifying the provision, the report stated that "Although sharply divided by political issues, the peoples of Palestine are sufficiently advanced to govern themselves independently." This assertion was based on the committee members' impressions of the Jewish community, but they now applied it to the Arabs as well. The supporters of partition maintained that an economic union would facilitate the considerable development that Arab society and the Arab economy required to reach parity with the Jewish state. The advocates of federation were in any case unwilling to assert that Palestine's Arabs would be unable to sustain themselves without massive aid.[27]

The sections addressing the transition period and who would implement it were corollaries of the decision on independence. The interim period between the declaration that the Mandate had ended and the beginning of the future arrangements was a matter of great concern to the committee. The primary question was who would be responsible for the transition. The committee did not have much room for maneuver on the issue. The natural candidate for the job was the British—they were already in the field, knew the country and its issues thoroughly, and they had the means to implement a complex plan. But the assumption was that the British would refuse to play the part.[28]

Proposals to impose the task on an international force were raised in the committee with many qualms. In the two years since its founding, the UN had experienced several abortive attempts to establish such entities. A document originating with UNSCOP's staff sought to lay out such a plan in general terms, and reached the conclusion that the impediments were enormous. Its conclusion was that the British should be asked to carry out the task, with the UN promising assistance.[29] In one of their informal sessions, UNSCOP's members reached the same conclusion. Some of the members thought that it would be feasible to ask the United States or other countries to assist in the implementation, but everyone (Yugoslavia excepted) agreed that the British would be the central actors.[30]

In the end, the majority plan stated explicitly that the task of implementation would be imposed on the British, who could call on the help of the UN member states. The minority plan left it to the UN to decide who to assign implementation to, because of the Yugoslavian representative's refusal to allow the British to remain in Palestine even one day beyond the end of the Mandate.[31] The committee also divided on the question of who would pay the cost of implementation. Some of the members maintained that the British should bear the economic costs, while others argued that the UN should

pay for putting the new arrangement into place. In the end, the committee resolved not to address the issue in their recommendations and to place the decision in the hands of the General Assembly.[32]

UNSCOP would later be taken to task for not giving enough attention to implementation, and for being too quick to place responsibility for it in the hands of the British without taking into account the difficult situation they were already in.[33] But these critics were imprecise. The committee discussed the issue and gave it considerable thought; the members were fully aware of the problematic position the British were in. Yet the committee decided nevertheless to place the hot potato in British hands because it was the most reasonable option. If the British refused, the problem would have to be discussed by the General Assembly, which would have to find its own solution.

Another unanimous recommendation that grew out of long discussion addressed the displaced Jews of Europe. With regard to this highly-charged subject, the committee's majority was determined to issue an unequivocal statement to the effect that it was not the committee's intention to recommend the establishment in Palestine of a state that would "solve the problem of the [sic] world Jewry or European Jewry." The Jewish state was meant principally to address the plight of the Jews who were already living in Palestine, not to offer a complete solution to the DP problem.[34] UNSCOP sought to issue a practical report that could be passed by the General Assembly and carried out. It thus sought to avoid to every extent possible any controversial declarations.

The DP issue was thus addressed in a separate recommendation, which stated that the General Assembly should initiate and implement, with "extreme urgency," an "international arrangement" that would alleviate the plight of the Jewish refugees in the DP camps. In the accompanying explanation, the report stated that "It cannot be doubted that any action which would ease the plight of the distressed Jews in Europe would thereby lessen the pressure of the Palestinian immigration problem, and would consequently create a better climate in which to carry out a final solution of the question of Palestine." In this, UNSCOP acknowledged that the refugee issue was part of the Palestine question. At the same time, in a separate paragraph, it stated that "any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem in general." Granados and Fabregat sought to strike this sentence. When they refused to endorse it, it was decided that the report would state that it was approved by a "substantial majority."[35]

The rest of the unanimous recommendations were the expected ones—preservation of the holy sites, avoidance of violence, the peaceful resolution of future conflicts, and guarantees of minority rights in any future program. The capitulations—provisions dating from the Ottoman period that granted powers and privileges to European powers in Palestine—would be canceled as a result of independence. As such, the relevant countries were called on to make new arrangements to assure their rights and status.[36] These twelve recommendations, signed by all eleven UNSCOP members, were a fine

achievement. The committee could take pride in the fact that all its members had gone a great distance together, in unity. But then came the majority and minority recommendations, where each member went his own way.

The majority's recommendation of "a plan of partition involving economic union" stipulated that, beginning on September 1, 1947, Palestine would enter a two-year transitional period, leading at its end to the constitution of a Jewish state, an Arab state, and separate special zone (*corpus separatum*) comprising Jerusalem and its environs. During the transition period, 150,000 displaced Jews would be permitted to immigrate, at a fixed monthly rate, and these would be settled only in the area designated for the Jewish state. Upon receiving independence, each state would have the authority to set its own immigration policy. In other words, the Jewish state would be able to take in unlimited numbers of Jewish immigrants. Each state would grant citizenship to the inhabitants of its territory. During the first year following independence, any individual wishing to do so could request citizenship in the neighboring state, but in doing so would have to give up his rights in the state in which he lived.[37] This provision was aimed at the Jewish minority that would find itself in the Arab state and the Arab minority in the Jewish state. The hope was that it would encourage each minority to immigrate to its respective nation-state and thus ameliorate the problem of minority populations in each state (in particular, the Arab minority in the Jewish state) that was of great concern to UNSCOP's members.

A different set of citizenship rules would apply to the inhabitants of the Jerusalem zone. They would be permitted to hold both citizenship of the city of Jerusalem and of one of the two states. The governmental authority in the City of Jerusalem, as the zone is called in the report, would be invested in an international trusteeship, with the United Nations as its administering authority. The zone's governor would be appointed by the UN Trusteeship Council, and would be neither an Arab nor a Jew, nor a citizen of the Arab or Jewish state. Neither would he be, at the time of his appointment, a resident of the City of Jerusalem. In addition to running the city, the governor would have many other powers, especially regarding the holy places in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine. He would have the authority to make determinations of whether the Jewish and Arab states were properly maintaining the holy sites in their respective territories. The governor would also serve as supreme arbiter of disputes between the different communities in Palestine. He would have at his disposal a special police force composed of men who were neither Arabs nor Jews, enlisted outside Palestine.[38]

In the large picture, the committee's concept of the internationalization Jerusalem seems to have grown consistently more modest. Some of the members toyed with the idea that the governing power in Jerusalem would serve as the sole arbiter of disputes between the Jewish and Arab states, but in the end they settled for a small administrative body which, outside Jerusalem itself, would extend only to the holy places. As the moment of decision approached, the State of Jerusalem, as it was originally referred to, was

demoted to the status of the City of Jerusalem.[39] The zone's boundaries were drawn such that the number of Jews and Arab citizens it contained would be almost equal (with a total population of about 200,000). Geographically, the zone encompassed the entire Jerusalem municipality with the addition of Bethlehem and several nearby Arab villages.[40] This expanded Jerusalem's municipal territory more than fivefold.[41]

The demographic composition of the Jerusalem zone differed from that of the two proposed states. The most serious problem was the large Arab minority that would find itself within the territory of the Jewish state, which would, according to the data used in the report, have more or less an equal number of Jews and Arabs, about half a million each.[42] The Jewish state's large Arab population was a controversial issue in the committee, especially when it came to including Jaffa which, with some 70,000 inhabitants, was Palestine's largest Arab city. Most of the members believed that it should not be included, and that its port should serve the Arab state.[43] But Mohn insisted on a map of maximum simplicity, without enclaves or corridors, and in the end he prevailed.[44] In any event, when the General Assembly took up the subject, it decided to remove Jaffa from the Jewish state and make it an Arab enclave.

Granting the Jewish state the entire Negev region was also a surprise. The Jewish Agency had, as noted above, refrained from asking for the southern Negev. There was no Jewish settlement there, and its agricultural potential was meager. Furthermore, its border with Egypt made it a sensitive area for the Jews. In contrast, it could serve as a very real geostrategic asset for the Arabs, allowing free movement between Egypt and Transjordan. There were also tactical considerations, as granting such a vast territory to the Jews would inflate the area of the Jewish state and might lead to demands for compensation by keeping other, more valuable, areas outside the Jewish state.[45] Furthermore, there was concern that the British would resist handing the region over to the Jewish state because they wanted to retain a military presence there.[46]

In this case as well, Mohn's position was important. He referred, in his diary, to Jewish efforts to settle the northern Negev as "an exceptional success," and explained that this fact, taken together with the principle of simple partition, led him to decide to give the rest of the Negev to the Jewish state as well. Mohn argued that the Bedouin could not be counted as permanent residents of the Negev, and that in any case, "they could also live there for a thousand years without leaving a mark." Had I been born an Arab who looked to the future, Mohn wrote, "I would not even consider investing money in the Negev when there are thousands of other attractive possibilities before me in the larger Arab world."[47]

These considerations did not apply to the Western Galilee, with its fertile land that could be a basis of future development for the Arabs who lived there. It was also demographically important to keep this region outside the Jewish state, as it had an Arab population of 118,000.[48] The Arab state, in contrast,

would have a population of only 8,000 Jews, an infinitesimal minority in an area with 715,000 Arab inhabitants.

The report's explanations of the majority's recommendations reflected the range of opinions of the members who supported them. The fundamental assumption was that the claims of both the Jews and the Arabs were valid, but that there was no way of reaching a compromise that both sides would subscribe to. Partition, the report said, was, "among all the solutions advanced … the most realistic and practicable settlement." It would enable both Jews and Arabs "to take their place as independent nations in the international community."[49] Partition would provide both the Jews and Arabs of Palestine the right of self-determination, a value cited frequently by the members and a foundational tenet of the United Nations Organization.[50] "Partition would be in accordance with the spirit of the [UN] Charter," Sandström wrote in a short personal document in which he summed up for himself the points in favor of partition.[51]

Other justifications were based on negation of the federative principle, principally because of doubts that Jews and Arabs would be able to cooperate, and given that such a solution would not provide for all the need for Jewish immigration. These assertions did not, however, sit well with the explanations provided for the economic union the partition plan provided for, and the fact that there would be a "considerable minority of Arabs" in the Jewish state. Here the report includes a digression, two long paragraphs seeking to argue that the Arabs and the Jews, "the sole remaining representatives of the Semitic race," living "in the land in which that race was cradled," could, after gaining independence, "with good will and a spirit of cooperation," which, "in close association," will emerge from "pride in their common origin." Then, in "natural emulation of each other," they could evolve "a synthesis of the two civilizations," the report stated, or hoped.

Indeed, the economic union, an inseparable part of the partition plan, looked like wishful thinking. It had a very wide purview, including a common currency and a customs union, as well as joint systems of transport and communications. The Joint Economic Board to administer these functions would have nine members, three from each state and three neutral members appointed by the UN. The customs income would cover joint outlays, with the rest to be divided equally between the two countries. The principal goal of the arrangement was to ensure assistance for the Arab state to enable it to maintain the level of social and other state services to the citizenry that the Mandate administration provided.[52] The economic charter between the two states would have a term of ten years, after which either country could, if it wished, obviate it by applying to the UN. The final model included in the report was a bit less ambitious than the version Rand had proposed, but even then some of the members, Sandström in particular, accepted it only reluctantly. The sunset provision made it easier for them to do so.

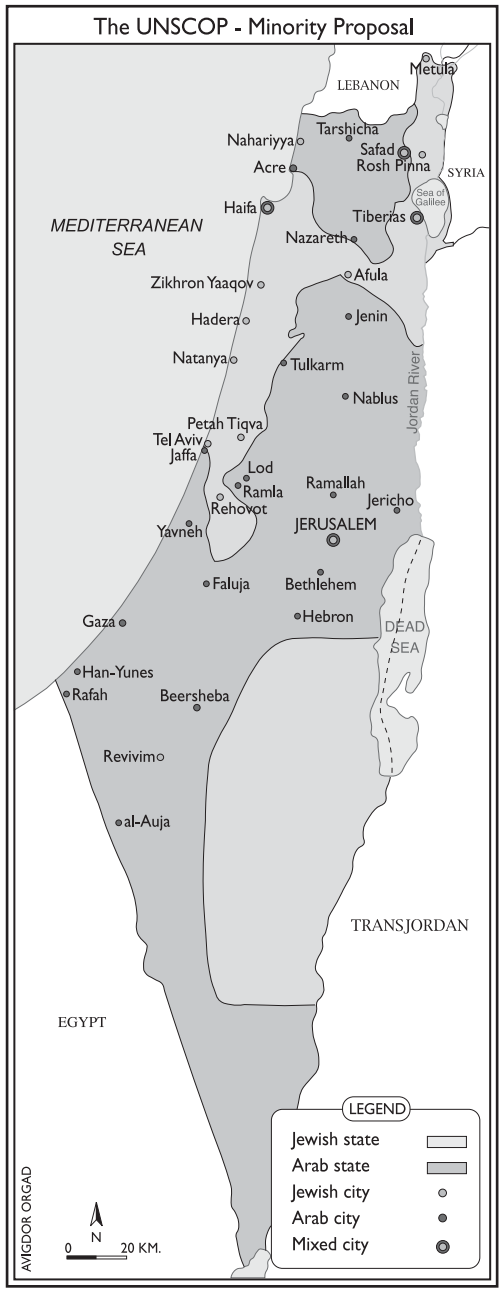
From the perspective of the violence that followed, many studies have pilloried the majority plan. It led, they argue, inexorably to war, and its authors,

they charge, were unrealistic.[53] In fact, the plan combined two contradictory approaches, one based on coexistence, as exemplified by the economic union and assistance in implementing the plan, and the other on a pessimistic scenario of violent opposition, necessitating that separation between the Arabs and Jews needed to be the leading principle. The majority report adhered to the coexistence approach, relegating worst-case scenarios to the background. A more realistic approach was taken with regard to the seam between the interim period and independence. Each state was required to meet a set of requirements before standing on its own, among them signing a series of treaties and other guarantees in which they would set aside previous demands that had not been granted. Each state would also be required to sign agreements with the other, with the City of Jerusalem, and with the UN. If either of them did not fulfill these contractual requirements, it would not receive independence.[54]

The minority report provided for a three-year interim period, leading to an "independent federal state of Palestine" in which separate regions would be defined for Arabs and Jews—which the plan referred to as "states." The structure would be composed of the country's federal institutions, including a head of state, under which the Jewish and Arab autonomous states would each have its own government. The federal legislature would have two houses, one with representation in proportion to the composition of the population (meaning that the Arabs would hold about two-thirds of the seats), and a second house in which there would be equal numbers of Jewish and Arab representatives. Every law would have to be approved by both houses that would entrench the country's Arab majority. The head of state would always be an Arab, given that he would be elected by a vote of both houses sitting jointly.[55]

The minority recommendations included a list of functions that would be administered independently by the Jewish and Arab governments, most notably tax collection for local needs, the establishment of police forces, and all social institutions, including independent school systems. In the economic realm, the regional governments would have authority only for local agriculture and industry, while the federal government would direct the economy on the national level in a way much like the economic union prescribed by the majority report. Beyond this, the federal government would conduct the country's diplomatic and foreign relations. Critically, it would have authority over immigration, on which maintenance of the Arab majority depended. The minority report made it clear that the Jews would have no chance of gaining a majority. The Jewish refugee problem would be solved by settling them in other countries around the world, although the federal state would be required to allow displaced Jews to settle in the Jewish territory, "in such numbers as not to exceed the absorptive capacity of the Jewish state."

Given the small territory the federal plan assigned to the Jewish state, it would be able to take in only a symbolic number of immigrants. Indeed, the Jewish region under this plan was much smaller than that proposed by the British in their various partition plans. It consisted of two non-contiguous



Map 9.2 The UNSCOP minority proposal.

regions, as did the Arab state. The principal Jewish region included most of an area of Zionist settlement that looked like the letter N, and was thus referred to by Zionist settlement organizations as the "N of settlement." The second area was a rectangle in the eastern Negev, leaving the southern Negev in Arab hands. The Arab territories encompassed most of Palestine—almost all the Galilee in the north, Samaria and part of the Sharon plain in the center, all of Judah and Jerusalem (designated as the capital of the federal state), and in the south all of the Negev excepting the small patch assigned to the Jewish state.[56]

The map did not seem very logical. Rahman, the Indian representative, drafted it with a thick pencil, drawing a line that was more than three miles wide. The map's creator did not bother to compute the number of Arabs and Jews living in each territorial unit, and was unable even to state what percentage of Palestine's territory had been assigned to each nation under their plan.[57]

The explanatory material for the federal plan attempted to refute the claims of the majority report, which it termed "impracticable." The partition plan proposed an economic union on the basis of political and geographical separation, and therefore was not feasible. The federalists declared that "the objective of a federal-State solution would be to give the most feasible recognition to the nationalistic aspirations of both Arabs and Jews, and to merge them into a single loyalty and patriotism which would find expression in an independent Palestine." Here, too, they appealed to the principles of the United Nations in support of their plan. The federal plan, they said, was based on the international organization's democratic principles. The Arabs, and "a substantial number of Jews," its supporters argued, reject the principle of partition, meaning that it was not democratic.[58]

UNSCOP submitted specific and detailed recommendations by its deadline. The support that a decisive majority of its members gave to the partition proposal lent it momentum and publicity. Following a period of discussion in the General Assembly, during which a few details were modified, it was adopted as the solution to be implemented in Palestine. But the report's real importance lay elsewhere—UNSCOP was a watershed for the Palestine question, as it was removed from the hands of the British and the other great powers and came before the United Nations. The eleven UN emissaries who visited Palestine in the summer of 1947 succeeded in fundamentally redefining Palestine's political future.

Jewish and Arab Reactions to the Report

The Zionists were quick to endorse UNSCOP's report. Shertok called it an "enormous achievement."[59] Eban said that it was "the first Jewish political victory in thirty tragic years," and that "the majority plan offered the Jewish people sovereignty and a territory much larger than anything previously offered."[60] In Zurich, he and Horowitz celebrated with the Zionist Executive, which voted to support the partition plan and lauded the two liaisons for their

success.[61] "The realization of the majority plan—with all its shortcomings," Ben-Gurion wrote to his wife, Paula, "is truly the dawn of the redemption, and more than the dawn."[62]

Ben-Gurion, who throughout the inquiry had been preoccupied with defense and security issues and intervened little in the political arena, now put his full weight behind Zionist acceptance of the recommendations, without reservations. He rejected all the criticisms. His insistence was due, in part, to his concern that the British would take advantage of such protests to declare that, in practice, the Jews rejected the report.[63]

The minority report was, of course, denounced by the Zionists. It was seen as a manipulation; it, too, spoke of a Jewish state, but the substance of the minority proposal was manifestly anti-Zionist. But the bogus window-dressing around it was cause for concern; if the Arab states were to support it, it might gain the support of many other countries as well.[64]

The Arabs were no less quick and no less categorical in their response to the report. "Blood will flow like rivers in the Middle East," Jamāl al-Ḥussaynī declared.[65] Fiery protests broke out in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine. Protests and vociferous condemnations flowed into newspaper offices and foreign delegations; civilians sighted petitions declaring that they were prepared to lay down their lives for Palestine.[66] The Syrian prime minister called a press conference at which he called on his people "to prepare themselves to do their duty if partition is imposed on Palestine." He declared that, in retrospect, it was clear that the Arab Higher Committee had been correct to boycott UNSCOP.[67] Other speakers declared that, while they had expected a pro-Zionist report, the "extremism" of the decisions had taken them by surprise.[68]

But the wave of protests quickly petered out. Foreign legations in the Arab countries reported that they were surprised at how mild the reaction on the Arab street had been. Arab public leaders, who had tried to give the opposite impression, explained that the public did not believe that the recommendations would ever be put into practice.[69]

The British offered a clear picture of the discrepancy between the harsh response they expected to see in the Arab world and actual events. Seeking to gauge their own response to the report and to shape their policy on the future of Palestine, they needed a correct assessment of the Arab response and of the new state of affairs. "Iraqi reactions have taken a little time to develop and the peak may not yet have been reached," stated a typical report that the British embassy in Baghdad sent to London, but the extreme declarations of the Arab press and leadership resonated very little among the public.[70] Henry Gurney, the chief secretary of the Palestine government, waited for the popular reaction, which did not seem to materialize. Two weeks after the report was issued he sent the Colonial Office an account of the reaction among Palestine's Arabs, saying that there were no demonstrations, not even token ones. His explanation was that the common wisdom was that the British had no intention of leaving, and that the proposal had no chance of gaining a majority in the General Assembly.[71]

It was Hajj Amīn al-Ḥussaynī's response to the report that dictated the larger Arab reaction, the British correctly believed. As had happened when the Arab states hesitated and then followed the mufti's lead in setting their policy on UNSCOP's inquiry, the mufti's bellicosity molded the opinions of other Arab leaders who might have been able to lead the UN away from adopting the majority report. Most importantly, al-Ḥussaynī categorically rejected the minority recommendations as well, and the Arab states followed his lead. The minority report was simply "partition in disguise," he declared; in his memoirs he vilified it as aimed at "stealing and raping Arab property and land." Al-Ḥussaynī would not agree, under any circumstances, for the Jews to receive official recognition that would grant them a foothold in Palestine. The fact that the federation plan would permit a small number of Jews to immigrate to the Jewish zone offered further confirmation of belief that the minority report, no less than that of the majority, was part of an "imperialist Zionist plot."[72] As part of the campaign, a spokesman for the Arab Higher Committee voiced his surprise that the Indian representative "permitted himself" to sign the minority proposal.[73]

Elie Podeh argues that the Palestinian Arabs missed a historic opportunity in rejecting the partition plan. It provided, after all, for the establishment of an independent state of their own, in contrast with the Peel Commission report, which had stipulated that the Arab part of Palestine would be annexed to Transjordan.[74] That may be true in hindsight, but it was hardly reasonable to expect that the Arabs would accept partition after opposing it consistently and utterly up to this point. But the Arab attitude to the minority proposal cannot so easily be dismissed. The sources indicate that the Arab camp did not really understand the logic behind the minority recommendations and the potential for campaigning for the General Assembly to support it, even if only as a tactic for heading off the establishment of a Jewish state. The moderate Mūsā al-Alamī issued a long statement rejecting the minority plan, mostly because of its lack of "finality" on the issue of Jewish immigration. That, he maintained, would lead to Jewish demands for sovereignty in additional areas of the country at a later stage.[75]

An emergency meeting of the Arab League's Political Committee, which considered how to respond to the UNSCOP report, was held on September 16 in Sawfar, Lebanon—the same resort town where UNSCOP had heard the testimony of the Arab states. It was marked by intrigues and power struggles.[76] The meeting rejected the UNSCOP report unequivocally, without distinction between the majority and minority sections. "Unscop's [sic] proposals involve a flagrant sacrifice of the natural rights of the Arabs of Palestine to independence," stated the Political Committee's communique, "and a violation of all the pledges given to the Arabs, as well as of the very principles for with the United Nations stands." At the same opportunity, it adopted a political program that reasserted the demand for Palestinian independence.[77]

The fact that this demand was presented as the only Arab proposal for the coming General Assembly session indicates that the Arabs had not

comprehended the failure of their approach up to this point. Instead of joining battle to change the boundaries of the partition proposal in their favor, or to promote the federation idea with, perhaps, changes to its details, they resolved to stick to the same position that had miscarried at the special session, and to disregard everything that had happened since. It was as if they were incognizant of UNSCOP's inquiry. Only at the end of the General Assembly session, when the debacle was already irreversible, did they suddenly express support for the minority recommendations. "We should have taken it," Fāḍil al-Jamālī, Iraq's foreign minister, later wrote regretfully.[78]

The clear stand of the Zionists and Arabs on the report contrasts with the amorphousness of the British response, which was extremely muddled. In the end, UNSCOP did not heed the British recommendation on borders, drawing them instead according to Zionist parameters. It did, however, assign the British responsibility for carrying out its program and then evacuating once the job was done. Some figures in the British administration may have thought that, when all was said and done, Britain would be asked to remain in Palestine under a refurbished mandate, but they were proven wrong. Neither were those who sought to end Britain's responsibilities under the Mandate pleased, as they now had the much more difficult task of implementing the recommendations. The clearly pro-Zionist tenor of the plan made it even worse. "It is obvious," Gurney wrote to the Colonial Office, "that British troops and police, however fully clothed with authority of United Nations would still be to the Arabs simply British troops and police."[79]

Officially, the British did not respond immediately. Thus, the range of opinions voiced within the government following the publication of the report could testify to the thinking only of the individuals who held them. Beeley maintained that "the majority program is the most unfair partition I have ever seen," but also that "the minority plan has many good points and seems possible to implement." Later, apparently after learning that the Arabs opposed the minority plan, he returned to his "dead end" thesis and maintained that the best option facing the British was that the UN, after the General Assembly refused to approve UNSCOP's plan, would grant them an improved mandate, free of the pro-Zionist constraints of the existing one and would thus make it possible to govern Palestine.[80]

On September 20, 1947, the British Cabinet put an end to all the speculation. Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, who throughout UNSCOP's inquiry had kept himself at a distance, took up the results of UNSCOP's work, consulted with the relevant government offices, and put his thinking into a detailed memorandum, which was accompanied by another memorandum from the Defense Ministry. Bevin proposed to his colleagues to declare that Britain refused under any circumstances to carry out either the majority or minority proposals, and that it would leave Palestine even if the General Assembly failed to pass one of the proposals. The Cabinet approved the motion without dissent, which meant that Britain would evacuate its forces from the country at the earliest possible moment.[81]

In his memorandum, Bevin maintained that the majority proposal was so unjust to the Arabs that Britain could not in good conscience agree to it. On the practical level, he estimated that carrying out the majority program would prompt an uprising among Palestine's Arabs, and that the people of the neighboring Arab countries might join in. The service chiefs estimated that in such a case the army would be compelled to augment its forces in the Middle East by at least a full division. The prospect of border adjustments in favor of the Arabs would not lead to an agreement about the solution. The Jews would not consent to major concessions and the Arabs refused in any case to accept the plan. That meant that whatever force or power sought to implement it would find itself facing virulent resistance from the Arabs and the Jews simultaneously. The minority report, despite including many elements that the Foreign Office accepted, would also not gain the consent of the two sides. Its fate would thus be no different from that of the majority plan. Another scenario presented to the Cabinet was that the issue would get stuck in the General Assembly, while in the meantime the British continued to maintain the Mandate regime as the situation deteriorated. In such a case, too, the solution was simply to leave. Bevin explained and persuaded his colleagues, with the support of the Defense Ministry memorandum, which by and large supported his claims.[82] Six days later, Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones told the General Assembly that Britain would not take part in implementing a solution that was not acceptable to both sides, and that his country intended to leave Palestine as soon as it could.

The Cabinet's decision to end the Mandate was, in many ways, the final British chord in the UNSCOP episode. Britain's convoluted rule of Palestine could have dragged on for many months in any number of variations, but UNSCOP put an end to it.

Notes

1 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947; UNA S-611-5, "Draft Recommendation on the City of Jerusalem," August 28, 1947.
2 UNA S-608-2, 48th Meeting, August 28, 1947.
3 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 244.
4 CZA S25/5991, Shertok to Meyerson, August 5, 1947.
5 OHA 64(155), interview with Edmundo Sisto, Montevideo, 1991 (in Spanish).
6 ISA 93/חצ/2270/1, "MEETING OF UNSCOP," August 19, 1947.
7 UNA S-608-2, 46th Meeting, August 27, 1947.
8 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 245–246.
9 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 208.
10 The three versions of the story are those put into writing by Horowitz, Granados, and Shertok. For a discussion of these, see Freundlich, *Mi-Ḥurban le-Tekumah*, p. 124.
11 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 255–260. Mohn's account of his research and the British material provided to him is confirmed by British documents. See TNA FO 371/

61782, MacGillivray to Martin, June 29, 1947; MacGillivray to Martin, July 7, 1947; FO 371/61878, Geneva to FO, September 2, 1947.

12 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 264–278.

13 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 244; Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 279. Sandström opposed giving the Negev to a Jewish state in an article he wrote in 1949, see Emil Sandström, "Palestinafrågan: Sambandet Mellan Delningsbeslutets Materiella Innehåll och Sättet för dess Verkställande," *Svensk Tidskrift* (Dec. 1949), pp. 29–30.

14 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947.

15 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, pp. 244–245.

16 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 278–279.

17 Ibid.

18 UNA S-608-2, 51st Meeting, August 30, 1947.

19 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 279.

20 CZA S25/5991, Shertok to Meyerson, September 7, 1947.

21 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 279.

22 Sandström, "Palestinafrågan," p. 31.

23 UNA S-608-2, 52nd Meeting, August 31, 1947.

24 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 223–224.

25 Asaf Siniver, *Abba Eban: A Biography*, New York: 2015, p. 87.

26 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 42–43.

27 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 43–46.

28 UNA S-608-1, 49th Meeting, August 28, 1947.

29 The document, undated and bearing no title, can be found in UNA S-609.

30 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947; UNA S-605-4, "Seventh and Eighth Informal Meeting," August 14, 1947.

31 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 43, 48, 60.

32 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947; UNA S-608-1, 49th Meeting, August 28, 1947.

33 Jones, *Failure in Palestine*, p. 276.

34 UNA S-608-2, 47th Meeting, August 27, 1947.

35 Ibid.

36 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 42–46.

37 Ibid., pp. 47–50.

38 Ibid., pp. 57–58.

39 UNA S-609-1, "The Form of Administration to be set up in the Jerusalem State."

40 Paul Mohn, "Jerusalem and the United Nations," *International Conciliation*, 464 (1950), pp. 452–453.

41 Michael Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History and the Future of the Holy City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 45

42 The data used by UNSCOP was based on information received from the British, who tended to overstate the number of Arabs and undercount Jews. According to these figures, the area of the Jewish state would have a population of 498,000 Jews and 407,000 Arabs, as well as 90,000 Bedouin whom the committee did not count as permanent residents, see *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, p. 54. According to the Jewish Agency, the precise numbers for the Jewish state were 513,000 Jews and 416,000 Arabs, see CZA S25/4553, "He'arot le-Mapat ha-ḤḤḤalukah shel ha-Rov be-Va'adah ha-Meyuḥedet le-Eretz Yisra'el mita'am ha-Umot ha-Me'uḥadot," September 18, 1947.

43 UNA S-609-1, "Municipal Autonomy for Jaffa."

44 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 262–263.
45 CZA S25/5991, Shertok to Meyerson, September 7, 1947.
46 CZA S25/4553, "He'arot le-Mapat ha-ḤḤḤalukah shel ha-Rov be-Va'adah ha-Meyuḥedet le-Eretz Yisra'el mita'am ha-Umot ha-Me'uḥadot," September 18, 1947.
47 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 258–261. His thinking confirms all the more the important role played by Jewish settlements in the Negev in the determination of the Jewish state's borders.
48 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 261.
49 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 47–48.
50 See the discussion of this in Alexander Yacobson, "The Positions in Support of the Partition Plan." In Ruth Gavison, ed. The Two-state Solution: The UN Partition Resolution of Mandatory Palestine—Analysis and Sources. London: 2013, pp. 24-26; Victor Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891—1949*, London: 2009, pp. 146–148.
51 SNA ESA Box 5, "Some Points for Partition."
52 *UNSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 5–51; Gavison, Ruth. "The November 29 Resolution: Then and Now." In Ruth Gavison, ed. The Two-state Solution: The UN Partition Resolution of Mandatory Palestine—Analysis and Sources. London: 2013, pp. 49.
53 See, for example, Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, p. 471.
54 *NSCOP Report*, Vol. I, pp. 48–49.
55 Ibid., pp. 60–64.
56 Ibid, Vol. II, p. 67.
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81 Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945–1951*, London: 1983, p. 476.
82 Cohen, "Mediniyut Britaniyah," pp. 101–128.

10 "Eleven Committees of One Man Each"[1]

The Personal Views of UNSCOP's Members

Up to this point, I have focused on UNSCOP as a whole. But a comprehensive account of the committee's work requires an examination of how the opinions of each individual member were shaped by their experience of the inquiry. As I have shown, the committee settled on its final recommendations through a negotiating process in which each member had to set aside some of his personal ideas and conclusions so as to reach the collective decision offered in the final report. On top of that, the positions that members voiced, ostensibly freely, before the committee as a whole, did not always fully reflect their actual thinking. Because of the group's heterogeneity and the many contrasts and motives of its members, they sometimes kept their real views to themselves, or shared them only with a few colleagues. In this regard, there were three levels to the committee's activity. The first was the official public report. The second was the experience and activity of the committee as a unit, finding expression primarily in the minutes of its closed full and subcommittee meetings, as recounted in the previous chapters. The third, the subject of this chapter, was the personal dimension.

It is this last level that offers the means of judging the Arab charge that the recommendations ultimately issued by the committee were in fact a foregone conclusion, as most of its members were sympathetic to Zionism before even setting foot in Palestine. This claim figures prominently in Arab historiography and can be found in a number of other scholarly studies as well. Another claim that often appears alongside it is that the great powers orchestrated the inquiry and its outcome, whether by directly influencing the committee members or in indirect ways. They had already decided on partition and the committee was simply a means of putting the plan into practice. In this view, the British, and Americans, and according to some versions the Russians as well, fashioned a pro-Zionist plan and pressed the committee to choose it.[2]

It was easy to accuse the British of involvement, given the easy access they had to the committee. But, as I have shown, the allegation is refuted by the unswervingly hands-off attitude the British took toward the committee. The Russian and American cases, however, require scrutiny, in two stages. In this chapter I will examine the direct influence of the great powers, the Soviets in particular, on members of the committee. The chapter that follows will

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consider the American and Soviet positions with the aim of discovering if there was indirect influence, and what sort of interactions these powers had with UNSCOP.

The European and Commonwealth Countries

Sandström

Emil Sandström of Sweden, UNSCOP's chairman, and Justice Ivan Rand of Canada were the two most influential figures in consolidating the majority report. Their colleagues suspected them of pro-British sympathies, but with regard to the Jews and Arabs they were neutral, which gave them cachet within the committee. Sandström made full use of his prerogatives and standing as chairman. He acted on his own in his contacts with the British and assigned members of UNSCOP staff to investigate certain topics. He was thus able to conduct a broader inquiry than his colleagues. He met secretly with leaders of the Haganah and Etzel, as well as with senior Arab figures, and he was the only member to whom the British conveyed all the material they had in their possession. At the start of the inquiry, Sandström felt a strong sense of commitment to the British, and supported a federative solution. It is hard to tell whether such a solution grew out of the knowledge that it was the solution the British had advocated in the period prior to their referral of the Palestine question to the UN, or for other reasons. But it was undoubtedly the chairman's bedrock position.[3]

Over the course of the inquiry Sandström completely revised his views, becoming the committee's most determined proponent of partition. The path he took is evident in a personal memorandum he wrote but did not show to his colleagues, as well as in candid conversations that the American delegation to the UN had with him and with Ralph Bunche a short time after UNSCOP submitted its report to the General Assembly. None of this information indicates that he adopted either a pro-Jewish or pro-Arab point of view. Rather, he collected information and sought the most practical, effective, and viable solution.

Sandström realized, at a very early stage of the inquiry, that the British wanted to leave Palestine. Furthermore, he seems to have been more aware than his colleagues were of the dynamics in London. Immediately after the government announced, in the wake of UNSCOP's report, that it would withdraw its forces from Palestine and would not implement the plan, he admitted that he had not been surprised and had anticipated just such a move.[4] After meeting personally with Arab figures and seeing the tension between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, he rejected the Zionist claim that the British were the core of the conflict. He maintained that no hope should be placed in Jewish-Arab cooperation of any sort; total separation was required. Furthermore, his forecast of what would happen when the British left was grim—there would be a decisive confrontation between the two nations.[5] Under the circumstances,

he probed the question of whether the committee's conclusions might end up being a death sentence for the Jews. That was the question he sought to get an answer to when he met with representatives of the Haganah. It was a decisive encounter for him. It convinced him that "the Jews, including the Haganah together with the more violent organizations" could not only repel an Arab attack but also conquer territories assigned to the Arab state.[6]

Sandström had difficulty reaching a clear position on the Arab side. His impression was that "the educated Arabs in Palestine were anti-Semitic," but most of the country's Arabs wanted "to be left to themselves." If it were left to them, they would be "capable of cooperating with the Jews in Palestine." He believed that the Arab states, not the Arabs living in Palestine, would determine just how violent the reaction to UNSCOP's decisions would be.[7] Bunche, explaining the chairman's logic, argued that the committee had not been able to determine whether the Arab war threats were real or merely rhetoric.[8]

Realizing that the British would pull out and that the real Arab position was an enigma, Sandström based his version of partition on the Jews. He saw this as a strategic decision that would ensure the stability of Palestine when the plan was put into action. As such, he wanted to ensure that the Jews would accept the plan without hesitation. Hence his accommodation of the Jewish demand for immigration, and the generous grant of enough territory to absorb these newcomers.[9]

This strategy was evident in his thinking about implementation. If the British bailed out, as he expected, and the UN could not find another option, which seemed likely, he presumed that the Jews would implement the plan. They would defend the partition borders and impose the arrangement on the Arabs who remained in their state. The UN would have to decide what to do with the rest of Palestine.[10] In other words, Sandström based his strategy on Jewish power, about which he had no doubts. Hearing from the Haganah that it would be able to repel an Arab attack, and from Etzel that it would cooperate with the Haganah, were significant factors that led him to this firm conclusion. This position also stood firmly on the foundation of classic principles of international law. One such principle is that a state gains recognition of its sovereignty over territory by enforcing its authority in that territory and defending the territory against outside forces.[11]

Sandström did not believe that Jews and Arabs could cooperate, so he rejected in principle the idea of an economic union. He agreed to include it in the final plan as a concession to Rand, a compromise made necessary by the inquiry's finding that the Arab state would not be economically viable, and would thus require support from the Jewish state. He told a meeting of the full committee, and stated in his memorandum, that "the economic and financial difficulties can be solved in another way," although he did not say how. The need for "another way" explains another element of Sandström's point of view—his belief that the territory designated for an Arab state in Palestine should be annexed to Transjordan.

"The majority group felt that the small Arab state should be assimilated to Transjordan, but it did not include this idea in their report," Bunche explained to a friend serving in the US delegation to the UN after the General Assembly session began.[12] Sandström made the same point at that time. He argued that the Arab state in Palestine could be a province of Transjordan, noting that King Abdullah had responded positively to the idea, as Sandström learned during his visit to Amman.[13] Bunche's attribution of this position to the entire majority group seems not to be correct. It stands to reason that some members supported it to one extent or another, but Sandström was without a doubt the man who carried the flag for the Transjordanian option. In this, the chairman adopted the Jewish Agency's proposal to "partition and annex." This model, proposed by the Peel Commission,[14] was also preferred by some British policy makers if their country were to withdraw from Palestine.[15] These explicit statements made after the event are supported by evidence from the inquiry itself. Recall that it was Sandström who initiated the visit to Transjordan. But the Swedish representative did not base himself only on what the king said. During the visit, he felt out British officers in Abdullah's army, the Arab Legion, asking to hear their views of whether their forces could take control of the Arab part of Palestine in case partition were decided on.[16]

Another important point has to do with Sandström's efforts to get a senior British official to speak to the committee in Geneva and help it formulate its conclusions. The British and most members of the committee opposed the initiative, and the chairman backed down. Neither did anyone ask him to reveal what official he had had in mind. But the documents show that it was Alec Kirkbride, the British ambassador to Transjordan, who was known to have close relations with King Abdullah and contacts in the Legion.[17] According to Motti Golani, Kirkbride was the strong man in the country and unabashedly promoted the position of the Foreign Office.[18] Benny Morris argues that, beginning in mid October, Kirkbride enthusiastically advocated a Jordanian seizure of the Arab parts of Palestine when the Mandate ended.[19] As Sandström saw it, Kirkbride could have assured the committee that annexation was a realistic option, or at least indicate that it was desirable, thus placing Sandström's version of partition on firm ground. But when the ambassador was not permitted to make an appearance, the chairman began to lose control of the committee's work. While the majority partition plan certainly bore the imprint of his concept, he had to accept the changes that melding it with Rand's version required.

In short, Sandström's ostensibly "Zionist" version of partition was not engendered by sympathy for Zionism but by a dispassionate analysis of the facts at hand. Yes, Sandström visited the *Exodus* in Haifa and was deeply moved by what he saw there. But it is not clear how and whether this affected his thinking about partition. Indeed, he told the British that "he was sickened by the use made of [the refugees on the boat] by the Zionist propaganda machine."[20] On another occasion, he showed his discomfort with the way the Zionists were presenting the facts. Their vilification of the British

was unjustified in his view, and he maintained that the Jewish Agency was exploiting the displaced persons (DP) issue for its own political purposes. Indeed, he had many reservations about Jewish immigration to Palestine and the best way to solve the refugee problem, but his desire to craft a solid proposal led him to adopt the Zionist position on these issues to the extent that it was possible. He wanted to send the General Assembly a plan that would work no matter what course events took, one that would go into effect even without assistance from the British, the UN, or anyone else. A possible outcome, he thought, was that the Jews would establish their state and that Transjordan would annex the Arab areas of Palestine, thus ensuring their economic viability.[21] Sandström took the idea of attaching the Arab areas of Palestine to Abdullah's kingdom from the Peel report, and no doubt also heard the idea voiced by British officials who supported partition, although the latter advocated a much smaller Jewish state that did not include any of the Negev, very far from the model that he adopted in the end.[22] Avi Shlaim argues UNSCOP's recommendations led to two forms of partition, one that the UN decided on and the other that Abdullah and the British contrived.[23] In fact, those two concepts were already manifest in UNSCOP's work. Some of the committee's members certainly preferred not to establish an independent Palestinian Arab state. Sandström was the first of them.

Rand

Justice Ivan Rand had a very different conception of the Palestine problem and how to solve it. The Canadian representative, who had some sympathy for Zionism prior to the inquiry, came during its course to identify totally with the Zionist case and the need and obligation to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, to which the Jewish people had a right. Rand was profoundly impressed by the Yishuv's achievements and its political maturity. He deeply felt the plight of the Jewish. Rand, himself an introvert, grew particularly fond of the fervent David Horowitz. He admired the dogged devotion of this senior economist who happily turned to manual labor when that was necessary. For Rand, he was the epitome of the Jews of Palestine, utterly devoted to the establishment of a Jewish state.[24]

Rand signed on to the entire Zionist narrative, including a rejection of the British Mandate. While he began his work on UNSCOP with a sense of duty toward the British, as was evident during the initial friction between the Mandate power and the committee, when he consistently and insistently supported the British position. But he soon changed his tone and began to lambast the British. "The British have an entirely abominable record in Palestine," Rand argued. "What a fuss they make about the illegal immigrants." He cited the *Exodus* affair as a typical blemish on the country's policy, and later claimed that, after he read all the material, he concluded that the British had contravened the mission they had been assigned in Palestine.[25] It was hardly surprising, then, that in Geneva he was one of the fiercest

opponents of Sandström's proposal to invite a senior British official to speak to the committee in Geneva.

But the romance between the Jewish Agency and Rand took a wrong turn. His moral principles impelled him to take seriously the economic future of the Arabs. He examined the data and deduced that a Jewish state of the size and shape the Jews were demanding would leave the Arabs in the lurch, as they would not be able to manage their affairs in their state. Horowitz made an impressive effort to persuade him otherwise, but to no avail.[26]

Rand emphatically rejected Sandström's solution to this problem. That is clear from the tenacity of their arguments over the matter throughout the committee's work, up until its final days. The Canadian stayed inside the box, processing all the data and formulating what he thought was the best plan under the circumstances, two sovereign states joined by an economic union. Sandström preferred to step outside the box.

Sandström assumed that the partition process would not go well. But Rand was optimistic, and hoped that the UN would make an effort to implement the plan. The economic union he proposed helped bring Blom, Lisicky, and Salazar on board the partition plan, in addition to Sandström, Granados, and Fabregat. Beyond providing answers to the economic issues that had been raised, it made a statement that was opposed to the way Sandström saw things. Rand presented his solution in the UNSCOP report; Sandström did not believe in the report's recommendations and continued to maintain that the best outcome would be Transjordanian rule over the Arab areas of Palestine. In retrospect, Jewish Agency officials acknowledged the decisive role played by Rand, in particular his act of turning his back on the British. As he was Canadian, his attitude made a big impression.[27] But they were missing something important. Rand offered the only alternative to Sandström's model, which would not have gained a majority had it been the only partition proposal on the table. In fact, the two major authors of the majority plan sent the General Assembly a single document, but each one viewed it entirely differently, enabling their colleagues to position themselves between them, at the point where each felt most comfortable.[28] Each was well aware that, as far as his country and his superiors were concerned, he was entirely free to advocate any idea he wished. All the other members had much less room for maneuver. It is all the more interesting, in this context, to consider the two different tracks taken by the remaining two men who had been perceived at first part of the contingent of four neutral members of UNSCOP—Blom and Hood.

Blom

Nicolas Blom, a dedicated Dutch foreign service officer, came to UNSCOP with a pro-Arab stance that had its roots in Holland's rule over Muslim Indonesia. He did not want to exacerbate the already fraught situation in this Dutch colony, which had declared its independence after the Second World War but over which Holland was still trying to reassert control. That meant

not angering Palestine's Arabs and the Muslim Arab world, which could inflame religious tensions in Indonesia. Blom thus needed to take the Arab side.[29]

In his memoirs, the author of the Arab boycott, Hajj Amīn al-Ḥussaynī, alleged that several of UNSCOP's members had declared their support for partition before the inquiry began. Among these he listed the representatives of Guatemala, Uruguay, and Holland. With regard to the latter, the charge is entirely baseless. In fact, Blom opposed partition almost until the end of the inquiry.[30]

The members of the Dutch delegation to UNSCOP found themselves torn during their time in Palestine. On the one hand they were extremely impressed by the Yishuv and enthused about their warm personal encounters with Jews who had come to Palestine from Holland.[31] On the other hand, they did their best to be a voice for the Arabs. In a discussion of the Negev, for example, Blom rejected the Zionist claim that the success of Jewish settlement in the region meant that it should be part of a future Jewish state. "In any case the land belongs to the Arabs even if they have not made full use of it," he declared. Blom also complained that the Zionists' arguments offered no response to the Arabs' fundamental refusal to live under Jewish rule.[32] He seems to have hoped that his position on UNSCOP would give him leverage against the Muslim rebels in Indonesia. By showing the Arabs that he could help their cause in Palestine, he thought, they might find it in their interest to pressure their coreligionists in Indonesia to go easier on the Dutch.

But the Arabs made no effort to embrace the Dutch delegation, even though it would have been very easy to do so. They were aware that Indonesia was a sensitive point for the country. The Arab League's secretary-general, who wanted to raise the subject of Indonesia in the UN, secretly contacted countries that had no direct interest in the Palestine issue, asking them to bring the subject up so that the initiative would not seem to be coming from the Arab states. But the Arabs did not continue to act with such caution. During UNSCOP's sojourn in Palestine, tensions in Indonesia escalated and there were violent clashes between the Dutch and the local population. A high-level Indonesian delegation arrived in the Middle East at this time, meeting with Arab heads of state and foreign ministers so as to cement relations between the two sides. The Indonesians lent their support to the struggle of Palestine's Arabs, and in return their Middle Eastern hosts lauded the fight of the Indonesian Muslims against Holland.[33] In a report he sent to the Dutch Foreign Ministry, Blom related his chagrin at discovering that several Arab foreign ministers he had met with had, just a few days previously, hosted opponents of Dutch rule in Indonesia. Blom, who had long served as Holland's governor in Indonesia, left Lebanon bitterly disappointed.[34]

When he arrived in Geneva, Blom wrote to his superiors that he had not yet formulated his position. He understood that neither had the Foreign Ministry, and that in the end he might well need to do so alone. He rejected

a full partition of the type Sandström advocated and was inclined toward a federative plan, or a trusteeship that would lead eventually to a single state with an Arab majority.[35] On Blom's account, his decision to join the partition camp in the end was mostly the result of the division of UNSCOP into working groups. He served on the subcommittee that addressed the partition with economic union option, where he defended Rand's principle that the two countries needed to share certain functions and played an important role in drafting the majority proposal. As the final vote approached, he thought it would look strange for him to support the federal option, yet remained far from convinced about partition. He telephoned his foreign minister but the conversation offered no assistance. He stressed to his Foreign Ministry that, on the day of the vote, he managed to persuade his colleagues to issue both a majority and minority report. "This way both plans will receive their proper standing as the results of the committee's inquiry," he wrote.[36] Having begun the inquiry with pro-Arab views, he did not end it as an advocate of Zionism.

Hood

John Hood abstained on the final vote, the endpoint of a convoluted and arduous journey. In his autobiography, Australian Foreign Minister Herbert Evatt noted tersely that he assumed the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestine Problem that the UN General Assembly formed in the autumn of 1947 after UNSCOP submitted its recommendations "without prejudices in favour of any particular practical solution."[37] But behind that statement lies a wide-ranging correspondence between Evatt and his representative on the committee, which enabled the former to maintain the appearance of objectivity despite Hood's activity. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to claim that Hood abstained only on the orders of his superior, as the Jewish Agency and the British claimed.[38]

Hood began and concluded the inquiry as a supporter of Britain. He believed that the interests of Britain and Australia coincided. After inquiring into what position the British wanted him to take and not receiving a clear answer, he devoted his efforts to conducting a real investigation, in part to produce background material that would be of assistance to Evatt. It is not clear what lies behind the strong pro-Arab and anti-Zionist position of his alternate, Samuel Atyeo, but it was clear that Hood shared those views to a certain extent.[39]

In a final report he wrote for the Australian Foreign Ministry, Hood explained that, after taking part in UNSCOP's travels around the country, he felt unalterably opposed to an independent Jewish state. It was simply not possible given the severity of the Jewish-Arab conflict. He believed that if the British left Palestine it "would lead to immediate and prolonged bloodshed." That being the case, establishing a Jewish state, and the subsequent Jewish immigration it would bring was not realistic, and "offered little prospect of stability." The solution was the continuation of the Mandate or its

replacement with a UN trusteeship, so that no matter what happened the inhabitants of the country would not be left to their own devices.[40]

This remained Hood's preferred solution in Geneva as well, where he promoted an initiative to establish a trusteeship in Palestine that would lead eventually to a single independent state. His visit to the DP camps did not budge him from this view. While acknowledging to his Foreign Ministry that the refugee problem could be solved only by establishing a Jewish state, such a plan would come at the expense of Palestine's Arabs. As such, the DP problem needed to be solved by an international effort, although he realized that choosing this path meant that the chances of resolving it would diminish.[41]

When Hood returned from his trip to the DP camps, he sensed that he needed to take a clear position. Up to that point he had acting in accordance with his instructions from his Foreign Ministry, which did not commit itself to any particular solution. Evatt seems to have been a supporter of partition on the private level,[42] but because he badly wanted to receive a position at the coming UN General Assembly, he kept his opinion to himself and did all he could not to be identified with any particular position. Hood awaited instructions so that he could do his job on UNSCOP. On August 18 he sent the ministry a proposal that it take a position. The Australian delegation, he wrote, supported a trusteeship regime that would lead toward the establishment of a single state in Palestine. This was a manifestly pro-Arab position to take. Hood offered an account of the committee's discussion of the partition with economic union principle, and estimated that a satisfactory formulation would garner a large majority. In an attempt to bridge between the opinion he and his alternate held and that of Evatt, Hood suggested that if a majority indeed supported the partition plan, Australia should abstain.[43]

The Australian Foreign Ministry had difficulty formulating its position, in part because of the ambiguity of Hood's message. Hood did not want to stand out as an exception in UNSCOP by being the only member to insist on trusteeship. But neither did he want to vote in favor of the proposal that he expected most of his colleagues to support. An internal ministry document maintained that it would certainly be proper for Hood to join a broad group that supported partition, but at the same time recommended issuing a statement to the effect that Hood was an independent delegate who acted at his own discretion and did not represent the position of the Australian government. Evatt, in any case, did not order Hood how to act. He asked for a number of clarifications; the bottom line was that "you should avoid being associated with any recommendation which will embarrass the Minister later."[44]

Continuing to straddle the divide, Hood participated in the subcommittee on partition, while Atyeo joined the federalist subcommittee. Hood updated his Foreign Ministry on August 24 that three members were supporting federation, four partition with an economic union, whereas the positions of the other three remained "open." He indicated that the federation idea was the one he thought best, but added that, under the circumstances, and because

the ministry had not made its position clear, he wished to abstain when the proposals came up for a vote.[45]

What the Australian Foreign Ministry really wanted was for the committee to submit a report that surveyed the problem but did not offer recommendations. But once that possibility was rejected, and after Hood asked for the third time for sanction for his abstention, Evatt acceded.[46] Hood seems to have been apprehensive that the ministry would require him to vote for the majority proposal, and thus made every effort to get Evatt to allow him to abstain. Had it been up to him, Hood would have joined the minority report.

The Latin American Countries

The second-largest group on UNSCOP consisted of the three representatives of Latin American countries. The governments of all three instructed their representatives to bring about the end of British rule in Palestine and to agree to the Zionists' demands. Jewish Agency officials, who were in close contact with the leaders of these countries, believed that they would support the establishment of a Jewish state.[47]

Granados and Fabregat

That accorded with the views of Jorge García Granados of Guatemala and Enrique Rodriguez Fabregat of Uruguay. Granados immediately identified the Zionists as the force able to push the British out, but he also truly identified with that movement's values. Granados made a major contribution to getting UNSCOP to endorse a Jewish state. Ironically and oddly, however, he believed, until very late in the game in Geneva, that the best solution was some sort of cantonal arrangement, not partition. He had a vision of several such districts assigned according to concentrations of Arab and Jewish population, each of which would manage its own affairs autonomously. His memoirs make no mention of this, but other sources show that the Jewish Agency had a hard time convincing him to set aside the idea. When he finally agreed to do so, he adopted the Zionist view on partition and promoted it diligently and enthusiastically.[48]

Fabregat, unlike his colleague, had been a supporter of Zionism prior to the inquiry. He was quick to adopt the version of partition promoted by the Jewish Agency, adding what he considered improvements. The Uruguayan delegation was thus the first to submit a partition map to the committee, as part of a complete plan for division of the country. Fabregat claimed, in an interview he gave in 1954, that he had authored the plan. While Fabregat clearly aimed to burnish the role played by the Latin Americans in the creation of Israel, his claim is corroborated by other sources.[49] In fact, the zealous pro-Zionist and anti-British approach taken by Fabregat and Granados from the time the inquiry commenced alienated a large number of their colleagues on

UNSCOP, in particular those who had trouble taking a clear position. The main force that tipped the scales in the Zionist direction was not the voicing of Zionist maximalist demands but the opposite—the presentation of a more nuanced position that the doubters could support.

Nevertheless, they made an important contribution to the Zionist success—in particular by providing the Jewish Agency with valuable intelligence about what was happening in UNSCOP's meeting. This flow of information, provided almost in real time, enabled the Jewish leadership to conduct its diplomatic campaign effectively.[50] They were also key figures in the committee's final days of deliberations. They pushed the members to vote and decide; Granados made his deal with Salazar that convinced the latter to support the partition plan, and endorsed Mohn's map. He was quick to understand the potential of Mohn and his maps, and had the political sense not to quibble over the borders Mohn was proposing. Rather, he helped present the Swedish alternate's plan to the committee.[51]

Salazar

From the first, Arturo Garcia Salazar stood apart from his two Latin American colleagues. His case shows just how much power each member of UNSCOP had even if his final vote was dictated by his government. Peru, like Guatemala and Uruguay, was expected to support the Zionist position, but Salazar took a manifestly anti-Zionist stance during the inquiry, in contradiction of his country's policy. His foremost priority was the interests of the Roman Catholic Church in Palestine, a product of his religious faith and his post as his country's ambassador to the Vatican. Salazar was the committee's leading advocate of the internationalization of Jerusalem and its environs, and an important supporter of keeping the size of the Jewish state to a minimum.[52]

Like the rest of the committee's members, Salazar took notice of the polarized positions of Palestine's Jews and Arabs, which prompted him to support partition in principle. But he was not prepared to adopt the Zionist position on the immigration of the displaced Jews of Europe. The dimensions of the Jewish state, he maintained, should reflect the existing state of Jewish statement, and should not assign territory for future development.[53]

Salazar's idea of internationalizing Jerusalem won support on the committee, and as the deadline approached it looked as if Salazar had achieved most of what he wanted—both with regard to Jerusalem and with regard to keeping the Jewish state small. As part of his lobbying and maneuvering on these issues, he allied himself, at the last minute, with the federalist camp. Clearly, however, this was simply a tactic to increase his bargaining power—after all, under the federalist plan, Jerusalem would become part of the Arab state. Granados called the bluff, forcing his Peruvian colleague to choose between what he wanted for Jerusalem and what he wanted for the Jewish state. The answer was obvious to Salazar, especially given that the Zionist

movement employed influential figures in Lima to lobby his government. He in the end deigned to accede to the policy dictated to him from home, signing the majority report.[54]

The Muslims

Although it was not easy for them to do so, the two Asians on the committee signed the minority report. For Sir Abdur Rahman of India, the federation proposal offered too many concessions to the Jews, while for Nasrollah Entezam of Iran it was too extreme. Indeed, throughout the inquiry, Entezam displayed a large measure of discomfort with the positions that he took.

Entezam

The Iranian representative was hugely impressed by the Jewish settlement enterprise, and at several junctures supported arrangements for Christian rule over Jerusalem. As for a solution to the Palestine dilemma, he indicated that at first he had supported a binational state, but later changed his mind. From time to time he evinced approval of partition.[55] MacGillivray reported that, although Entezam had declared that he would vote against Jewish immigration to Palestine, he actually believed it should be allowed, and at a large scale, and intended to do all he could to ensure that such a recommendation be included in the majority report.[56]

This casts a different light on the common cause unexpectedly made, during the committee's final days of work, by the pair of pro-Zionist Latin Americans and Entezam (and Sicmic as well). Their common interest was to keep the committee from submitting a report without recommendations. Entezam doggedly pressed his colleagues to be decisive, not only to advance his minority proposal, but also—perhaps—because what he really wanted was for the majority report to pass and have an impact. Alongside his effort to further the majority recommendation in favor of partition, Entezam positioned himself where his nationality and religion required him to be, as an ally of his Indian colleague in the minority. The Arab countries, not wanting to take any chances, sent messages to the Iranian government demanding that it instruct its representative to align himself with the official Arab position.[57] There was really no need to do so. Tehran had already told Entezam not to take any position that would bring Iran into conflict with the Arab League nations; the Iranian ambassador to Washington had informed a Jewish Agency official at the end of July that this would be his country's position.[58]

Abdur Rahman

The Indian delegate represented the position of the Arab Higher Committee. He joined UNSCOP as the ally of this body, dictated by Mufti Amīn al-Ḥussaynī, and stuck to this position throughout the inquiry, during which

he maintained regular contact with that body and whose confidence he retained. Yet this might well have been to the Arabs' detriment. Rahman could have kept the mufti at arm's length and urged the leaders of the Arab states to adopt a position that had a chance of receiving the support of at least some UNSCOP members. Instead, his major effort was expended trying to enable al-Ḥussaynī to testify before the UN committee. When he met privately with the leaders of the Arab states in Lebanon, he made no effort to persuade them to accept a proposal that might be a lesser evil for the Arabs. Instead, he allied himself with the mufti's dogmatic, uncompromising position.

In Geneva he advocated the establishment of an Arab state in all of Palestine, but he did wonder whether it would not be better tactically to take a more pragmatic position. In the event, during the stage when each of the members was asked to voice his personal position, he did not have the audacity to break the consensus among his colleagues that an extreme position on either side could not solve the Palestine problem. While he declared at this point that he did not believe that they should accept the Arab demands in full, he then proceeded, in the next stage, to advocate the Arabs' maximalist position. On August 14, the official date of India's partition, Abdur Rahman gave Sandström a memorandum in a sealed envelope laying out "the final recommendations of the Indian delegation." This was prompted by his concern that the partition of the subcontinent would affect his position on UNSCOP and rule out his continued membership.[59] According to his memorandum, the best solution would be a single Arab state in which the Jews would receive a fixed third of the seats in the legislature. At the end of the document, however, he left an escape hatch open, writing that it might be possible, under certain circumstances, to consider a federative scheme.[60] In parallel, Abdur Rahman sent a message to his prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who also held the foreign affairs portfolio and had kept a close eye on UNSCOP's inquiry. Rahman told Nehru that he conveyed the envelope to Sandström after receiving information that some members of the committee were seeking to disqualify him as a member of UNSCOP because of the partition at home.[61]

Nehru, who had long before dismissed, categorically and at length, the concerns Rahman had expressed about serving on the committee,[62] immediately took the reins into his own hands. While a unitary Arab state in all of Palestine was justified, it did not look like a realistic solution under the circumstances, Nehru cabled Rahman. He instructed his representative to adopt, as a compromise, the federal solution that would later become the minority program.[63] Nevertheless, Rahman kept his cards close to his chest and thus was able to wring out further concessions for the Arabs. Bunche claimed that, during the final days of the committee's work, Rahman threatened to break with the two colleagues with whom he had fashioned the federation proposal and to submit an individual report demanding the establishment of an Arab state. His two partners, fearing that in the end three reports would be

submitted, had to accommodate themselves to his demands.[64] In other words, while Rahman had no choice but to do the bidding of Nehru, he did so with great acumen and could take some comfort in the fact that he had put forward an alternative to partition that favored the Arabs. If the latter came to their senses at the General Assembly, the minority report offered them a path they could follow.

The Soviet Bloc

Simic and Brilej

The other partners in the minority report were the Yugoslavians, who came to the inquiry with limitations imposed by the nature of the complex internal political and national settlement in their own country. The Yugoslavian regime granted the country's different nations a measure of autonomy, but united them under a strong central government. The country's founding principle was that federal unity, not partition, was the proper way to resolve national and ethnic conflict. This position on the national issue accorded with both the Communist principles of the brotherhood of nations and economic and social equality, and with the country's zeal for getting the British out of Palestine. One of the designated members of the delegation stated that explicitly in the official Yugoslavian Communist Party newspaper, before the delegation set out to join UNSCOP. Mapping out the position it would take, he called for the liberation of Palestine from "highhanded imperialism." Yugoslavia's representatives would carefully examine the chances for achieving good relations between Jews and Arabs, with the goal of establishing a single state in which both peoples would enjoy equal rights, on the basis of the existing cooperation between them.[65]

From the moment they arrived in Palestine, the Yugoslavians made great efforts to find the cooperation they sought. They befriended members of Hashomer Hatza'ir, closely attended the testimony offered by Judah Magnes and the Palestine Communist Party, and during committee meetings they frequently sought to interpret the facts in light of their beliefs. A long report written by the delegation, sent from Belgrade to Moscow, also evidenced the process of self-persuasion that the representatives pursued, to the point that the report utterly distorted the real facts in Palestine, claiming that a significant proportion of Palestine's Jews supported a binational state.[66]

But other sources paint a different picture of the Yugoslavians, and in particular of Brilej, who was the man who called the shots. Speaking to an old acquaintance, he openly expressed his doubts. It was not reasonable, he said, to expect that the Jews and Arabs, with such different lifestyles, could live in a single state, no matter what sort of common state might be established. He enthused over the Zionist settlements in Palestine and argued that "the Jews have nowhere else to live but in Palestine." He also believed that "perhaps it would be for the best if the existing Arab population could be transferred to

one of the settled areas in the Arab countries." If such a solution were not possible, then, he admitted, "there is no choice but partition."[67]

Brilej consistently supported Zionism, even after Yugoslavian support for the federation program became well-known.[68] In other words, the Yugoslavians jointed the federalist camp not so much because they liked the idea, but rather because they were unable, given the instructions they had received, to sign on to partition and to granting self-determination to two national groups in Palestine. In the working group on the federal solution, the Yugoslavians found themselves allied with the Iranians against the Indians. They did not want to lend the program the anti-Zionist cast that Rahman was seeking, but his ultimatums forced them to give in. In any case, they achieved their primary goal of getting rid of the British. During the final phases of UNSCOP's work, the most important thing for them was to avert any weakening of the report, which the submission of three different proposals would do.[69]

The British, Zionists, and Americans were all certain that the Yugoslavians were acting in full coordination with the Kremlin. (The Czechoslovakians, they believed, were also under the Kremlin's influence, although to a lesser extent.)[70] They were wrong. Beyond the fact that the Soviets had imposed silence upon themselves with regard to UNSCOP, relations between the Yugoslavians, whose every bone was Communist, and the Soviets was not so simple.

Yugoslavia is generally portrayed as having been, at this point, a Soviet puppet state. It was only the following summer, in 1948, that Tito, Yugoslavia's leader, broke with the USSR and took his own independent Communist path. But there is much evidence that trouble was already brewing between the two countries in 1947, and by the time UNSCOP began its inquiry it was an established fact. Jewish immigration activists, who were taking advantage of the fact that Jews were free to move between Eastern bloc countries, were told that, while this remained the case, it did not apply to Yugoslavia. Jewish Agency officials who asked the Soviets to intercede so that the activists and refugees could pass through Yugoslavia on their way to Palestine discerned that channels of communication between the two countries were problematic.[71] While the Yugoslavians provided the Soviets with information about the inquiry while it was in progress,[72] no Soviet documents from the period indicate that the Soviet Union was giving instructions to Yugoslavia about it.

Further confirmation that the Yugoslavians acted on UNSCOP without connection to the Soviet Union comes from the delegation that was seen as Moscow's other hand on the committee. Documents from archives in Prague show that the Soviets made no attempt to tell the Czechoslovakians what to do with regard to UNSCOP. The archives contain a single message on the subject: on July 28, the Soviets inquired whether the Czechoslovakian government had already formulated a position on Palestine. The answer was no.[73] In short, the Yugoslavian delegation to UNSCOP acted at its own discretion, not under orders from Moscow.

Lisicky

Karel Lisicky, the Czechoslovakian member of UNSCOP, was caught between a rock and a hard place, namely between his avowedly pro-Zionist foreign minister and his connections and obligations to the British, and between his country's old pro-Zionist regime and the Communist regime that had replaced it. He joined UNSCOP without any instructions to advocate any particular solution, and as such sought a compromise that would enable him to stay on the good side of most of his contradictory allegiances.

His reports to his Foreign Ministry reveal two principal approaches. On the one hand, he sought to conduct an objective inquiry and search for a solution. On the other, he was truly impressed by the Zionist settlement project and by the warm reception he received from Czechoslovakian Jews living in those settlements.[74]

But Lisicky fell prey to his anxieties and doubts, and quickly enlisted in every initiative aimed at delaying a decision and at making any decision a vague one. He wrote to his Foreign Ministry about the intractable border issue and the task he had taken upon himself, along with the Australian and Dutch members, "to stress the common points in both of the programs that took form during the discussions."[75] Jewish Agency representatives appealed to Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, whose representative had become ever more unsympathetic to the Zionists as the day of decision approached. Masaryk took action. He personally presented the issue to Stalin, stressing that Czechoslovakia's policy was to support the Jews' demand for a state. Stalin replied that he had no intention of forcing Masaryk and his government to take a position opposed to their views; Masaryk claimed to have passed the message on to Lisicky.[76] Yet Lisicky still had a great deal of trouble joining the core supporters of the partition plan. Masaryk's tenuous position in the government in Prague was no secret, meaning that his personal position could hardly be taken as an official instruction. In fact, the Czechoslovakian cabinet, which held a discussion of the Palestine issue on August 27, preferred not to make a decision and left Lisicky without clear instructions.[77] Under the circumstances, Lisicky did his best to bridge the partition and federation plans (as he reported to his Foreign Ministry after the fact).[78] When he failed, he joined the supporters of partition, but asked that the minutes of the final meeting include his statement that he in fact took exception to the plan he had just signed.[79]

The Influencers: Mohn and Bunche

The personal views of UNSCOP's eleven members show that when they began their inquiry, there was a true balance of power between those sympathetic to the Arab cause and those sympathetic to the Jews. This remains the case if the members who were bound by their governments to vote one way or the other are taken out of the equation, and if the inclinations with which

the members came to the inquiry are weighed. The manifestly pro-Zionist position that a solid majority of the members took when they approved the partition plan could not thus have been predicted when the inquiry began. Indeed, almost up to the point when the report was submitted things could have gone the other way.

The support that a few members lent to the partition scheme was tenuous in the extreme. The portrayals of these men (in particular) cannot be complete without giving due attention to two key figures: Paul Mohn, the Swedish alternate member, and Ralph Bunche, the top American on the UNSCOP staff. While neither had a vote on the committee, they undoubtedly carried a lot of weight. Mohn was responsible for producing the partition map, and to a large extent for getting a majority to vote for it. Bunche was responsible for drafting the report, and for the arbitration that in the end arrived at an agreed draft of both the majority and minority reports. Given the importance of their contributions, their motives and views require examination.

Mohn came to the inquiry somewhat supportive of Zionism, and quickly became an advocate of partition. Blom reported at the inception of the committee's work that Mohn told him, in a private conversation, that he preferred partition, but added that despite his view that a Jewish state needed to be established, he did not think that it could solve the problem of the displaced Jews of Europe.[80] These two convictions grew stronger as the inquiry progressed. After studying the issue in depth, it turns out that Mohn, who later came to support a manifestly pro-Zionist partition plan, concluded that the Zionist border plan could never be put into effect. He therefore came up with a new idea—the establishment of *two* Jewish states. The first would be the "homeland," would comprise Palestine and include only a small territory on which there was a solid Jewish majority. The second territory allotted to the Jews would be outside Palestine. Mohn spoke of Italian Somalia, a territory whose status was then under discussion at the UN. He proposed that the Jews be granted territory there that could "absorb immigration on a large scale," thus solving the DP problem. In this way Mohn intended to solve both the DP and the Palestine issues simultaneously.[81]

Mohn put the idea to his colleagues and to the British as well.[82] In the end, he reversed his thinking. It is hard to say exactly what caused it. He was indeed shocked by his visit to the DP camps, but he made no connection between the two in his diary. In fact, he agonized over his Zionist-friendly map, and as part of his process of convincing himself, he cited odd evidence. For example, he plumbed the "Jewish mind" and asked Jewish Agency officials to provide him a list of Jewish Nobel Prize recipients.[83] Mohn proposed a large Jewish state that could take in the displaced Jews of Europe, but it was not clear whether his primary motive as solving the DP problem, the need to give the Zionists what they wanted so that they would accept UNSCOP's plan, or a combination of both along with a realization that, under the circumstances, it was the best solution available.

Bunche, who came to UNSCOP from the UN Secretariat, began his work without a firm view and ended it in the same position. He did, however, have a very strong opinion about UNSCOP's role, which as he saw it was to recommend a practical solution to the Palestine problem. "The committee is strictly … practical in its approach," he declared at the beginning of recommendation-drafting stage. By this he meant that UNSCOP preferred to propose practical conclusions rather than to seek abstract justice, and its members believed that "politics is the art of the possible."[84] During much of the inquiry, this was more wishful thinking than a real description of how the committee was operating, but it was clearly evident in the committee's final product.

Bunche, who had worked for the UN since its establishment and profoundly identified with its goals,[85] worked hard for the committee. Throughout the inquiry he labored to provide the members of the committee with as much data as possible. In Geneva he became concerned that, without the active assistance of the staff, the committee would find it difficult to produce a report and the UN would suffer the embarrassment of a major failure. He thus did all he could to enable UNSCOP to submit a report that would gain the support of a majority of its members by the deadline that had been set. He played an important role in the internal arbitration that crafted the majority report.[86]

A close examination of Bunche's personal views can be confusing; they seemingly emerge as contradictory. He was impressed by Magnes's principles,[87] claiming that, between the two plans he wrote up, he tended to prefer that of the minority. Yet he also disparaged the economic union component of the majority report on the grounds that any plan based on Jewish-Arab cooperation was quixotic and could never work. The prospect of Jewish-Arab cooperation in a binational state might have appealed to him, but it was clearly unrealistic. As such, Bunche preferred a practical plan. He apparently supported the partition plan knowing that it would most likely not lead to the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state but rather to a Jewish state and the annexation of the Arab regions of Palestine by Transjordan.[88] In any case, he put much labor into drafting the majority report. Above all he wanted UNSCOP to fulfill its mission and submit clear recommendations to the UN that were supported by a significant majority of the committee's members.

Notes

1 Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, p. 233.

2 Ilan Pappé, "Mediniyut Artzot ʻArav klapei ha-Mahalkhim ha-Diplomati'im be-She'elat Eretz Yisra'el, 1947–1949," *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisra'el* 5 (1995), pp. 112; al-Ḥussaynī, *Mudhakarāt al-Ḥajj*, p. 316; ʿAlī, *Filasṭīn wa-al-Intidāb al-Bariṭānī*, p. 243.

3 TNA FO 371/61876, "Extract from Sir H. Gurney's Letter to Mr. J. Martin," July 20, 1947; UNA S-605-4, "Third Informal Meeting, Chairman's Office," August 7, 1947.

4 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
5 Ibid. Sandström was unable to predict the dimensions of this coming conflict, but maintained that imposing a solution at an early stage of the violence might calm and stabilize the situation.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Ralph J. Bunche–James Frederick Green," September 24, 1947.
9 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by the Chairman."
10 Ibid.
11 SNA ESA Box 5, "Some Points for Partition"; Cohen, "Mediniyut Britaniyah," p. 100.
12 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Ralph J. Bunche–James Frederick Green," September 24, 1947.
13 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
14 In 1949, Sandström acknowledged that the Peel Commission report had guided him in the UNSCOP inquiry, see Sandström, "Palestinafrågan," p. 29.
15 Benny Morris, *The Road to Jerusalem: Glubb Pasha, Palestine, and the Jews*, London: 2002, pp. 71, 95–100.
16 TNA FO 371/61875, Pirie Gordon to FO, July 28, 1947.
17 TNA FO 371/61876, Baxter to Kirkbride, August 5, 1947; Smith to Beeley, July 28, 1947.
18 Golani, *Ha-Natziv ha-Aḥaron*, p. 254.
19 Morris, *The Road to Jerusalem*, p. 98.
20 TNA FO 371/61876, Gurney to Martin, July 21, 1947.
21 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
22 In an article he wrote summing of UNSCOP's work, Sandström claimed that he opposed including the Negev in the Jewish state and advocated attaching it to Transjordan. He offered several reasons, most notably his desire to give the Arabs access to the Mediterranean and territorial continuity between Egypt and Transjordan. Sandström also pointed to the British interest in having the Negev attached to Transjordan, although he did not state that this was one of the considerations that molded his thinking. See Sandström, "Palestinafrågan," pp. 29–33, 36–37.
23 Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan*, p. 89.
24 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, pp. 186–187.
25 CZA S25/5970, "Minute of conversation between Mr. Radak and Mr. Rand on 11.8.1947."
26 ISA 93/חצ/1/2270, "Meeting: D. Horowitz – I.C. Rand," August 6, 1947.
27 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 225.
28 Leon Mayrand, the Canadian alternate, reported to his Foreign Ministry that Rand made the major contribution to the partition with economic union plan, see NAC RG 25/4219, Mayrand to Secretary of State for External Affairs, September 1, 1947. Eliezer Tauber reaches similar conclusions, see his "Tafkido

shel ha-Shofet ha-Kanadi Rand be-UNSCOP, *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisra'el* 8 (1998). A journalistic account agrees, see John Ross, "Ivan Rand and the UNSCOP," *The Canadian Jewish News*, April 18, 25, 2002. But not everyone agrees about Rand's central role, see Bercuson, *Canada and the Birth of Israel*.

29 See the section of Chapter Two devoted to the positions of UNSCOP's members.

30 al-Ḥussaynī, *Mudhakarāt al-Ḥajj*, p. 316; UNA S-605-4, "Third Informal Meeting, Chairman's Office," August 7, 1947.

31 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.

32 Comay to Shertok, June 30, 1947, in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, pp. 426–428.

33 ISA 93/חצ/170/8, "Tamtzit ha-Do"Ḥ shel 'Abd al-Raḥman Izzam Paḥa 'al Nesiyato le-ARH"B ve-Briytaniyah," October 1, 1947; TNA FO 371/61778, Cunningham to CO, June 19, 1947.

34 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1947.

35 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 18, 1947.

36 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947.

37 Herbert Evatt, *The Task of Nations*, New York: 1949, p. 133

38 ISA 93/חצ/2266/15, Shertok to Max Freilich, September 12, 1947; TNA CO 537/2342, MacGillivray to Smith, August 27, 1947.

39 Comay to Shertok, June 30, 1947, in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, pp. 427–428; NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2147, Macatee to Merriam, July 21, 1947.

40 ANA 852/20 P. 1, "Special Committee of Inquiry," [no date].

41 Ibid.

42 Mandel, *H.V. Evatt*, pp. 99–102.

43 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 18, 1947.

44 ANA 852/19/1/1, FO to U.N Division, August 22, 1947; "Mr. Shann," August 22, 1947; Evatt to Hood, August 22, 1947.

45 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 24, 1947.

46 ANA 852/19/1/1, Hood to FO, August 28, 29, 1947; Evatt to Hood, August 29, 1947.

47 Reicher, "Yahadut Uruguay," pp. 224, 255; Tov, *El Murmullo*, p. 56.

48 Tov, *El Murmullo*, pp. 63–65.

49 Glick, *Latin America and the Palestine Problem*, pp. 65–66, 72–73.

50 Benno Weiser, *Professions of a Lucky Jew*, New York: 1992, p. 151.

51 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1947.

52 The Holy See's position on Jerusalem was unclear. See Ferrari, "Ha-Kas ha-Kadosh," pp. 189–191. Salazar seems to have navigated the issue as he saw best.

53 It could be argued that Salazar took a position consistent with his instructions, which seem to have been to support partition. Presumably the instructions did not include guidelines on the border issue. I was unable, despite considerable effort, to gain access to documents in Peruvian archives. Neither was Leon Trahetemberg Siederer, a Peruvian scholar who maintains that Salazar took a position that combined his country's position with his personal views. See Leon Trahtemberg Siederer, *Partcipaicion del peru en la particion de Palestina*, Lima: 1991, p. 58.

54 OHA 71(155), interview with Abba Eban, Dec. 1993.

55 CZA S25/5991, "Mispar Yedi'ot mi-Yeshivat UNSCOP be-14.8.1947," August 18, 1947; UNA S-608-2, 49th Meeting, August 29, 1947.
56 TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 20, 1947.
57 NA 501.BB Palestine/8-2347, Dorsz to Marshall, August 23, 1947.
58 Elath, *Ha-Ma'avak 'al ha-Medinah*, pp. 142–143.
59 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Sandstrom, August 14, 1947.
60 UNA S-609-1, "Memorandum by Sir Abdur Rahman," [no date].
61 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, August 20, 1947.
62 Nehru to Abdur Rahman, July 10, 1947.
63 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Vol. 4, New Delhi: 1989, pp. 636–637.
64 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Ralph J. Bunche–James Frederick Green," September 24, 1947.
65 Shelah, *Ha-Kesher ha-Yugoslavi*, pp. 195–196.
66 Memorandum of I.N. Bakulin on UNSCOP, July 31, 1947, *Documents on Israeli–Soviet Relations 1941–1953*, pp. 212–214
67 CZA S25/5374, "Do"H 'al Maga'im Meyuḥadhim 'im D"R Brilej," June 23, 1947.
68 OHA 3(155), interview with Oscar Sako-Azouri, Montevideo, 1981.
69 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.
70 See, for example, MacGillivray assessment of Moscow's position, based on the Yugoslavian contribution to the minority report, TNA CO 537/2341, MacGillivray to Smith, August 20, 1947.
71 Shelah, *Ha-Kesher ha-Yugoslavi*, pp. 191–195; Elath, *Ha-Ma'avak 'al ha-Medinah*, p. 443.
72 Memorandum of I.N. Bakulin on UNSCOP, 31 July 1947, *Documents on Israeli–Soviet Relations 1941–1953*, p. 213.
73 MFCZ, International Department Division, file 69; Karel Kaplan (ed.), *Československo a Izrael v letech 1947—1953*, Praha: 1993, p. 10.
74 MFCZ, International Department Division, file 69, "Report of UNSCOP's Work from June 6 to July 19, 1947."
75 Ibid.
76 CZA S25/3895, Shertok to Meyerson, August 5, 1947; Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 198.
77 Habermann, "Československo a Izrael 1947–1949: Léta přátelství," pp. 30, 41; Kaplan (ed.), *Československo a Izrael v letech*, p. 10.
78 MFCZ, International Department Division, file 69, "The Negotiation of the Palestine Question in the UN," September 5, 1947.
79 Ibid.; UNA S-608-2, 52nd Meeting, August 31, 1947.
80 NNA 999.212, UNSCOP, Blom report to Foreign Ministry, July 9, 1947.
81 Mohn, *Krumulur*, pp. 264–265.
82 TNA FO 371/61786, MacGillivray to Martin, August 20, 1947. Mohn also proposed the idea to Horowitz, see Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 175.
83 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 216; ISA 93/חצ/2270/12, Horowitz to Mohn, August 21, 1947.
84 CZA S25/3890, Eban report, August 4, 1947 (the quotes are from this document). See also CZA S25/3965, "Meeting: A. Eban and D. Horowitz – R. Bunche (Geneva)," August 3, 1947.
85 Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche*, p. 4.

86 The name of the game was flexibility. This explains the hard feelings Bunche harbored against Rand, the Canadian member, who refused to compromise and insisted that his colleagues, not he, should give in. See UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, August 22, 1947.

87 UCLA, Urquehart Collection (364) Box 5, Bunche's diary, July 14, 1947.

88 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Ralph J. Bunche–James Frederick Green," September 24, 1947.

11 The Great Powers and UNSCOP

The Soviet Union

Everyone involved in UNSCOP believed that the Soviet Union was pulling strings behind the scenes to influence the committee's decisions. Throughout the inquiry, the Americans, British, and Zionists, and not only they, were searching for the "Soviet connection." Members of the committee also reported confidently that their colleagues from the Eastern Bloc, the Yugoslavians in particular, were operating on orders from Moscow.[1] The report, in which one of the Eastern Bloc members sided with the majority and the other with the minority, proved that the claim was untrue. Some observers had assumed that the votes of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would finally dispel the fog around the Soviet Union's intentions, but exactly the opposite happened. The Soviet position remained an enigma even as the regular General Assembly session began. But knowing it is essential for determining whether Moscow exerted any sort of indirect influence on the committee.

The starting point must be Andrei Gromyko's speech on May 14, the last day of the special session convened to discuss the Palestine issue. It conveyed a double message. He declared that his country preferred a solution based on Jewish-Arab cooperation. But if that were not possible, it offered a second choice—separation. His audience did not take him at his word. The assumption was that the speech was a tactical move, even if its true aims were not clear. As such, everyone was caught off guard when the two countries ostensibly doing Moscow's bidding split their votes. It showed that Gromyko had meant what he said. As Moshe Shertok put it, "The Yugoslav is in one group and the Czech in another, and it can be said that both of them are fine as far as Gromyko is concerned—both are in accord with what he said."[2]

The Soviets themselves claimed that they were not telling either representative what to do. The claim might be doubted, but another way of understanding it is that the most important thing for the Soviet leadership was to keep its real opinions to itself. After the report was submitted, Gromyko also made a point of telling UN Secretary General Trygve Lie in private that the Soviet Union "is not behind the Yugoslavians." At the same time, he refused to endorse the majority plan.[3]

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Studies that have sought to explain the disparate votes of the two Communist countries have described the complex relations between the Soviet Union and its client states as being characterized by "the internal work roster of the Eastern Bloc," according to which the countries under Soviet influence could serve its purposes in different ways. On this view, the disagreement between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia received the tacit support of the Soviet Union, which allowed them enough latitude to create a situation where they came down on opposite sides.[4]

Perhaps this was exactly what the Kremlin wanted. In other words, Soviet leaders knew in advance that the Yugoslavian and Czechoslovakian members would take opposite stands on the issue, and saw the split as advantageous. They thus had no need to issue clear instructions. The Soviet insistence that they did not has not been contradicted by any of the documents on the Palestine question they have released in recent years, although it is not clear that all the relevant material has been made public. All the signs are that the Czechoslovakians and Yugoslavians were not told by the Soviets to take a particular position. In fact, they did not even know what their patron's position was.

What, in fact, was the Soviet position? Gromyko's speech needs to be taken as evidence of a significant shift in policy. It was not the product of sympathy for Zionism but grew rather out of analysis of the facts, leading to a conclusion that the best way to push the British out of Palestine—a prime Soviet goal—was to support Zionism.[5] It looked to them as if their traditional support for the Arabs would not achieve that goal, so they were willing to consider supporting the Jews. But that was a hypothesis that the Soviets sought confirmation for. As such, they did not want to declare a new policy but rather to collect further information that might confirm or disprove the proposition. UNSCOP's report was thus of primary importance—the committee's success in gaining a majority for partition offered retroactive validation of the policy the Soviets had gambled on in May. The Jewish determination to found a state, and to eject the British in the process, won the day in UNSCOP. At that point the Soviets no longer had any hesitations about showing their cards.

Concrete expression of that arrived on September 30, when Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov sent two telegrams to Andrey Yanuareyvich Vyshinsky, his deputy foreign minister and leader of the Soviet delegation to the General Assembly's autumn session in New York. The first briefly ordered Vyshinsky not to oppose the UNSCOP majority proposal, while the second offered the background to the order. According to the cable, the idea of a binational state, endorsed by Gromyko in his speech at the special session, was "motivated by tactical considerations." It told the members of the delegation that "we did not want to be the ones to propose the establishment of a Jewish state," but in fact that was what the Soviet government wanted. Now that a majority of UNSCOP's members had supported the establishment of a separate Jewish state, "you should support the majority proposal." The instructions resulted from a long study of the situation by all the high-level

officials who determined the USSR's foreign policy.[6] The report produced by the eleven members of UNSCOP at the UN's behest gave a green light to the activation of a new Soviet orientation, different from what had come before and revolutionary in nature.

The United States

The United States also kept its own counsel. Throughout the inquiry and its aftermath, the Arabs charged that the USA was steering the committee. Indeed, it was hard not to suspect the Americans of doing so. First, American support for the Zionist demand for a Jewish state had been declared by President Truman in October 1946, which had prompted Britain to place the Palestine question before the UN. Second, the Americans had made no secret that they thought that 100,000 displaced Jews in Europe should be allowed to immigrate to Palestine. Furthermore, at the special session they had played a central role in the composition of the committee of inquiry. It was thus quite reasonable to think that they would try to influence the committee's work. The Arabs were astonished by the American public's and media's support for Zionism and believed it to be the government's position as well. The view is deeply rooted in Arab and pro-Arab historical writing.[7] Ilan Pappé, for example, has argued that "despite [UNSCOP's] heterogeneous composition … its work was guided behind the scenes by the American delegation."[8]

But a careful examination of the evidence shows that the United States stood aside and waited to see what UNSCOP would do. This passive stance grew to a large extent out of the ongoing erosion of the American government's support for the Zionist solution. Their fear that the burden of Palestine would fall on their shoulders led to much uncertainty, and the American policy makers had difficulty navigating between, on the one hand, their desire not to get tangled up in making military or other sorts of commitments, and on the other hand backing down from their declared position and coping with the incessant pressure the Zionists were exerting on them. Britain's referral of the issue to the UN enabled American leaders to unburden themselves of the need to make a decision. They could treat the UN as the supreme arbiter of the issue and hide behind its decisions. This approach was also dictated by the changing of the guard at the State Department, when Secretary of State James Byrnes and his deputy Dean Acheson were replaced by John Marshall and Robert Lovett. During UNSCOP's inquiry, the leadership at State, which had responsibility for the Palestine issue, was still in its first stages of learning about the subject. The person who filled the vacuum and took responsibility in the meantime was Loy Henderson, director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, known for his uncompromising opposition to partition. Henderson conducted all contacts, while also lobbying the American leadership in an effort to avert US support for partition in general and for the establishment of a Jewish state in particular.[9]

Henderson argued that support for partition was liable to be detrimental to American national interests. At the beginning of July he sent a detailed memorandum to Marshall laying out his firm opposition to any American intervention in UNSCOP intended to impel it to recommend a partition plan. "If the plan finally adopted should be considered as primarily an American plan or as a plan decided upon as a result of American pressure," Henderson warned, "we should probably be held primarily responsible for the administration and enforcement of such a plan."[10] Henderson's warning led the American government to decide to remain silent about UNSCOP, to the chagrin of Zionists all over the USA.

But other voices could be heard in the American government at the beginning of the inquiry, while UNSCOP was holding its initial meetings in New York. An abundance of individuals and organizations (mostly Jewish and Zionist) asked to appear before the committee before it left for Palestine. American officials were concerned. The State Department worried that, if the committee heard such testimony in New York, the administration's silence would be interpreted as consent to what these American citizens were saying. Warren Austin, the US ambassador to the UN, pressed the government to formulate a position that could be presented to UNSCOP as the official American position. He himself recommended "the establishment of an independent state, neither Jewish nor Arab."[11] His proposal was given serious consideration. Marshall did not reject it out of hand, but once UNSCOP resolved to go to Palestine to hear testimony, the secretary of state wrote that "We are convinced that there is no solution of the Palestine problem which will not meet with strong opposition from one or several quarters." In light of that, the American government preferred not to make any public statement about the issue.[12]

With Zionists pressing their case on the one side and Arab accusations on the other, Marshall sent American legations a set of instructions informing them of American policy on Palestine. It claimed that the USA had no political plan for the territory, that it had never had one, and that at this point the USA had no preference for any particular solution.[13] The administration maintained its silence religiously, and the reports it received from the inquiry only reinforced that position. Robert Macatee, the US special consul in Jerusalem, familiar with both the Arab accusations that UNSCOP and the USA were co-conspirators, warned against any contact with the members of the committee. He argued that the committee was under "close observation" and declared that he would avoid even "social contact" with the members of the committee, so as not to give any reason for suspicion.[14]

This explains the lengthy and bizarre correspondence between the Americans and the British over UNSCOP's request to receive the document drawn up by the Anglo-American committee of experts, the Morrison-Grady Plan. This team presented a joint plan of action for the two countries on the basis of the investigation conducted by the Anglo-American Committee. UNSCOP requested the document from the British. The British asked for

the consent of the Americans, who had difficulty making a decision. They asked the British to tell UNSCOP that the proposals in question "have at no time in the past been accepted by the United States Government and that they are not (repeat not) considered acceptable to the United States Government at the present time." The British told the Americans that they could not convey such a message to UNSCOP, because that would violate Britain's "no recommendations" policy. Declaring that one particular solution was unacceptable to the USA "would obviously carry great weight with the delegates," the British maintained. Seeking to satisfy the British, the Americans offered more convoluted formulations. In the end the decision came before President Truman himself. The Americans agreed, on August 20, to send the material to UNSCOP. It is doubtful, however, whether any of the members bothered to read it at that point, just a few days before they completed their work.[15] Despite public appeals for it to intervene, in particular in the *Exodus* affair, the administration made no effort to influence UNSCOP.

If anything, the opposite is true—UNSCOP influenced the Americans. All the doubts American policy makers had about Palestine, and the firm opposition that some of them displayed to partition, evaporated once UNSCOP issued its report. Secretary of State Marshall declared to the General Assembly on September 17 that the United States "gives great weight" to the majority recommendations. His reasoning was simple and clear—his country should not oppose recommendations made by a majority of the members of the UN committee of inquiry.[16] This continued to be a central motif in American policy at the General Assembly, and helped American officials who supported partition to overcome the opposition of their colleagues. On October 9, President Truman instructed the American delegation to the UN to support partition.[17]

In short, UNSCOP's eleven members operated freely, without being imposed on by any of the great powers. Indeed, the cause-and-effect relationship was the opposite. The tiny committee moved these countries from their initial position on the sidelines into support for partition. It was exactly the opposite of what might have been expected. The assumption has been that the great powers act in general, and acted in this case, in accordance with their own interests. Yet, in the case of UNSCOP, the great powers deferred to an ostensibly feeble committee that ultimately set the parameters of what would become the policies of the two superpowers in Palestine.

Notes

1 NAI, F-2(16)-UNO-I/47, Abdur Rahman to Nehru, June 25, 1947; NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.

2 "Sekirah biy-shivat ha-Va'ad ha-Po'el ha-Tzioni," August 26, 1947, in Sagi, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency*, p. 606.

3 Ibid., p. 644.

4 Shelah, *Ha-Kesher ha-Yugoslavi*, p. 194; Yaakov Roi, *Soviet Decision Making in Practice: The USSR and Israel, 1947–1954*, London 1980, p. 66.
5 There were several other less important reasons for the shift. See Benjamin Pinkus, *Yaḥasim Meyuḥadim: Brit ha-Moʿatzot u-Vaʿalot Britah va-Yaḥaseihen ʿim ha-ʿAm ha-Yehudi, ha-Tzionut, ve-Medinat Yisrael, 1939–1959*, Sde Boker: 2007, pp. 172–173.
6 Molotov to Vyshinski, September 30, 1947, *Documents on Israeli-Soviet Relations 1941–1953*, pp. 226–227.
7 For a classic example, see ʿAlī, *Filasṭīn wa-al-Intidāb al-Bariṭānī*, p. 243.
8 Pappé, "Mediniyut Artzot ʻArav," p. 112.
9 Evan M. Wilson, *Decision on Palestine: How the U.S. Came to Recognize Israel*, Stanford: 1979, p. 102; Radosh and Radosh, *A Safe Haven*, pp. 219–220.
10 Henderson to S/S, July 7, 1947, *FRUS* 5 (1947), pp. 1120–1123.
11 Austin to S/S, May 22, 1947, *FRUS* 5 (1947), pp. 1086–1088.
12 Freundlich, *Mi-Ḥurban le-Tekumah*, pp. 118–119; NA 501.BB Palestine/5-2247, Marshall to Austin, June 13, 1947.
13 S/S to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers, June 13, 1947, *FRUS* 5 (1947), p. 1103.
14 NA 501.BB Palestine/7-2147, Macatee to Merriam, July 21, 1947.
15 NA 867N.01/8-1147, "Memorandum for the President," August 11, 1947; Maclean to Henderson, August 15, 1947; TNA FO 371/61877, Balfour to FO, August 12, 1947; FO to Washington, August 15, 1947; Balfour to FO, August 20, 1947.
16 David Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel*, New York 1993, p. 55. The quote from Marshall's speech is from United Nations, *Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings of the General Assembly, Verbatim Record, 16 September–29 November 1947*, p. 20.
17 Radosh and Radosh, *A Safe Haven*, pp. 244–260; Wilson, *A Calculated Risk*, pp. 224–247.

Conclusion

UNSCOP has gone down in history as a committee that was swiftly persuaded to support Zionism, but that is inaccurate. Even after completing its inquiry, as it labored over its report in Geneva, the final result could have gone either way. The Arab claim that the committee was in the Zionists' pocket is baseless. When the inquiry began, the pro-Jewish and pro-Arab forces on the committee were equally divided. The same is true if the members who acted on orders from home are taken out of the equation and only the predispositions of the independent members are considered. At the start of the process, the Jews and Arabs had equal potential for tipping the committee in their direction. Likewise, the writers of the memoirs and histories of UNSCOP—who, for example, promoted the myth that the campaign fought by the Jewish immigrants on the *Exodus* was decisive—are wrong. The visit an UNSCOP delegation made to the displaced persons (DP) camps in Europe, an achievement for the Zionists, did not change the committee's profile. What, then, led UNSCOP to adopt a manifestly pro-Zionist program?

"Partition had won support because of the failure of the members, notwithstanding their efforts, to find another satisfactory solution," David Horowitz, one of the Jewish Agency liaison officers, justly wrote.[1] While that sentence has been overwhelmed by all the superlatives used to portray the ostensibly enormous impact of the members of the committee, it can serve as the starting point for a more precise portrayal of UNSCOP. Zionist diplomacy succeeded because, before anything else, it offered a clear and pragmatic solution in opposition to the claim of the Arabs that they should get all of Palestine. From a relatively early stage, in fact, both the Arabs and the Jews were playing tug of war. The British did their best to make it look as if they had ordered a true outside inquiry, a view adopted with ease by the members of the committee. They also straightforwardly came to realize that the British Mandate had to come to an end. At the end of the inquiry conducted in Palestine, nearly all of UNSCOP's members were in agreement on a number of things. They had all been hugely impressed by the Zionist enterprise and believed that the Yishuv could manage its own affairs. They also saw that the tensions between Jews and Arabs were severe and dangerous, and that the latter refused any compromise of any kind.

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The first stage of deliberations in Geneva came to a quick conclusion. Having agreed that Britain had to leave, the members concurred that the best solution would be one that offered a compromise between Jewish and Arab aspirations. This took the Arabs out of the game because they were unwilling to compromise. The committee thus grappled only with the aspirations of the Jews.

The problem was the borders. An absolute majority of the committee's members agreed that the Jews should be given a state with borders reflecting the demographic situation at that time. The British indicated indirectly that this was a reasonable principle. As such a Jewish state would be small, only a fraction of Palestine's total area, the Arabs would get the rest, a large state of their own, in which most of them would live. But the Arabs refused to accept this arrangement. The members of UNSCOP feared, correctly, that they were liable to find themselves offering a solution that would be roundly rejected by both sides.

The Arabs thus actually impelled the committee to move closer to the Jews, who demanded a state large enough for all their brethren around the world, but most immediately the Jews in the European DP camps. UNSCOP's members had no interest in a state for all the world's Jews, and while they were moved by the plight of the Jewish refugees, it did not persuade them to accede to the Zionist demand. Most of the members did, however, acknowledge a connection between the DP issue and the Palestine question. Indeed, they had believed this even before some of them went to visit the DP camps, which reinforced this impression. Even so, the committee preferred—as its report stated—that it would be better for the world's other countries to make an effort to take in the refugees, rather than to permit them all to go to Palestine.

Yet the differences of opinion on the committee remained significant and seemingly unamenable to reaching a consensus. Even among the advocates of partition there were diametrically opposed opinions about immigration, the size of the Jewish state, and whether the economies of the Jewish and Arab states should be linked. The committee found itself in a rut and could not extricate itself. But, in the end, a group of seven members came together to support a partition plan that offered a Jewish state of a size that resembled what the Zionists were demanding. The Swedes led the move toward this solution. The committee's chairman, Emil Sandström, made the Jewish consent to the program its anchor, not because he was pro-Zionist, but because he believed that, under the circumstances, it was the most practical resolution of the Palestine question. His Swedish alternate, Paul Mohn, sketched out borders granting a Jewish state large enough to take in the Jews of Europe, but he, like most of the other members who endorsed the map he drew, did so not only because he wanted to solve the DP problem, but also because it was the only way to be sure that it would be accepted by the Zionists. Ivan Rand of Canada added the element of an economic union, creating a package that the members who believed that the proposal was too generous to the Zionists could endorse, lacking an alternative. The committee wanted a program with

the best possible chances of succeeding. It was the Jews who offered such a plan, while the Arabs simply continued to demonstrate, through their refusal to engage the committee, that all the other options were hopeless.

Many studies have addressed the question of to what extent the Holocaust and its aftermath led to the creation of the state of Israel.[2] Some claim that there is a causal connection mediated by the guilt felt by the world's nations, which prompted them to support the establishment of a Jewish state as compensation for the people's suffering. Others point to the DP crisis, which seemed to have no other solution than the establishment of a Jewish state.[3] Other scholars think that there is only a weak connection between the two and, in fact, that the Holocaust made it less likely that a Jewish state would be established.[4]

This study of UNSCOP shows that guilt feelings played almost no role in the creation of Israel. The Holocaust almost never came up in the committee's deliberations, and never as a justification for compensating the Jews with a state. The committee's members focused on the political context, and quite deliberately sought to stay away from the moral aspects of the Palestine question. The *Exodus* affair, which in Zionist mythology is what tipped the scales for the Jews, indeed moved the members of the committee. But it seems unlikely that it caused any of them to change their view of the issue as a whole. As for the place of the DPs in the issue, the answer is complex. The British were being pressured by the USA to allow large numbers of Jewish refugees into Palestine. But they did not want to harm their relations with the Arab world, and thus pursued a pro-Arab policy in Palestine. That included severe limits on Jewish immigration so as not to cause unrest among the Arabs in Palestine and throughout the Middle East. Their solution was to refer the question to the UN, which led to UNSCOP's establishment. In fact, the question needs to be divided into two—did the need to find a solution for the Jewish refugees in Europe affect the decision, in principle, to establish a Jewish state? And did it impel the committee's members to grant that state more territory, so that it would be able to take in at least some of the refugees? The record shows that the members viewed the Jewish community in Palestine, the Yishuv, as an independent unit. They granted recognition and sovereignty to what the Yishuv had achieved up to that point without regard to the DP issue. The Zionists, however, insisted that the DPs should be a factor in determining the boundaries of the state. In other words, while the DPs were not a factor in the decision to establish a Jewish state, it was allotted considerably more territory than it would otherwise have gotten because it would need to take many of them in.

Walid Khalidi, a Palestinian Arab historian, maintains that UNSCOP's decision was "entirely Zionist," putting in a nutshell the claim against the committee that the Arabs have made from the time the report was issued to the present day.[5] But the conclusions reached by UNSCOP indicate otherwise. During its brief engagement with the issue, the committee found itself addressing, time and again, the only solution that seemed realistic and

coherent—partition. The British refrained from recommending a solution, and even the members of UNSCOP who had not come into the committee with an interest in pushing out the British became convinced that the Mandate could not continue. The Arabs adhered to demands that UNSCOP's members, even the most pro-Arab of them, simply could not accept. In light of my account of UNSCOP's inability to reach a consensus until literally the final moments of its work, the Arabs' shortsightedness stands out all the more starkly in its tragedy. Under the circumstances, the members had no choice but to focus on the clear part of the picture—the Jews.

In August 1947, UNSCOP's eleven members found themselves in Geneva, and in a dilemma. They were charged with the task of resolving one of the most important international issues of the day, but the great powers ignored it and made every effort not to reveal their positions on the issue. The committee itself was divided and wracked by doubts, but wanted to perform its job and reach a decision. Two alternatives were placed before the wavering members. In general, one was pro-Arab and the second pro-Zionist. But the pro-Arab alternative one was rejected by the Arabs themselves (who had previously spurned proposals even more favorable to them), not to mention the Jews, to the point that there seemed no point in proposing it. This in and of itself gave the other proposal a clear advantage. The members tried to mitigate its drawbacks for the Arabs in three ways: by attaching the Arab parts of Palestine to Transjordan, by guaranteeing their economic viability by means of including an economic union in the partition play, or by offering the General Assembly a minority plan that could be chosen instead of partition. In fact, some of the members who supported the majority plan did not believe that the Palestinian Arab state proposed by the plan would indeed come into being, as it seemed clear that the Arabs would not cooperate with the UN to carry out the program. On paper, the majority report was a plan to partition Palestine into two states, but in practice it was a program for establishing a Jewish state.

Another problem with the partition plan was the Arab declarations that they would respond violently, which would interfere with its implementation. If there was any real logic behind their approach, it was based on the presumption that UNSCOP could be deterred from endorsing a partition plan if it knew that doing so would plunge the country into war. But that was a gross miscalculation. The members of the committee did not believe the Arab threats. Their impression from their contacts with the Arab public was that it and its leaders were divided. They were well aware of the rift between the mufti, Hajj Amīn al-Ḥussaynī, and the Arab states, who were divided over whether they should boycott the committee. They received mixed messages from King Abdullah of Transjordan and from different Lebanese groups. They were aghast at the political ineptitude of the Arabs, who did not provide the committee with even the hint of a program that they could support and which could serve as an alternative to partition. Yet neither did the Arabs manage to convince the committee that they meant what they said. UNSCOP

was not persuaded that the Arab states, which had been unable to come together to testify to the committee, would unite in war. While the members realized that violent clashes between Jews and Arabs were likely to break out when the report was released, they believed that they would remain on a local level, and that a regional war was unlikely.[6]

A working paper produced by the UNSCOP staff, which tried to compare the likely violent reaction to partition to the violent reaction to a UN decision to establish a trusteeship concluded with the statement that "predicting the future on this matter is very difficult, if not impossible."[7] Furthermore, as this was the UN's first real test case, UNSCOP was within its rights to hope that the international organization would provide real assistance in implementing the program during the transition period. Indeed, had such assistance been provided, it might have dampened the violence and given the program a better chance of succeeding.

Some historians have attacked the majority report. They have described it as unrealistic (in particular the economic union provision, which required Jewish-Arab cooperation). Others have pointed to the partition map, which laid out long and convoluted borders and two states that each consisted of three territorial units that touched each other only at one geometric point, as inviting the war that indeed came in its wake.[8] Mohn, the man who drew the borders, responded to this in his diary: "I tried to combine two incompatible ideas—hope for Jewish-Arab cooperation and fear of Jewish-Arab hostility. If both sides had wanted to live in peace, it could have been realized in my partition plan. If they had wanted to separate and turn their backs on each other, that was also a theoretical possibility. If they wanted war, it didn't matter how the border was drawn."[9] UNSCOP's majority report punted the ball into a field where the British were no longer playing, and dictated to both Arabs and Jews new rules of the game. Given the doubts about whether the rules would be accepted, the plan was built on two levels. One was detailed, proposing Jewish-Arab cooperation and offering an idealistic vision of the best possible arrangement. The second faced up to the lack of Arab cooperation, and took a clear direction that became the plan's anchor—the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Notes

1 Horowitz, *State in the Making*, p. 190.
2 A survey of the subject can be found in Dan Michman, "Mi-Sho'ah le-Tekumah! Mi-Sho'ah le-Tekumah? Ha-Historiografiyah shel ha-Kesher ha-Sibati bein ha-Sho'ah le-Hakamat Medinat Yisra'el—Bein Mitos le-Mitziyut," *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisra'el* 10 (2000), pp. 234–258.
3 Ibid., pp. 236–243.
4 According to this argument, the Holocaust nearly thwarted the establishment of Israel because it largely annihilated the Jews of Eastern Europe, who were the vital pool of immigration to Palestine and thus to the establishment of a state.

See Michman, "Mi-Sho'ah le-Tekumah," pp. 247–248; Yoav Gelber, "Memory, Historiography, and Comprehension: The Zionist Movement, Israel, and the Impact of the Holocaust," in Roni Stauber, Aviva Halamish, and Esther Webman, eds., *Holocaust and Antisemitism: Research and Public Discourse: Essays Presented in Honor of Dina Porat*, Tel Aviv: 2015, pp. 140–142.

5 Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest*, Beirut: 1971, p. xix.

6 NA RG 84 Box 57, "Memorandum of Conversation: Justice Sandström–Mr. Gordon Knox," September 26, 1947.

7 UNA S-504-9, undated and untitled working paper.

8 Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, p. 471; Kaplan, *Canadian Maverick*, pp. 245, 248.

9 Mohn, *Krumulur*, p. 264.

Epilogue

UNSCOP's work was put to the test when its recommendations came before the second regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, then once more during the attempt to implement the partition plan and the war that broke out as a result. In fact, the first chapter of the UN's involvement in the Israel-Arab conflict, which began at the special General Assembly session in the spring of 1947, ended only in 1949, when the state of Israel was received as a full member of the UN, within the borders determined by the armistice agreements that officially ended the war. UNSCOP's program played a central and decisive role in the General Assembly's deliberations, and was frequently referenced during the UN's attempts to mediate during the war. Furthermore, the UN called time and again on some of UNSCOP's members and staff to address the Palestine question.[1]

UNSCOP's majority recommendations were a sweeping success—the General Assembly adopted them at the end of its session. Consideration of the report was assigned, at the start of the session, to a special ad hoc committee that commenced its work on September 25. At the opening of the debate, the Jewish Agency declared its unqualified support for the majority plan, while the Arab Higher Committee announced that it rejected the report categorically and would not accept any solution other than the establishment of a single Arab state in Palestine. Britain affirmed that it was determined to end the Mandate and withdraw from Palestine at the earliest possible date, on the grounds that it would not impose a settlement that was not acceptable to all the parties. After a brief delay, the two superpowers also made their positions public. The Americans lent their support to the majority plan on October 11, and two days later the Soviets did the same. The fact that the two superpowers stood on the same side of the partition plan (rather than on opposite sides, which was generally the case with international policy during the Cold War) filled many with hope that a solution to the Palestine problem had been found.

The ad hoc committee split into three subcommittees. The first addressed the details of the majority recommendations, the second with the minority recommendations, and the third sought a compromise between them. The second of these subcommittees, made up entirely of delegates from Arab or

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Muslim countries, finished its work first. Its members rejected the minority report and demanded a single Arab state in all of Palestine. It turned the minority report into a dead letter. Unsurprisingly, the third subcommittee's efforts to find a compromise between the two programs also led nowhere.

The first subcommittee started its work from a much more promising point. UNSCOP's majority recommendations were the basis for the deliberations, which gave them redoubled importance. It had a heterogeneous membership; furthermore, its authority was augmented by the inclusion of the USA and USSR, whose support for the majority recommendations had brought the support of other countries in their wake. At the heart of the deliberations were the arrangements for the transition period and the implementation of the partition plan. UNSCOP had deliberately left these vague, holding to the vain hope that the British would assume the task. But once the British let it be known that they would evacuate Palestine without waiting to see what the ultimate outcome would be, those hopes were dashed and implementation became the plan's major defect. The Americans also refused to send troops to Palestine, and opposed the Soviet Union's proposal to transfer responsibility for implementation to the Security Council, which would give the USSR, one of that body's five permanent members wielding veto power, a foothold in Palestine. In the end a compromise acceptable to both the USA and the Soviet Union was reached, but it provided only a weak response to the implementation issue. The decision was that, for the purposes of implementing the UNSCOP plan, the UN would establish a special committee composed of five nations, none of them great powers and none directly connected to the Palestine issue. This committee would coordinate the British evacuation and would take responsibility for administering the transition period that would follow. Proposals to form an international military force were not accepted. In the face of the Arabs' bellicose declarations, this was tantamount to evasion of any real effort to put the UNSCOP plan into practice. It was bad news for anyone who had hoped that imposing the plan from the start would lead to its implementation in full following a brief cooling-off period.

A second important issue that the subcommittee discussed at length was the partition borders. It made a few changes in UNSCOP's map. Most of the initiative on the border issue came from the Americans, who were alarmed at the size of the territory allotted to the Jewish state and sought a more balanced division between the two peoples. The American approach, backed by the British, was to remove the Negev (especially its southern part) from the Jewish state. They argued that this area would constitute a Jewish wedge between Egypt and Transjordan, and that it should thus be given to the Arabs. The Zionists fought the proposal and successfully lobbied President Truman to order his diplomats to leave the southern Negev in the Jewish state. In the end, following the revisions, the Jewish state lost some 772 square miles to the Arab state. It was still larger than the Arab state, but the ratio changed from 62:38 to 55:45. The principal change came in the Negev, where the Arab state received a large strip of territory along the Egyptian border, as well as the city

of Bir Seb'a (Be'er Sheva) and its environs. Jaffa was also removed from the Jewish state and made into an Arab enclave. The subcommittee also discussed UNSCOP's proposal for an economic union and for internationalization of Jerusalem, and left both these as they were, despite the British announcement that they would not cooperate with the implementation of the plan, and the UN decision not to send an effective military force to replace the British, it became more likely that in any case the fate of the partition plan would be decided on the battlefield.

UNSCOP's recommendations, as revised, were brought before the General Assembly for final approval on November 29, and were approved by a vote of thirty-three in favor, as opposed to thirteen against and ten abstentions. The necessary two-thirds majority was barely achieved, but it was nevertheless a magnificent victory for the Zionists and for UNSCOP's majority. The message was clear: the world valued and appreciated UNSCOP's work.

Now the gaze turned from New York to Palestine, where, the very next day, the Palestinian Arabs commenced their violent campaign against the decision. The Jewish Agency announced that it accepted the plan in full, including the territorial compromises it required. They responded to the Arab offensive with defensive measures, pursuing this strategy until April 1948. The focus was defending areas of Jewish settlement, including settlements that lay in territory assigned to the Arab state.

The events in Palestine accelerated the UN's establishment of the implementation committee that had been decided on by the General Assembly. The five countries assigned to the task were Denmark, Panama, Bolivia, the Philippines, and Czechoslovakia, a disappointing make-up because of these countries' inferior status at the UN. Nevertheless, the knowledge acquired by UNSCOP was useful for this new panel. Czechoslovakia's representative was Karel Lisicky, an UNSCOP veteran who was appointed to serve as the committee's chairman. The staff of the committee, officially named the United Nations Palestine Commission, consisted entirely of the same UN personnel who had served UNSCOP. It was led by Ralph Bunche, aided by Constantin Stravopoulos, John Reedman, and Henri Vigier, as well as Paul Mohn, who had been Sweden's alternate member of UNSCOP. He had been recruited for the UN staff during the General Assembly session because of the considerable expertise on Palestine he had gained in his work for the committee.[2]

The committee did not do much. The war in Palestine escalated inexorably, and the British placed obstacles in the way of advancing the UN plan. They announced that their Palestine Mandate would end on May 15, 1948, and that the Palestine Commission would not be allowed to enter the country until a short time before the end of the Mandate. To address the situation, the commission's staff set up a work team that advised the commission how to implement partition under the prevailing circumstances. In light of the British refusal to cooperate, Arab aggression, and the lack of a military contingent that could enforce its activity, the experts maintained that, given all these developments, no Arab state would be established, and the commission's



Map E.1 The Partition Resolution of the UN General Assembly, November 29, 1947.

work would focus on guaranteeing the survival of the Jewish state. This staff work, completed at the beginning of January 1948, recommended reverting responsibility for the territory designated for an Arab state to the UN, quickly establishing the provisional government of the Jewish state, and supporting the Haganah, including its elite fighting force, the Palmach, which were to be equipped by the UN.[3] A bit more than a month after the General Assembly vote, the partition plan, or what remained of it, had been reduced from the establishment of two states in an economic union to only a Jewish state that would have to fight for its survival. These guidelines were largely consistent with what Sandström had expected. He had doubted the viability of the Palestinian Arab state and the apparatus of economic unity, and was inclined to trust to Jewish power to carry out the establishment of the Jewish state.

At the end of February, the Palestine Commission called on the Security Council to organize a military force to send to the country. It warned that, without a military force, partition would not be implemented, and bloodshed would increase. But nothing happened. The UN made fateful decisions on international issues, but was not capable of sending even a single soldier to carry out its decisions. A small detachment of members of the Palestine Commission's staff was sent to Palestine at the beginning of March as an advance team for the implementation of the partition decision, but it was unable to do anything significant.

The UN's helplessness set off a process that determined the course of events. Opponents of partition among American decision makers argued that their direst predictions were coming true and that the implementation of the partition plan had to be halted immediately. On March 19, the United States told the Security Council that, as it was impossible to carry out the partition plan peacefully, a temporary trusteeship should be established in Palestine. The Zionist leadership responded by declaring that the Yishuv would continue to implement the partition plan on its own. The hopes that the Zionists had placed in the UN were replaced now by a tendency to dismiss the importance of what happened in the UN and its ability to shape the situation in Palestine. In keeping with this, the Zionist offensive that began in April did not take into account the partition borders and extended beyond the territory designated for the Jewish state.

A special session of the UN General Assembly convened on April 15, 1948 to discuss the American proposal. But the Americans were unable to move it forward. The Zionists continued to advance toward partition. They established a provisional government that, on May 14, declared the foundation of the state of Israel "on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly." The British evacuated, and the Arab states carried out their threat. Their armies invaded Palestine with the declared aim of eliminating the young state. Hopes that the evils bursting out of the Pandora's box opened by the General Assembly decision of November 29 could be contained within the local theater were dashed. A full-scale war broke out. The UN adapted itself to the new situation. The Palestine Commission was

disbanded, and instead Folke Bernadotte, a Swedish nobleman and diplomat, was appointed to mediate the crisis. Bernadotte was instructed to bring about a peaceful resolution of the situation in Palestine. He was not well-versed in the issue, but Bunche, Reedman, Stavropoulos, Mohn, and Vigier were meant to cover for him. In addition to relying on these figures from UNSCOP, Bernadotte, before setting out on his mission, met with Sandström, who served as his deputy in the Swedish Red Cross. Sandström told Bernadotte that partition was "still the only solution," but that the Arab state and the economic union included in the UNSCOP plan were not realistic. With the Jewish state now an established fact, Sandström advised, the territory designated for the Arabs should be attached to Transjordan.[4]

The divide and annex version of partition, namely the establishment of a Jewish state and the attachment of the Arab areas of Palestine to Transjordan, took a large step toward realization with the invasion of the Arab armies. King Abdullah's Arab Legion seized the Samarian and Judean highlands and East Jerusalem, including the Old City. Abdullah knew very well that the British had always preferred the annexation of these territories to Transjordan, a fact of which Bernadotte was well aware. The Swedish mediator succeeded in imposing a ceasefire on June 11, and on June 28 he submitted a political program to resolve the crisis. This so-called First Bernadotte Plan reduced the size of the Jewish state that the General Assembly had decided on, limiting it to the Galilee and a narrow coastal strip. The Negev would be given to Abdullah, as well as the city of Jerusalem. The plan took the idea of an independent Arab state off the table, attaching all of Palestine not included in the Jewish state to Transjordan. There was an echo of the economic union plan in Bernadotte's recommendation that the Jewish state and Abdullah's kingdom should join in a loose confederation.

This plan for all intents and purposes replaced the UNSCOP partition plan. Bunche and the other UNSCOP veterans prepared this hybrid proposal for Bernadotte. They were inclined to believe that the Zionists would work with Abdullah, and that the arrangement they proposed would be helpful for Palestine's Arabs. It was a combination of the two contradictory approaches that lay behind the UNSCOP plan—annexation to Transjordan and economic union.[5] But the map it offered was a different animal and reflected the American and British interest in denying the Negev to the Jewish state. The Arabs rejected the proposal, and Israel was alarmed by it. The revocation of the General Assembly's partition plan, the redivision of the territory, and the transfer of Jerusalem to the Arabs was a slap in the face for them, bringing the Zionist crisis of confidence with the UN to its high point. Fighting resumed on July 9, leading to ten days of battle that ended with another ceasefire imposed on the belligerents.

Bernadotte's second plan was issued only after he was murdered by Lehi assassins in Jerusalem on September 17. It included some revisions in reaction to the criticism of his first plan, most notably discarding the confederation element, which would have imposed economic unity, and returning to the

principle of internationalizing Jerusalem. No changes were made, however, to the borders of the Jewish state as set out in his first plan. This new version was based on full separation and the annexation of the Arab territories to Transjordan.

The Third UN General Assembly, which convened in Paris in September 1948, discussed the Bernadotte plan. Yet, even though the British and Americans had been involved in drawing it up and at first asked that it be adopted, the deliberations reached a dead end. After hostilities resumed once more, the Security Council resolved, on November 16, 1948, to require the two sides to reach armistices on all fronts. Bunche, who replaced Bernadotte and received his powers, led the armistice talks together with the staff he had worked with since UNSCOP. He was able to end the war in stages. The first armistice agreement was signed by Israel and Egypt in February 1949. It was followed by agreements between Israel and Lebanon and Jordan; finally, in July 1949, Israel and Syria reached an agreement. Unlike Bernadotte, Bunche and the other UNSCOP veterans had no interest in carrying out new plans, and the armistice lines—called the Green Lines—largely reflected the position of the opposing forces when fighting stopped. It was after their work with UNSCOP that they learned that the UN had no teeth when it came to Palestine, and that complex plans that were not firmly anchored in the facts on the ground would never get implemented. The UN recognized the new boundaries. In the wake of the armistice agreements, the country's territory was some 2,700 square miles larger than what it had been allotted in the partition plan. That included the western Galilee, and the section of the Negev that the General Assembly had designated for the Arab state, and other areas. The Samarian and Judean highlands and the Jordan Valley to their east were annexed by Transjordan and from then on were known as the West Bank. A salient stretching from the city of Gaza southwest to the Egyptian border was occupied by Egypt. Jerusalem was split between Jordan and Israel.

The Jewish state was the only part of UNSCOP's plan to emerge from the war. There was no Arab state; Jerusalem was divided rather than international; the partition was absolute, without any economic union. In fact, the final result was quite similar to the pessimistic but realistic assessment of Emil Sandström, UNSCOP's chairman. He had also been correct when he suggested that the Jews were the only actor who could put partition into practice, even in a catastrophic situation, which is in fact what happened. The plan's most fundamental provision, the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, became a reality in a process that escaped the UN's control, as the result of a bloody war. The UN in fact continued to promote the internationalization of Jerusalem; the General Assembly passed a resolution calling for it in December 1949. But Israel and Jordan both opposed the initiative and held on to their parts of the city. Neither was a solution found for the Palestinian refugee crisis created by the war, nor were the armistice borders, or any other agreed-on set of borders, accepted as permanent between Israel and its neighbors, who refused to sign peace treaties. Ultimately, UNSCOP

could not do anything about the root causes of the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, but it played a decisive role in the establishment of the state of Israel.

Notes

1 This survey is based on the following sources: Yoav Gelber, *Komemiyut ve-Nakba: Yisra'el, ha-Falastinim, ve-Medinot 'Arav, 1948*, Or Yehuda: 2004; Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*, New Haven, CT: 2008; David Tal, *War in Palestine, 1948: Strategy and Diplomacy*, London: 2003; Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche*.
2 Elad Ben-Dror, "How the United Nations Intended to Implement the Partition Plan: The Handbook Drawn up by the Secretariat for the Members of the United Nations Palestine Commission," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43:6 (2007), p. 999.
3 Ibid.
4 Amitzur Ilan, *Bernadotte in Palestine*, Oxford: 1989, p. 60.
5 Ben-Dror, *Ralph Bunche*, pp. 65–75.

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ANA — Australian National Archives, Canberra
CZA — Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem
ESA — Emil Sandström Archives, Stockholm
HHA — Haganah Historical Archives, Tel Aviv
ISA — Israel State Archives, Jerusalem
MEC — St. Antony's College, Middle East Centre, Oxford
MFCZ — Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Prague
NA — US National Archives, Washington DC
NAC — National Archives of Canada, Ottawa
NAI — National Archives of India, New Delhi
NNA — Netherlands National Archive, The Hague
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