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# **The United Nations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict.**

How did the UN's Involvement Influence the Course of the Arab-Israeli  
Conflict (1947-49)?

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## **Abstract**

The Arab-Israeli conflict has engaged the peace efforts of the United Nations from the onset of the organization's foundation. The Palestinian conflict was the first significant international problem to be tackled by the UN. Although its primary objective—securing peaceful relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine—has not been achieved, the UN has still proved to be an influential factor in the development of the dispute. On several occasions, it has successfully fostered the cessation of hostilities between the opposing parties. This research chronicles the conditions which led to the first Arab-Israeli war examines how the UN's envoys to the area influenced the advance of the conflict. The study also analyzes the UN's involvement from the perspective of the US and the UK, as it would be unreasonable to isolate the impact of the two major players in the UN Security Council. On the basis of the observations made of the first 3 years of the UN's engagement in Palestine, this thesis argues that the organization's involvement did not cause the first Arab-Israeli war; it only accelerated its emergence.

**Keywords:** UN; First Arab-Israeli war; US-Israel relations; peacemaking; refugee question

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## Introduction

The Arab-Israeli conflict has engaged the peace efforts of the United Nations from the onset of the organization's foundation.<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian conflict was the first significant international problem to be tackled by the UN.<sup>2</sup> Although its primary objective—securing peaceful relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine—has not been achieved, the UN has still proved to be an influential factor in the development of the dispute. On several occasions, it has successfully fostered the cessation of hostilities between the opposing parties.<sup>3</sup>

The series of difficulties that Great Britain encountered during the 1940s (economic crisis, pressure from the US, and the violent attacks) led the UK to the decision to withdraw from its mandate over Palestine and submit the Palestinian issue to the UN.<sup>4</sup> Thus, from February 1947 the recently established organization found itself burdened with the intricate matter of resolving the future of Palestine.<sup>5</sup> The British announcement of the termination of the mandate was followed by an increase in the Zionist attacks as well as a rise in the illegal immigration into Palestine.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, the situation in Palestine deteriorated

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 298

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, T. (1980). *The Middle East, 1914-1979* (Documents of Modern History). London: Edward Arnold.

<sup>3</sup> See: Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101; Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 299

<sup>4</sup> British Government, *The Political History of Palestine*, 40; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 11-12.; For a further overview of the historiographical debate on the reasons for the British withdrawal see: Morris, B. (2008). *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 38; Cohen, M. (2014). *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-48*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 442-58.

<sup>5</sup> Pappé, I., Historicus., (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 16

<sup>6</sup> Cohen, M. (2014). *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-48*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 461-82

and Britain requested a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the issue.<sup>7</sup> In May 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was established with the aim to examine alternatives for the future of Palestine.<sup>8</sup> The UNSCOP report recommended the partition of Palestine (into an Arab and a Jewish state) as the most plausible solution to the problem.<sup>9</sup> Based on the conclusions of the Committee, the UN adopted Resolution 181 (29 November 1947), which provided for the partition of Palestine.<sup>10</sup> Then, the end of the British mandate, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the beginning of the First Arab-Israeli war in May 1948 followed.

With the objective to secure the peace in Palestine, the UN appointed Count Folke Bernadotte as a mediator in the conflict.<sup>11</sup> Throughout his mediation term, Bernadotte submitted two proposals to the UN. His recommendations did not win the endorsement of the belligerent parties, which later led to his assassination.<sup>12</sup> The historiographical review of the literature on the dispute reveals that most of the authors regard to Bernadotte's mediation efforts as a total failure.<sup>13</sup> The most common argument for the Count's inefficacy is the lack of a joint US-UK policy towards Palestine, which did not produce support for the Bernadotte's plan.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, scholars like Pappé and Ilan note the mediator's

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<sup>7</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 38-40.; Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 17

<sup>8</sup>Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 33.

<sup>9</sup> Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 181 (II), 29 November 1948

<sup>11</sup> Berger, E. (1993). *Peace for Palestine : First Lost Opportunity*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida. 6-7; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 264; Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 136

<sup>12</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 515; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 19-20; Gazit, M. (2001). *Israeli Diplomacy and the Middle East Peace Process*. London: Frank Cass.9

<sup>13</sup> See: Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.; Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534.;

<sup>14</sup> Di Mauro, D. (2012). *The UN and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : American Hegemony and UN Intervention since 1947*. Abingdon etc.: Routledge. 194; Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press.

contribution to the agreement of two truces in the Arab-Israeli fighting.<sup>15</sup> While acknowledging Bernadotte's merits for the cease-fire, Touval also assesses Bernadotte's term as a failure.<sup>16</sup> Despite the criticism of Bernadotte, most historians recognize that his mediation efforts had a significant effect on the evolution of the conflict.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout his mediation term, Bernadotte's was advised by Ralph Bunche, a member of the UNSCOP. After the conclusion of the UNSCOP's responsibilities, Bunche was appointed a senior aide to the UN mediator.<sup>18</sup> Following the Count's assassination, Bunche became the acting mediator.<sup>19</sup> Unlike Bernadotte, Ralph was more experienced in the Palestinian issue.<sup>20</sup> Bunche's greater knowledge of the specifics of the conflict was due to the fact that he had been involved in the matter ever since the Arab-Israeli dispute became part of the UN's agenda.<sup>21</sup> His diplomatic efforts in the Palestinian question began after his appointment as an advisor to UNSCOP, followed by the post of the head of the secretariat for implementing the partition plan.<sup>22</sup> Due to Bunche's penetrating mind, the situation in the region was improved, i.e the tension between the parties was temporarily

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pp.19-101. 26-7; Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 515-6.

<sup>15</sup> Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 140; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 2.

<sup>16</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 49

<sup>17</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.; Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris.; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>18</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 158

<sup>19</sup> Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 6; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 2.; Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 303

<sup>20</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 264

<sup>21</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.1

reduced.<sup>23</sup> He succeeded in bringing Arabs and Jews to the negotiating table, which resulted in the conclusion of four armistice agreements, known as the General Armistice Agreements (GAAs), which brought an end to the First Arab-Israeli war in 1949.<sup>24</sup>

This thesis aims to address the question of the role that the UN played as a neutral organization in the conflict. To this end, it focuses on the analysis of the diplomatic endeavors that the UN representatives undertook in order to reach a settlement of the Palestinian dispute. The UN's involvement is also analyzed from the perspective of the US and the UK, as it would be unreasonable to isolate the influence of the two major players in the UN Security Council. The research examines key documents, resolutions, and reports of the UN commissions, responsible for the study and resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The starting point of the thesis is the origins of the Palestinian conflict. The study concludes with the analysis of the mediation efforts that ended the first Arab-Israeli war. The thesis intends to answer the question of **how the UN involvement in Palestine (1947-49) influenced the evolution of the conflict**. Accordingly, the research raises supplementary questions such as: What was the outcome of the mediation terms of Bernadotte and Bunche? What obstructed the UN's efforts? Did the UN decisions trigger the outburst of violence and the transformation of the conflict? Were the mediation efforts of the UN the main reason for the end of the first Arab-Israeli war? If so, which diplomatic activities contributed to the alleviation of the situation in the region?

There is an abundance of published works on the Arab-Israeli conflict, its origins and evolution. The historiographic review of the literature on the conflict's origins shows

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<sup>23</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 242-256

<sup>24</sup> Eisenberg, Laura Zittrain, and Neil Caplan. 2010. *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace : Patterns, Problems, Possibilities*(version 2nd ed.). Indiana Series in Middle East Studies. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press. 16

that there are a lot of books written about Zionism and the Israeli narrative.<sup>25</sup> The publications on the Arab narrative are more limited.<sup>26</sup> In the historiography of the first Palestinian war an agreement on the development of the events lacks.<sup>27</sup> The debate on the events of 1948 is based on the mutually contradicting concepts of Jews and Arabs. While the Israeli's sources present Jews as victims and the Palestinian as conquerors, the Arab's literature condemns Israel as an oppressor.<sup>28</sup> According to the Jewish narrative, the war was one for independence, between "a Jewish David and an Arab Goliath".<sup>29</sup> Authors such as Pappé, Morris, and Shlaim challenge the Zionists' explanations of the events, making them known as "the Israeli revisionists or the new historians."<sup>30</sup> For these reasons, this study draws extensively on the works of the above-mentioned authors.

While some scholars consider that the first Arab-Israeli war was inevitable development of the situation in Palestine, others argue that it was the result of the UN partition resolution. Among the proponents of the latter are adherents of the Palestinian narrative.<sup>31</sup> Khouri acknowledges that even before occupying the UN agenda, the Palestinian conflict had reached a stage of significant entanglement.<sup>32</sup> However, he notes that by endorsing the partition, the UN exacerbated the conflict "through [its] misunderstanding of the problem's true nature" which added "new dimensions to it."<sup>33</sup> He argues that the partition resolution "merely precipitated a bloody conflict".<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kenneth W. Stein. (1991). A Historiographic Review of Literature on the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. *The American Historical Review*, 96(5), 1450-1465.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Shlaim, A. (1995). The Debate About 1948. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27(3), 287-304. 287

<sup>28</sup> Shlaim, A. (1995). The Debate About 1948. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27(3), 287-304. 287

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.288

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 88

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 88-9.

<sup>34</sup> ibid. 89, 23



The study focuses on the examination of the UN peacemaking activities and their effect on the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To this end, the main task of the study is to answer the question of how the UN's activities during 1947-1949 affected the Palestinian conflict. To conduct a thorough analysis and give an extensive answer to the research question, the thesis largely draws upon primary sources. On the examination of the UN's decisions regarding the conflict management, the thesis uses official UN documents of resolutions and reports. These documents were accessed from the official UN digital archive databases and the specialized UN Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISIPAL). The research draws special attention to the texts of the UNSCOP reports, Resolution 181, which envisaged the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish parts, and the reports of the mediation efforts of Bernadotte and Bunche. The research utilizes a number of autobiographies and memoirs of individuals directly involved in the events under review. The digital library of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series are used in the thesis, in particular, the following volumes: *The Near East and Africa* (1947) and *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa* (1948; 1949). Due to restricted access, the study encounters difficulties with the access to primary sources from the Jewish and Arab archives. Therefore, to analyze the reactions of the belligerent parties, induced by the UN's peace efforts, the study uses secondary literature, based on official Israeli/Arab archives.

Even though there is a great number of publications on the Arab-Israeli conflict, only a few works focus on the UN's role in the beginning of the dispute. Most of the literature is focused on the contemporary development of the issue (the evolution of the conflict after 1950).<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the scientific relevance of this thesis contributes to the enrichment of the existing knowledge of the history of the initial stage of the dispute. Moreover, it presents the Arab-Israeli conflict in virtue of the United Nations peace efforts.

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<sup>35</sup> Kenneth W. Stein. (1991). A Historiographic Review of Literature on the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. *The American Historical Review*, 96(5), 1450-1465. 1451

## **1. The Origins of the Palestinian Conflict. First UN Steps in Peacemaking.**

The first section of this thesis addresses the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Key events and developments of the dispute, such as political Zionism and the Balfour Declaration, are examined. This part also presents briefly the events that led to the British decision to terminate its mandate over Palestine and the subsequent UK withdrawal from the politics in the region. The starting point of the UN's involvement in the conflict with the establishment of the UNSCOP is discussed here. Finally, the section gives an answer to the cause of the outburst of the first Palestinian war.

### **Historical Background - the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict**

The first wave (the first Aliya) of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to the land of Palestine dates back to the early 1880s.<sup>36</sup> The Land of Israel, which was ruled by the Jewish people for 13 centuries, was named Palestine by the Roman conquerors.<sup>37</sup> The history of the land is characterized by a series of conquests, which shaped the area as the Holy place of the Muslims, Christians, and Jews.<sup>38</sup> During the Ottoman rule over Palestine, in particular in 1881, around 450,000 Arabs inhabited the land, which constituted 90% of Palestine's population, and the Jews were 25,000.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 1; Krämer, G. (2008). *A History of Palestine : From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (G.Harman, Trans.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 106

<sup>37</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 2

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 2

## **Political Zionism**

The idea of the political Zionism can be found at the end of 19 century and the beginning of 20 century in Vienna.<sup>40</sup> Theodor Herzl, the father of modern political Zionism, was distressed by the anti-Semitism in Europe, which gave rise to his idea of an independent Jewish state as the only solution for the Jewish people.<sup>41</sup> Herzl incorporated his vision for countering anti-Semitism in his pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* ('*The Jewish State*'). His book proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to have their state and it encouraged the establishment of a Jewish state:

The Jews who wish for a State will have it. We shall at last live as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes. The world will be freed by our liberation, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness. And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare, will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity.<sup>42</sup>

This quote shows that the foundation of Herzl's Zionism lays in the interdependence between the Jewish people and the freedom of humanity in general. With this binding, Herzl most likely aimed to attract more proponents of the Zionist movement.

It is worth mentioning that *Der Judenstaat* envisaged the future Jewish state to be located either in Argentine or Palestine. While the justifications for Argentine were related to the fertile land, mild climate, and sparse population, the considerations for choosing

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<sup>40</sup> Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 5-6

<sup>41</sup> Krämer, G. (2008). *A History of Palestine : From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (G.Harman, Trans.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 107-11; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 4-5; Fraser, T. (2004). *The arab-israeli conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 6

<sup>42</sup> Herzl, T. (2006). *The Jewish State*. Filiquarian. 95

Palestine were based on a sense of ethnic affiliation -- “Palestine is our ever-memorable historic home.”<sup>43</sup>

In 1897, Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress (FZC) in Basel, Switzerland and over the following years, he chaired a number of Zionist meetings.<sup>44</sup> From Shlaim’s point of view, 1987 was the starting point of the Palestinian dispute.<sup>45</sup> Throughout every Zionist Congress, Herzl emphasized the ultimate Zionist demand for “a publicly recognized and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people”.<sup>46</sup> In his diary, the father of the modern Zionism summed up the FZC with the following sentence: “At Basel I founded the Jewish State.”<sup>47</sup> His movement paved the way for the establishment of the State of Israel, and therefore the consequent Arab-Israeli war. It cannot be evidenced to what extent Herzl’s platform contributed to the first Arab-Israeli war, but it certainly played a role in the outburst of hostilities. Even though the first Aliya dated before the rise of the political Zionism, its emergence further enhanced the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine. Thus, Jewish people from all around the world sought a home in Palestine. With the outset of the UN’s involvement in the Arab-Israeli dispute, the Partition Plan in 1947, which made possible the proclamation of the State of Israel a year later, Herzl’s aim was achieved. In other words, 50 years after Herzl’s claim in his diary that he “founded the Jewish State” at the Basel Congress, the state became reality.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 28

<sup>44</sup> Schwartzwald, J. (2012). *Nine Lives of Israel : A Nation's History Through The Lives of Its Foremost Leaders*. Jefferson: McFarland &. 15

<sup>45</sup> Shlaim, A. (1988). *Collusion Across the Jordan : King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2

<sup>46</sup> Herzl, T., Straus, N., Federation of American Zionists,, & Zionist Congress. (1917). *The Congress Addresses of Theodor Herzl*. 23

<sup>47</sup> Herzl, T. (1960). *The Complete Diaries Of Theodor Herzl* (R. Patai, Ed.; H. Zohn, Trans.). New York: Herzl Press. 581

<sup>48</sup> Schwartzwald, J. (2012). *Nine Lives of Israel : A Nation's History Through The Lives of its Foremost Leaders*. Jefferson: McFarland &. 23

### **British Contradicting Promises**

During the last stages of the First World War, Great Britain realized the prospect benefit of utilizing the British Zionists as allies. Chaim Weizmann, a Jewish chemist, made a significant contribution to the British war industry by producing explosives.<sup>49</sup> By virtue of his work for the positive evolution of the war in favor of the Allied powers, British authorities desired to express their gratitude. In his memoirs, Lloyd George, the British Minister of Munitions and later Prime Minister, wrote that he asked Weizmann what Britain could do “as a recognition of [his] valuable assistance to the country”.<sup>50</sup> Weizmann reply was: “ I would like you to do something for my people.”<sup>51</sup> Put differently, Weizmann desired the British assistance with the establishment of a Jewish state. It was his aspiration that led to the Balfour Declaration. As Lloyd George put it: “That was the fount and origin of the famous declaration about the National Home for Jews in Palestine.”<sup>52</sup>

The Balfour Declaration marked another significant development of the Zionist movement as it reflected the British support for the Jewish aspirations. Arthur Balfour, Foreign Minister of Britain, sent a letter to Lord Rothschild, a supporter of Zionism, which declared the British “sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations”.<sup>53</sup> The Declaration testified the British approval of Palestine as a Jewish home:

His Majesty’s Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish

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<sup>49</sup> Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 7

<sup>50</sup> Lloyd George, D. (1933). *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*(1st ed., Vol. 2). London: Nicholson & Watson. 586

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 586

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 586

<sup>53</sup> Balfour Declaration, 2 November 1947

communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.<sup>54</sup>

Although the declaration had been ever since utilized by the Zionists as a justification for future Jewish control in Palestine, it was not the main reason for the Arab-Israeli polemic over the area.<sup>55</sup> The controversy emanated from British promise to the Arabs in 1915. Sir Henry McMahon was the British High Commissioner to Egypt and Hussein bin Ali was the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>56</sup> During the British search for allies against the Turks, McMahon and Hussein engaged in the exchanging of a number of letters (known as the McMahon-Hussein correspondence).<sup>57</sup> The McMahon letter from 24 October 1915 is regarded by scholars as the most important piece of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence.<sup>58</sup> The letter assured the Arabs “of the sympathy of Great Britain towards the aspirations of her friends the Arabs”.<sup>59</sup> The letter also excluded “[t]he two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo” as those areas could not “be said to be purely Arab”.<sup>60</sup> According to Fraser, it was the different interpretations of the above-mentioned excerpt that later together with the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate in Palestine influenced the Arab-Israeli dispute.<sup>61</sup> Morris argues that the October letter did not envisage Palestine to be part of Arab territories, on the contrary, it was to be under the joint control

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 9

<sup>56</sup> Krämer, G. (2008). *A History of Palestine : From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (G.Harman, Trans.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 143; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 9;

<sup>57</sup> Krämer, G. (2008). *A History of Palestine : From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (G.Harman, Trans.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 143-147.

<sup>58</sup> Cohen, M., & Mazal Holocaust Collection. (1987). *The Origins And Evolution of The Arab-Zionist Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 18

<sup>59</sup> The McMahon Letter, 24 October, 1915

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004).

of Britain and France (Sykes-Picot Agreement - January 1916).<sup>62</sup> Cohen posits that the ambiguity of the letter, regarding the territory, gave impetus to the debate between Arabs and Jews.<sup>63</sup> Thus, both parties held the strong belief that Palestine was promised to them. In order of chronology, it follows that the rights over Palestine were first assured to the Arabs. The rationale behind the diametrically opposed claims of both Arabs and Jews, therefore, originated from the promises, given by Great Britain during the wartime.<sup>64</sup>

### **British Mandate over Palestine**

Later, from the onset of the British Mandate, the consequence of these promises became apparent. For its victory over the Ottoman Empire Britain obtained a mandate over Palestine by the League of Nations.<sup>65</sup> Hitler's coming to power in Germany, led to a new immigration wave of Jewish people from Europe to Palestine. Due to restrictions in the United States, the Jews seeking refuge from the European anti-Semitism headed for Palestine.<sup>66</sup> The increased Jewish population in the area induced Arab resentment, which triggered the Arab Revolt in April 1936-1939. The Arabs were dismayed that the necessary prerequisites for a Jewish state in Palestine were available.<sup>67</sup> To put an end to the revolt, the British government adopted a white paper in May 1939, which provided for the “the establishment within 10 years of an independent Palestine State”.<sup>68</sup> The paper also envisaged restrictions on the Jewish immigration.<sup>69</sup> The outcome of the policy was the

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<sup>62</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 9

<sup>63</sup> Cohen, M., & Mazal Holocaust Collection. (1987). *The Origins And Evolution of The Arab-Zionist Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 18-19

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 28

<sup>65</sup> Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 8

<sup>66</sup> Meir-Levi, D. (2007). *History Upside Down : The Roots of Palestinian Fascism and the Myth of Israeli Aggression* [1st ed.]. New York: Encounter Books. 59

<sup>67</sup> Cohen, M., & Mazal Holocaust Collection. (1987). *The Origins And Evolution of The Arab-Zionist Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 89

<sup>68</sup> British White Paper of 1939

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

radicalization of the Palestinian Jews, which resulted in insurgencies against the British authorities in Palestine.<sup>70</sup> Weizmann, in a speech in front of the Zionist Congress in 1939, expressed his disappointment with the British deviation from their previous promise.<sup>71</sup>

Another crucial event for the analysis of the Arab-Israeli dispute was the Holocaust. The great number of victims and the torture the Jewish people suffered further reinforced the need to create a Jewish sovereign territory, where to redeem from anti-Semitism.<sup>72</sup>

The tragic events associated with the Holocaust increased the American sympathy for the Jewish people.<sup>73</sup> Roosevelt declared to the Jewish community the American concern about the refugees and assured that “a Jewish national home” would be created.<sup>74</sup> After Roosevelt’s death, Harry Truman succeeded the presidential post. Truman’s position on the support for Zionism is a controversial one. While his published memoirs embed a sympathy towards the Jewish refugees, the archives suggest the opposite.<sup>75</sup> However, it was Truman who asked Britain to allow Jewish immigration to Palestine.<sup>76</sup> The impact of the Israeli-US relations on the course of the issue in Palestine is analyzed in the following sections of the study.

### **Termination of the British Mandate**

The British failure to meet the demands of both the Arabs and the Jews at the time of its mandate over Palestine as well as the series of Jewish attacks against the British

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<sup>70</sup> Cohen, M., & Mazal Holocaust Collection. (1987). *The Origins And Evolution of The Arab-Zionist Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 96

<sup>71</sup> Blumberg, H. (1975). *Weizmann, His Life and Times*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 168

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 16

<sup>73</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 23-24

<sup>74</sup> Hurewitz, J. (1976). *The Struggle for Palestine*. New York: Schocken Books. 213; Finkelstein, N. (2007). *American Jewish History* (1st ed., Jps guide) [1st ed.]. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. 140

<sup>75</sup> Cohen, M. (2014). *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 293

<sup>76</sup> Cohen, M. (1988). *Palestine to Israel : From Mandate to Independence*. London, England: F. Cass. 181



administration resulted in the UK's decision to withdraw from the region.<sup>77</sup> In this way, the young organization of the United Nations found itself burdened with the serious engagement to settle the Palestinian conflict.<sup>78</sup> Apart from having no experience in conflict management and resolution, at that time the UN still had not accomplished harmony within its own structure.<sup>79</sup> In regard to the internal dynamics of the UN, besides the United States-Soviet Union rivalry, there were also other contradictions.<sup>80</sup> For instance, the UK and the US shared different views on the partition of Palestine.<sup>81</sup>

The events which significantly encouraged the British withdrawal were the economic crisis it encountered after the end of the Second World War, the pressure from the United States and the frequent terrorist attacks against the British administration in Palestine.<sup>82</sup> After the King David Hotel attack, a conference in London was summoned (September 1946 - February 1947), under British initiative, to discuss prospects of a political settlement in the area.<sup>83</sup> The aftermath of the conference was the identification of the partition of Palestine as the best solution to the problem.<sup>84</sup> During the conference session on February 18, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Britain, Ernest Bevin, declared the final British decision to submit the mandate over Palestine to the United

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<sup>77</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 36-39; Cohen, M. (2014). *Britain's Moment in Palestine : Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-48*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 442-458

<sup>78</sup> Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 300

<sup>79</sup> Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 24-25.

<sup>80</sup> Waldman, S. (2015). *Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1948-51*(Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World). Palgrave Macmillan. 14, 38.

<sup>81</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 517; The UK envisaged a Federated State in Palestine, while the US supported partition.

<sup>82</sup> Morris, B. (2004). *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Vol. 2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 12; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 11-12.

<sup>83</sup> The Headquarters of the British Mandate authorities were placed in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. On 22 July 1946, the Hotel was bombed by a Zionist terrorist group. The attack was motivated by the Zionist perception that Britain would endanger the establishment of a Jewish state., Hugo, M. (2006). Ruins of Jerusalem's King David Hotel. In K. L. Lerner & B. W. Lerner (Eds.), *Terrorism: Essential Primary Sources* (pp. 117-119). Detroit, MI: Gale. 117

<sup>84</sup> Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 32.

Nations.<sup>85</sup> The rationale behind the British withdrawal was the “irreconcilable” nature of the conflict, which caused its inefficiency to formulate a plausible solution.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the intricate task of solving the Palestinian question was submitted to the United Nations.

### **UNSCOP. First UN Steps in the Conflict Resolution**

On 2 February 1947, Britain requested a special session of the General Assembly to deliberate over the future conflict arrangements in Palestine.<sup>87</sup> During the course of the session was raised the question of establishing an inquiry committee to examine the details of the Palestinian dispute and to propose a solution.<sup>88</sup> In May 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was established with the aim to provide alternatives to the future of Palestine.<sup>89</sup> It was decided that the members of the Committee should be impartial states that did not pursue their own interests in the region. Therefore, the UNSCOP was formed by delegates from the following states: Uruguay, Guatemala, India, Australia, Yugoslavia, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Peru, Sweden, Iran, and Canada.<sup>90</sup> After the conclusion of its investigation in Palestine, the special committee had to submit a report including recommendations for resolution of the conflict to the General Assembly by 1 September 1947.<sup>91</sup> Right from the arrival of the UNSCOP delegation in

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<sup>85</sup>Cohen, M. (2014). *Britain's Moment in Palestine : Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-48*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 457; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 37; Palestine Conference (Government Policy), 18 February 1947. ; Krämer, G. (2008). *A History of Palestine : From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (G.Harman, Trans.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 305.

<sup>86</sup> Palestine Conference (Government Policy), 18 February 1947.

<sup>87</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 12.

<sup>88</sup> Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 25

<sup>89</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 40; Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,33

<sup>90</sup> The United Nations. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its first special session from 28 April to 15 May 1947, IV Resolution adopted on the reports of the first committee, 106 (S-1). Special Committee on Palestine. p.6

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.. 7

Jerusalem in June 1947, the British authorities obstructed the efficiency of the committee's work by refusing to cooperate with it.<sup>92</sup>

Another event that complicated the investigation of the commission was the boycott of the Arabs. The Higher Arab Committee had declared its determination to sabotage the UNSCOP even prior to the commission's appointment.<sup>93</sup> The Arab Committee showed great determination to uphold its demands, based on the claim that the territory of Palestine was rightfully property of the Arabs. Even though the representatives of the UNSCOP tried to persuade the Arabs to cooperate, their efforts bore no fruit.<sup>94</sup> The main mistake of the persistence of the Higher Arab Committee was that its members did not realize the negative implications of their non-cooperation -- in their desire to achieve their goals, in fact, they only benefited the Jews.<sup>95</sup> By refusing to communicate their claims to the UNSCOP, the Arabs themselves impeded the achievement of the desired future for Palestine.

In contrast, the Jewish leaders, with the main goal to assure the endorsement of the partition proposal, demonstrated their eagerness to assist with the Commission's work.<sup>96</sup> As they recognized the significance of the UNSCOP proposals—unlike the Arab side—the Jewish authorities delegated Abba Eban and David Horowitz as liaison officers with the

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<sup>92</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 15; Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 25

<sup>93</sup>Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 160; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 15-16

<sup>94</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 16

<sup>95</sup> Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 34; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 16-7.

<sup>96</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 41; Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 34

Commission.<sup>97</sup> In that way, the Jews aspired to secure a significant advantage of the Arabs' boycott by expressing their willingness to collaborate with the representatives of the UNSCOP.<sup>98</sup> In the historiography of this stage of the UN's involvement in Palestine it is commonly agreed that before the onset of the first Arab-Israeli war, in particular before the Israeli military advances, the Arabs were not fond of the UN's presence, unlike their antagonists who tried to benefit from cooperating with the organization.<sup>99</sup> However, after the first Bernadotte plan, the positions of both Arabs and Jews reversed, i.e. Israel distrusted the UN, while the Arabs endorsed its involvement.<sup>100</sup>

The UNSCOP's activities involved tours around the regions in Palestine as well as public hearings of the claims of Jewish/Arabs sides.<sup>101</sup> The committee embarked on a journey around all parts of Palestine. In the Arab parts of the region, the Commission visited schools, hospitals, and other institutions.<sup>102</sup> On the basis of the investigation of the Arab parts, the UNSCOP concluded that the opportunities for the future of Palestine as a unity between Arabs and Jewish people were quite low.<sup>103</sup> The poor living conditions in the Arab parts disturbed the commission representatives the most.<sup>104</sup> In contrast to the UNSCOP's tour in the Arab Palestine, the visit in the Jewish parts was cordially welcomed.

<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, the living conditions and the industrial development of the Israeli parts of

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<sup>97</sup> Sofer, S., & Shefer-Vanson, D. (1998). *Zionism and the Foundations of Israeli Diplomacy*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. 50-1; Horowitz, D., & Meltzer, J. (1953). *State in the Making*. New York: Knopf. 158; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 41-42; Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004). 34;

<sup>98</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 16-17

<sup>99</sup> Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 87-8, 27-8

<sup>100</sup> Pelcovits, N. (1993). *The Long Armistice : UN Peacekeeping and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1960*. Boulder: Westview Press. 11-22;

<sup>101</sup> Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 167-8;

<sup>102</sup> Horowitz, D., & Meltzer, J. (1953). *State in the Making*. New York: Knopf. 17.; Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 168.

<sup>103</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 144-45

<sup>104</sup> Horowitz, D., & Meltzer, J. (1953). *State in the Making*. New York: Knopf. 169

<sup>105</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 42; Horowitz, D., & Meltzer, J. (1953). *State in the Making*. New York: Knopf. 170, 171

Palestine were satisfactory.<sup>106</sup> The commission members were impressed by the medical and educational Jewish institutions.<sup>107</sup> During the hearing of the Jewish claims, the main narratives were the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, accusations of the unjust treatment by the British mandate, and the desire to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>108</sup>

As a result of the efforts of Ralph Bunche, a member of UNSCOP then, an informal communication channel was established between him and representatives of the Arab community.<sup>109</sup> Through Bunche, the committee gained certain knowledge of the positions the Arabs. However, the statements by the Arab society did not present new perspectives to the UNSCOP's efforts to formulate a plausible solution.<sup>110</sup> The demands of the Arabs further inferred the tangled situation in Palestine. The irreconcilable positions of Arabs and Jewish people stemmed from the Arab perspective that Palestine should be declared an Arab state, while the Jewish claimed that it was their home.<sup>111</sup> In this sense, the UNSCOP had no room for maneuvering for practical alternatives to resolve the issue. However, it had to fulfill its obligations and draw up a report proposing recommendations for the future of Palestine.

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<sup>106</sup>Fraser, T. (2004). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2nd ed.) [2nd ed.]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004) 17; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 42

<sup>107</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 17

<sup>108</sup> Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>109</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 16

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 19-20

<sup>111</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 144-45; Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 23-4.

## **UNSCOP Report**

After a significant analysis of the collected information, the UNSCOP prepared its final report and submitted it on 31 August.<sup>112</sup> The commission firmly rejected the possibility of declaring Palestine a Jewish or Arab state, e.i. it rejected the maximalist solutions.<sup>113</sup> Instead, the committee plan was based on the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state:

The basic premise underlying the partition proposal is that the claims to Palestine of the Arabs and Jews, both possessing validity, are irreconcilable, and that among all of the solutions advanced, *partition will provide the most realistic and practicable settlement, and is the most likely to afford a workable basis for meeting in part the claims and national aspirations of both parties* [emphasis added].<sup>114</sup>

The report recommended “the division of Palestine into three parts: an Arab State, a Jewish State and the City of Jerusalem.”<sup>115</sup> The Commission plan was based on the partition with an economic union between the Arab and the Jewish states:

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<sup>112</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 47; Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>113</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 24; Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>114</sup> Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

Such economic unity requires the creation of *an economic association by means of a treaty between the two States* [emphasis added]. The essential objectives of this association would be a common customs system, a common currency and the maintenance of a country-wide system of transport and communications.<sup>116</sup>

UNSCOP's proposals, however, did not introduce the idea for the partition of Palestine.<sup>117</sup> Ten years earlier, the British Royal Commission (the Peel Commission) published a report recommending partition.<sup>118</sup> Krämer, while acknowledging that the UNSCOP report incorporated the recommendations from 1937, posits that it still “recommended a rather different map in light of the changed conditions of... settlement.”<sup>119</sup> He refers exactly to this distinction and emphasizes its significance to the greater possibility of a conflict as a result of the territorial provisions of the UNSCOP report (the Jewish state was assigned more land than it owned).<sup>120</sup>

On the matter of Jerusalem, the Committee proposal reflected the city's holy image for the three major monotheistic religions. The report recognized that “[r]eligious peace in Jerusalem [was] necessary for the maintenance of peace in the Arab and in the Jewish States.” Under these considerations, the UNSCOP proposal envisaged Jerusalem to be

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Palestine Royal Commission Report; Safty, A. (2009). *Might Over Right : How the Zionists Took Over Palestine*. New York: Garnet Publishing (UK). 118-119; Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 3

<sup>118</sup> The Peel Commission was set up after the beginning of the Arab revolt in 1936. Its main objective was to examine the reasons for the riots against the British mandate. The Peel report envisaged 20% of Palestine for a Jewish state and 70% - for an Arab. It was firmly rejected by the Arab side, while there was not a common agreement in the Jewish circles. ; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 18;

<sup>119</sup> Krämer, G. (2008). *A History of Palestine : From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (G.Harman, Trans.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 305

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 306

under international control, i.e to be administered by the United Nations.<sup>121</sup> The city was to be demilitarized and headed by a governor, appointed by the Trusteeship Council.

The Arabs condemned the plan by arguing that it violated the United Nations Charter, in particular, the right of self-determination and territorial integrity.<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, after the publication of the report, the Palestinian leadership realized the potential ramifications of its negligence of the efforts of UNSCOP.<sup>123</sup> Thus, the Palestinian cooperation with the UN's efforts increased.<sup>124</sup> The partition plan also faced rejection by the UK. The main concern of the British was that a significant proportion of Arabs would be placed under the control of the Israeli authorities.<sup>125</sup> The British representative to the UN, Alexander Cadogan, commented that the plan was "so manifestly unjust to the Arabs that it [was] difficult to see how [Britain] could reconcile it with [its] conscience"<sup>126</sup>. The Jewish community accepted the proposals with some reservations, but it still acknowledged the plan's value for achieving their aspirations.<sup>127</sup> It should be noted that the Jewish leaders had reservations regarding the economic union, nevertheless, they engaged to assure the adoption of the plan.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>122</sup>United Nations. (2008). *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations* (Vol. [Rev. ed.]). New York: United Nations Publications. 9

<https://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/palestine/ch2.pdf>

<sup>123</sup>Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 33

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 33

<sup>125</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 50-51; Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 37

<sup>126</sup> Jones, M. (2016). *Failure in Palestine: British and United States Policy after the Second World War*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. 290; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 51.

<sup>127</sup> Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 35; United Nations. (2008). *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations* (Vol. [Rev. ed.]). New York: United Nations Publications. 9

<sup>128</sup> Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 33



## **Partition of Palestine**

The United Nations adopted Resolution 181 (29 November 1947), based on the UNSCOP recommendations.<sup>129</sup> Hence, the partition of Palestine was endorsed by the international community. The Jews were to receive 55% of the land and the Arabs - 40%.<sup>130</sup> The Arabs' strong dissatisfaction with the separation of Palestine escalated the situation within the area and led to a civil war.<sup>131</sup> In this context, the British authorities decided to withdraw from Palestine by 15 May 1948.<sup>132</sup> As the date of the termination of the Mandate approached, the Jews' determination to proclaim their state increased.<sup>133</sup> Horowitz wrote that "[t]he only possible course open to us was to implement the UN resolution ourselves, and to achieve independence with our own hands".<sup>134</sup> Accordingly, the State of Israel was declared on 14 May 1948 in Tel Aviv by David Ben-Gurion, who became the first Prime Minister of Israel.<sup>135</sup> On the following day, joint military forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria entered Palestine, setting the beginning of the first Arab-Israeli war.<sup>136</sup>

Pappé argues that Resolution 181 was the immediate cause of the first Arab-Israeli war.<sup>137</sup> According to Morris, the war was an "inevitable result" of the arrival of the first Jewish immigrants in Palestine (first Aliya).<sup>138</sup> This research recognizes the role of Resolution 181 in the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli hostilities, but it argues that the real cause of the war originates from the historical development of the land of Palestine. In

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<sup>129</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 181 (II), 29 November 1948

<sup>130</sup> Morris, B. (2004). *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Vol. 2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 13

<sup>131</sup> Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 39-40; Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 210-211

<sup>132</sup> Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 210

<sup>133</sup> Louis, W. (1998). *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951 : Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 518

<sup>134</sup> Horowitz, D., & Meltzer, J. (1953). *State in the Making*. New York: Knopf. 342

<sup>135</sup> The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 14 May, 1948; Eban, A. S. (1972). *My Country: The Story of Modern Israel*. New York: Random House. 9-10

<sup>136</sup> "The Secretary-General of the United Nations (Lie) to the Secretary of State." 16 May 1948, in Foreign Relations of the United States. 1948, Vol. V: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, p. 1000.; Owendale, R. (2013). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. [Fourth edition.]. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 135

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 41

<sup>138</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 1

other words, this thesis posits that each of the above-mentioned events (the Balfour Declaration, the first Aliya, the inefficient British Mandate, etc.) contributed to the first Arab-Israeli war. The study argues that all of the developments under review are important to the understanding of the outburst of the military conflict in Palestine; therefore, it is not possible to evidence which event outweighs the others in respect to inducing the war. Along this line of thinking, this section emphasizes the role of the gradually increasing tension between Arabs and Jews. Therefore, it opposes the argument that the United Nations resolution caused the Palestinian war. This formative stage of the UN's involvement in the Arab-Israeli was mainly informative as Azcárate puts it.<sup>139</sup> The above discussion on the UNSCOP mission supports this argument -- the Committee was responsible only for information gathering, which to present later to the General Assembly in the form of recommendations.<sup>140</sup> The proclamation of the Jewish state, according to Ovendale, was mainly a product of the emergence of the Cold war.<sup>141</sup> The scholar claims that the Jewish state became a fact because the Soviet Union and the United States both perceived it essential for their interests.<sup>142</sup> He explains that from the onset of the Western-Eastern rivalry the UK feared SU advances in the Middle East, as it was crucial to the security of the Western block.<sup>143</sup> Considering the problem from this angle, it is evident why the UK did not support the partition plan and refused to implement it.<sup>144</sup> The British non-cooperation with the UN postulations may be understood with the circulation The

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<sup>139</sup> Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 14

<sup>140</sup> United Nations. (2008). *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations* (Vol. [Rev. ed.]). New York: United Nations Publications. 4

<sup>141</sup> Ovendale, R. (2013). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. [Fourth edition.]. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 141-142

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. 141-142; Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. 16.

<sup>143</sup> Ovendale, R. (2013). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. [Fourth edition.]. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 98

<sup>144</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Palestine Commission, Note for Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 19 February 1948; Cohen, M. (2014). *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 273-4; Fraser, T. (1980). *The Middle East, 1914-1979* (Documents of Modern History). London: Edward Arnold. 5;

*Middle East Oil* memorandum.<sup>145</sup> The US position different from the British one. Even though the State Department warned Truman of the possible repercussions of supporting Zionist aspirations for partition, the president let Jewish electoral pressure influence his conduct.<sup>146</sup> This illustrates the collision between the British and American interests. Therefore, during this stage of the Cold war, the rivalry was not limited to the SU-US opposition, but also witnessed Anglo-American friction. The Soviet Union, the US, and the UK represented the three out of five permanent members of the Security Council. Looked from this perspective, the opposition between the three most influential UN members surely bore a negative impact on the effective functioning of the organization's efforts in the Middle East.

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<sup>145</sup> Gilbert, M. (2014). *Israel : A History*. New York: Rosetta Books. 128; The Memorandum was written by the UK Foreign Minister, Bevin. It emphasized the significance of the oil resources in the Middle East for the British interests by suggesting that they would be jeopardized, given potential British support for partition.

<sup>146</sup> Ovendale, R. (2013). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. [Fourth edition.]. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.98 Cohen, M. (2014). *Britain's Moment in Palestine : Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-48*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 452

## 2. The First UN Mediator. What Does it Mean for Palestine?

The second section of the thesis brings forward the individual/personal level of analysis of the UN peace efforts. This analysis is accomplished by the observation of the activities of the UN envoys to Palestine. The focus in this part is placed on the settlement proposals of Count Folke Bernadotte. The section starts with a condensed biography of Bernadotte, proceeds with his appointment as the first UN Mediator and concludes with the Bernadotte plan and its implications for the dispute.

### **Bernadotte - a Condensed Biography**

A Swedish nobleman -- nephew of King Gustav V of Sweden and a grandson of King Oscar II, Count Folke Bernadotte was born in Stockholm on 2 January 1895.<sup>147</sup> Bernadotte received military training at the Royal Military Academy Karlberg and during World War II, he was a major in the Swedish Army.<sup>148</sup> The Count represented Sweden at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago and later, at the New York World's Fair, where he was a Commissioner General of the Swedish Pavilion.<sup>149</sup>

In his autobiography, Bernadotte expresses his interests in philanthropy and international issues.<sup>150</sup> His dedication to philanthropic activities contributed to his appointment in 1943 as vice-president of the Swedish Red Cross.<sup>151</sup> Bernadotte's main task

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<sup>147</sup> United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Count Folke Bernadotte-- Activities as Mediator and Biography*, 17 September, 1948; Kugelmass, J. (1996). *Ralph J. Bunche: Fighter for Peace*. New York: Julian Messner. 111

<sup>148</sup> Fredriksson, G. (1996). *Sweden at the UN : Eight Profiles*. Stockholm: Svenska Institutet. 11

<sup>149</sup>United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Count Folke Bernadotte-- Activities as Mediator and Biography*, 17 September, 1948

<sup>150</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 21

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. 21; Kugelmass, J. (1996). *Ralph J. Bunche: Fighter for Peace*. New York: Julian Messner. 110-11;

after assuming office was “to draw up a plan for the post-war activities of the Swedish Red Cross”.<sup>152</sup> The Count’s greatest achievement during his leading role in the Red Cross was the negotiating of the release of about 20000 people from German concentration camps in 1945.<sup>153</sup> It should be noted that a significant number of the liberated men and women were Jewish.<sup>154</sup>

His first steps in the field of mediation Bernadotte took in April 1945 when Heinrich Himmler asked him to inform the Western Allies that Germany was willing to capitulate on the Western front.<sup>155</sup> In other words, Himmler aimed at using Bernadotte as an intermediary between the Third Reich and the Western powers regarding the settlements of the Reich’s surrender.<sup>156</sup> At first, Bernadotte refused, but after conducting a series of talks with Himmler he agreed to satisfy his request.<sup>157</sup> Thus, he engaged in shuttle diplomacy activities and gained some experience in the acts of mediation.

### **Mediation Term**

Striving to put an end to the Arab-Israeli hostilities, the United Nation General Assembly created the post of the UN Mediator with the adoption of Resolution 186 on 14 May 1948.<sup>158</sup> Among the specified by the resolution obligations of the Mediator were securing the protection of the Holy places and exploring solutions to the peaceful settlement between Jews and Arabs. The resolution also provided that after the appointment

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<sup>152</sup>Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 21;

<sup>153</sup> Fredriksson, G. (1996). *Sweden at the UN : Eight Profiles*. Stockholm: Svenska Institutet. 11

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>155</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1945). *The Curtain Falls* (E. Lewenhaupt Greve, Trans.). New York: A.A. Knopf. 111; Kugelmass, J. (1996). *Ralph J. Bunche: Fighter for Peace*. New York: Julian Messner. 110-11;

<sup>156</sup> Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 26-33

<sup>157</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1945). *The Curtain Falls* (E. Lewenhaupt Greve, Trans.). New York: A.A. Knopf. 88, 110-14

<sup>158</sup> General Assembly resolution 186 (S-2), *Appointment and Terms of Reference of a United Nations Mediator in Palestine*, A/RES/186 (S-2) , 14 May 1948; Owendale, R. (2013). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. [Fourth edition.]. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.138;

of the mediator, the United Nations Palestine Commission duties would be suspended.<sup>159</sup> The post of Mediator was unanimously assigned to Count Folke Bernadotte on 20 May.<sup>160</sup> In spite of Bernadotte's lack of experience and knowledge of the details of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Security Council entrusted the responsible task of solving the future of Palestine to the Swedish diplomat.<sup>161</sup> Besides Bernadotte's accomplishments during World War II and his dedication to philanthropic activities, the fact that he headed the post of Chairman of the Swedish Red Cross probably contributed to his designation as UN Mediator since one of the responsibilities of the Mediator specified by the resolution was to involve other international organizations to co-operate with the UN in solving the Palestinian issue.<sup>162</sup>

Even though Bernadotte did not possess a thorough knowledge of the situation in Palestine, he decided to take the UN's proposal under the condition that his engagement did not exceed the period of six months.<sup>163</sup> In his book *Instead of Arms*, the Count shares his fear of deterioration of the Palestinian conflict, leading to global conflicts and endangering world peace.<sup>164</sup> That fear overpowered the sentiment of incompetence and stimulated Bernadotte to accept the post. He spent several days in preparation for taking office as Mediator and after that departed for the Middle East.<sup>165</sup> It is important to note that before the Count's departure, he was advised to visit the UN Headquarters at Lake Success, New York (headquarters of the UN during 1946-1951) so as to acquire a thorough knowledge of

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<sup>159</sup> General Assembly resolution 186 (S-2), *Appointment and Terms of Reference of a United Nations Mediator in Palestine*, A/RES/186 (S-2), 14 May 1948; Safty, A. (2009). *Might Over Right: How the Zionists Took Over Palestine*. New York: Garnet Publishing (UK). 207

<sup>160</sup> United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Count Folke Bernadotte-- Activities as Mediator and Biography, 17 September, 1948*

<sup>161</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948: A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 264

<sup>162</sup> General Assembly resolution 186 (S-2), *Appointment and Terms of Reference of a United Nations Mediator in Palestine*, A/RES/186 (S-2), 14 May 1948

<sup>163</sup> Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 58; Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 198

<sup>164</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 198

<sup>165</sup> Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 58-61

the issue and the situation in Palestine, but he refused.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, “Bernadotte’s ignorance”, as Ilan puts it, “was not necessarily a disadvantage” as the extensive knowledge of the situation would not make any substantial difference.<sup>167</sup>

### **First Cease-Fire**

After its several failures to impose a cease-fire and induce the conflicting parties to comply with its provisions, the Security Council decided to entrust this objective to the Mediator.<sup>168</sup> On 29 May the Security Council adopted Resolution 50, calling for a four-week suspension of armed conflict between Arabs and Jews.<sup>169</sup> The resolution also provided that the Mediator’s primary task was to observe the compliance with the truce stipulations.<sup>170</sup> The Mediator also had to establish contacts with the belligerent parties as soon as the truce came into effect. In other words, the Count’s first responsibility as Mediator was to assure that both Arabs and Jews accept the provisions of the United Nations Resolution of 29 May. To fulfill his duties, Bernadotte undertook a series of tours and negotiations talks with Arab and Jewish representatives.<sup>171</sup> The Count made contact with the Secretary-General of the Arab League Abdul Rahman Azzam.<sup>172</sup> During the meeting, Azzam expressed the Arabs’ distrust and strong dissatisfaction with the United

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<sup>166</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 198

<sup>167</sup> Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 4

<sup>168</sup> Before reaching a cease-fire in accordance with Resolution 50 of 29 May, there had been three previous attempts to suspend the Arab-Israeli hostilities-- Resolution 43; Resolution 46; Resolution 48. According to Touval (Touval, 1987, p.27) the difference between Resolution 50 and the previous three ones was the threat of sanctions if the conflicting parties did not comply with the stipulations of Resolution 50. Therefore, the element of sanction contributed to the acceptance of the truce proposal.

<sup>169</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 50, 29 May 1948; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 72; Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 24

<sup>170</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 50, 29 May 1948

<sup>171</sup> Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 222-7; Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 198-199; Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 24

<sup>172</sup> Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 88-9, 97-8

Nations.<sup>173</sup> He also declared the Arabs' willingness to accept the cease-fire in case they would receive a guarantee that the Arab position would not worsen.<sup>174</sup> Bernadotte met with Ben-Gurion in Haifa.<sup>175</sup> Like Azzam, the Prime Minister of Israel too was not enthusiastic about the acceptance of the truce.<sup>176</sup> Gurion also considered that the cease-fire would be in Israel's disadvantage.<sup>177</sup> In his notes, Bernadotte underlines that Egypt, Iraq, and Transjordan supported the truce proposal, whereas Lebanon and Syria opposed it.<sup>178</sup> It was evident that the conditions under which the Count had to execute his mediation were entangled due to the conflicting parties' distrust of the United Nations impartiality.<sup>179</sup> The Count's primary objective, therefore, was to assure both parties of his neutral position. To this end, the Mediator had to convince the Arabs as well as the Jews that the cease-fire would not lead to the military advance of either of the opponents.<sup>180</sup> The question of the Jewish immigration in Israel was another core obstacle to the attainment of the truce.<sup>181</sup> Initially, the Arabs expressed willingness to accept the proposal for hostilities suspension provided that the immigration of Jews in Israel was halted.<sup>182</sup> Confronted with such demands, based on mutually exclusive values, deemed sacred by both parties, the Count tried to refer the solution of the immigration matter to the Security Council.<sup>183</sup>

On 4 June, the Mediator cabled the President of the Security Council requesting further clarification on the question of whether Jewish men of military age may be admitted

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<sup>173</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 518; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 25

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. 25

<sup>175</sup> Ben-Gurion, D. (1971). *Israel: A Personal History*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. 120-1

<sup>176</sup> Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 223;

Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 25

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. 25

<sup>178</sup> Bernadotte, F., Bulman, J., & Lundström, A. (1951). *To Jerusalem*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 115

<sup>179</sup> Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 26

<sup>180</sup> Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 89

<sup>181</sup> Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 221, 223.

<sup>182</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 29; Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 221.; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*.

Basingstoke: Macmillan. 26

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. 26



in Israel during the truce period.<sup>184</sup> The ambiguity stemmed from the postulations of the second and the third clauses of Resolution 50:

2. *Calls upon* all Governments and authorities concerned to undertake that they will not introduce fighting personnel into Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan and Yemen during the cease-fire;

3. *Calls upon* all Governments and authorities concerned, should men of military age be introduced into countries or territories under their control, to undertake not to mobilize or submit them to military training during the cease-fire;<sup>185</sup>

The response by the President of the Security Council was based on the citation of the first clause of the Resolution which envisaged to “bring about a cessation of hostilities in Palestine without prejudice to the rights, claims and position of either Arabs or Jews”.<sup>186</sup> The reply was not instructive and, therefore, Bernadotte had to introduce his own interpretation of the clauses. Finally, he decided that no fighting personnel were to be admitted in the region under the cease-fire period.<sup>187</sup> With regard to the immigration of men of military age in Israel, Bernadotte resolved that admitting that category of immigrants in Israel would lead to its military advantage.<sup>188</sup> Hence, the Mediator declared free entry of women and men above or under military age and as for the men of age 18-45, they would be placed in “non-military camps under the surveillance of the United Nations Observers” during the four-week period.<sup>189</sup> Said otherwise, the Mediator assumed responsibility to

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<sup>184</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the Security Council*, 12 July, 1948

<sup>185</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 50, 29 May, 1948

<sup>186</sup> Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 26

<sup>187</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the Security Council*, 12 July, 1948

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

guarantee that the number of the military-aged men let into Israel would not shift the army balance in favor of the Jews.

At this point, Bernadotte had realized how intricate his mission was due to the persistence and the “diametrically opposed” views of the two sides.<sup>190</sup> After his meetings with the representatives of the antagonists, the lack of progress induced Bernadotte to employ a different approach.<sup>191</sup> To this end, he informed the parties that a cease-fire would come into effect on 11 June.<sup>192</sup>

The Mediator’s first negotiating efforts in the Palestinian conflict bore fruit by 9 June when he received unconditional acceptance of the cease-fire by both sides.<sup>193</sup> Touval argues that it is hardly likely that only Bernadotte’s negotiating skills contributed to the agreement of both Arabs and Jews to suspend the fighting.<sup>194</sup> In his book *The Peace Brokers*, he posits that both political and military conditions played an important role in the parties’ acceptance. From Israel’s perspective, according to Touval, the truce was desirable since the state was invaded by Transjordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria.<sup>195</sup> On a political level, Israel aspired to gain the United Nations support for securing the sovereignty of the State of Israel.<sup>196</sup> To this end, Israeli authorities considered it wise and pragmatic to adhere to the stipulations of the United Nations. In this line of thinking, even if Bernadotte’s efforts were not the main factor for the cease-fire, the UN still influenced the course of the conflict thanks to Israel’s perception of the UN as an authority through which Israel would reach its objectives.

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<sup>190</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 198

<sup>191</sup> Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 227.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 227; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 194-5.

<sup>193</sup> Bernadotte, F. (1949). *Instead of Arms*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 199; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 95; Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 228-9.

<sup>194</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 27- 31.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 27. ; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 25.

<sup>196</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 27-28

From the perspective of the Arab side, Touval emphasizes that their position towards the cease-fire altered when they began to realize that their invasion would not bring about the desired outcome -- prevention of the separation of Palestine.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, the military advantage of the Arab armies came to a standstill and the war balance shifted in favor of the Jews.<sup>198</sup> Another factor which influenced the Arabs' response to Resolution 50 was the fragmentation within the governments of the Arab League. Even though the Count did not satisfy the requirement of the Arab side, to prohibit all immigration into Israel, both conflicting parties accepted his truce terms and the cease-fire came into effect on 11 June.<sup>199</sup> During this period -- from the onset of the war to the first truce -- of the United Nations peace efforts in Palestine, and in particular, those of the Bernadotte, had an impact on the military course of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The suspension of the hostilities, apart from the military and political circumstances, Bernadotte's interpretation of Resolution 50 contributed to the UN's success in taking a step towards the further tackling of the Palestinian matter.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, the Mediator's most intricate task had just begun -- the search for a permanent peace settlement in Palestine.<sup>201</sup> In his report to the Security Council, the Mediator emphasized that the truce "spared Palestine from much bloodshed, loss of life, and destruction."<sup>202</sup> In addition, it enabled the process for successful mediation in "an atmosphere of peace".<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid. 27-28

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. 28-29

<sup>199</sup> Gilbert, M. (2014). *Israel : A History*. New York: Rosetta Books. 185; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 30

<sup>200</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 30-31

<sup>201</sup> Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 125; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 31

<sup>202</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the Security Council*, 12 July, 1948

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

## The First Bernadotte Plan

Soon after the truce came into effect and Bernadotte started negotiations with the parties, he realized that it was not likely to mediate face-to-face talks between Arabs and Jews.<sup>204</sup> Unlike their opponents, the Israeli authorities demonstrated their willingness to hold direct negotiations with the Arabs.<sup>205</sup> The Count was pressed by the demands of both parties, which was a significant obstacle to the implementation of his intermediary duties.<sup>206</sup> The questions the immigration, the establishment of the Jewish state, and the status of Jerusalem proved to be the major stumbling blocks of the negotiations.<sup>207</sup> As the expiration date of the truce approached, meaning that further mediation efforts would be difficult to conduct, Bernadotte had no choice, but to act quickly.<sup>208</sup> The rationale behind that was to secure a greater chance of providing a solution to the issue.<sup>209</sup> In this context, the Mediator drew up several basic suggestions, based on the mainstream of the negotiations.<sup>210</sup> When he forwarded the proposals to the parties he stressed that they were only the foundation for further talks, not final settlements.<sup>211</sup> Bernadotte's suggestions were based on the perception of Palestine as defined by the British Mandate -- including Transjordan.<sup>212</sup> His

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<sup>204</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 20-1; United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948

<sup>205</sup>Pelcovits, N. (1993). *The Long Armistice : Un Peacekeeping and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1960*. Boulder: Westview Press. 13-14; United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the Security Council*, 12 July, 1948; United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948

<sup>206</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 18-20.; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 31.; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 33

<sup>209</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948

<sup>210</sup> Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 31; United Nations, Security Council, *Text of Suggestions Presented by the United Nations Mediator*, 28 June 1948.

<sup>211</sup> Bernadotte, F., Bulman, J., & Lundström, A. (1951). *To Jerusalem*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 110; United Nations, Security Council, *Text of Suggestions Presented by the United Nations Mediator*, 28 June 1948

<sup>212</sup> Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 24; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli*

plan was founded on the idea of establishing a union between the Arab and the Jewish states.<sup>213</sup> The plan envisaged that both states would conduct autonomous policy, while the foundation of their coherence would be the intertwined economy. Bernadotte explained that during his talks both parties acknowledged the “importance of economic unity”.<sup>214</sup> The question of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes unrestricted was also included in the suggestions. In the territorial suggestions, the Count proposed that the Negev be transferred to Arab control, while Western Galilee was to be included in Jewish territory.<sup>215</sup> On the matter of Jerusalem, the plan envisaged that it would be considered an Arab city.<sup>216</sup> The territorial suggestions differed from the provisions of the Partition Plan from November 1947. The motive for that was the notion that the Partition Plan provided that Arab and Jewish states were to be established; however, an Arab state was never created.<sup>217</sup>

With regard to the presented proposals, it was not surprising that both parties firmly rejected the plan.<sup>218</sup> From the Jewish perspective, any alteration of the provisions of the Partition Plan was unacceptable since it would endanger their sovereignty.<sup>219</sup> On the other hand, the plan contradicted the Arabs’ demands for one state within Palestine.<sup>220</sup> Not only the Arabs and the Jews but also the Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, and other UN officials

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*Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 31; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 5

<sup>213</sup> Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 31

<sup>214</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the Security Council*, 12 July, 1948

<sup>215</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Text of Suggestions Presented by the United Nations Mediator*, 28 June 1948

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the Security Council*, 12 July, 1948

<sup>218</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 522; Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 133.

<sup>219</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 19-20; Gazit, M. (2001). *Israeli Diplomacy and the Middle East Peace Process*. London: Frank Cass.9; Cass.Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 125-6

<sup>220</sup> Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 25

criticized Bernadotte for his hasty recommendations.<sup>221</sup> From Lie's perspective, Bernadotte should have not forwarded the proposal before first discussing it with the belligerent parties.<sup>222</sup>

Bernadotte realized that the four weeks were not sufficient to resolve the conflict and the expiration of the truce would halt further progress of the negotiations. Thus, he issued an appeal to the Security Council requesting to impose prolongation of the truce.<sup>223</sup> Israel agreed to the extension of the cease-fire, while the Arabs refused.<sup>224</sup> Thus, the rejection of Bernadotte's plan was followed by the resumption of the military conflict.<sup>225</sup> In accordance with the Mediator's request, the Security Council issued Resolution 54 of 15 July 1948.<sup>226</sup>

### **The Second Plan**

Resolution 54 called for immediate suspension of hostilities for an unlimited period of time -- "until a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine" was reached.<sup>227</sup> After the imposition of the second truce, in effect from 18 July, Bernadotte, again, engaged in a series of shuttle diplomacy endeavors after which he came to perceive a prospect settlement for the future peace in the region.<sup>228</sup> After his talks with the Jordanian and

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<sup>221</sup> Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 132-33;

<sup>222</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 32

<sup>223</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Cablegram from the United Nations Mediator Addressed to the Secretary-General Concerning The Prolongation of the Truce in Palestine*, 6 July, 1948; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 34

<sup>224</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Reply to the Mediator's Proposals for Prolongation of the Truce, 9 July, 1948*

<sup>225</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 75-80.

<sup>226</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 54, 15 July, 1948; Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 95-6

<sup>227</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 54, 15 July, 1948

<sup>228</sup> Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 46

Lebanese leaders, he was convinced that they were willing to accept Israel's existence.<sup>229</sup> During his talks with Israeli officials, he insisted that the problem with the Palestinian refugees had to be solved.<sup>230</sup> To this end, Bernadotte suggested giving the refugees the right to return to their homes and he stressed the necessity of securing their peaceful coexistence within Palestine.<sup>231</sup> The major difference between the first and the second Bernadotte plan was that the latter was to be imposed on the parties.<sup>232</sup> In other words, Bernadotte, having learned from his mistakes, considered that the revised plan was not a subject of discussion.<sup>233</sup> In his report to the General Assembly, the Count indicated his certainty that if the plan was supported by the UN body, no resistance should be faced.<sup>234</sup>

Unlike the initial recommendations, the second plan drew upon the premises that the State of "Israel exists in Palestine".<sup>235</sup> The status of Jerusalem raised certain disagreement between Bernadotte and his team.<sup>236</sup> The mediator supported the idea of placing the city under an international regime, but his advisers favored compensation of Transjordan for the lack of an Arab state in Palestine.<sup>237</sup> The second Bernadotte plan was submitted to the UN on 16 September. It recommended that Israel keep Galilee, but return parts of Negev, Lydda, and Ramle to the Arabs.<sup>238</sup> It also suggested the rights of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and envisaged Jerusalem to be an international

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<sup>229</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 523; Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 47

<sup>230</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948;

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Pelcovits, N. (1993). *The Long Armistice : Un Peacekeeping and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1960*. Boulder: Westview Press. 15; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 38-39.

<sup>233</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 29

<sup>234</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Stanger, Cary David. 1988. "A Haunting Legacy : The Assassination of Count Bernadotte." *Middle East Journal*. - 42(2) Spring 1988 : 260-272., 261

<sup>237</sup> Ibid. 261

<sup>238</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948;

city (the main difference with the first plan).<sup>239</sup> This version was in advantage of the Israelis as it represented the development of the military actions, meaning that the Israeli territory would become larger than the recommended Jewish state in the partition plan.<sup>240</sup>

A day after the submission of his proposals to the UN, Bernadotte was assassinated by a Jewish paramilitary organization (Lehi).<sup>241</sup> In this respect, Bernadotte did not have the opportunity to promote his recommendations. The fate of his plan faced rejection by both Israelis and Arab authorities.<sup>242</sup> However, some provisions of it, the establishment of a conciliation commission in Palestine and the repatriation issue, were included in the United Nations Resolution of 11 December 1948.<sup>243</sup>

Some scholars, such as Di Mauro, Heller, and Khouri, attribute the failure of the Count's plan to the lack of support from the great powers, especially by the US.<sup>244</sup> On the other hand, there is a debate on whether the US and the UK interfered in the preparation of the proposals.<sup>245</sup> Bernadotte himself often emphasized the importance of a US-UK

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<sup>239</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954* (Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 29-30; United Nations, General Assembly, *Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine*, 16 September, 1948;

<sup>240</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 52

<sup>241</sup> Marton, K. (1994). *A Death in Jerusalem*. New York: Pantheon Books. 16; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 193

<sup>242</sup> Truman, H. S. (1965). *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Years of Trial and Hope*. New York: New American Library. 195

<sup>243</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 48; Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 133

<sup>244</sup> Di Mauro, D. (2012). *The UN and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : American Hegemony and UN Intervention since 1947*. Abingdon etc.: Routledge. 194; Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 26-7; Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 515-6.

<sup>245</sup> See: Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 93; Gazit, M. (1986). American and British Diplomacy and the Bernadotte Mission. *The Historical Journal*, 29(3), 677-696.; Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 175; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 41; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan 187-191; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 46-7; Pappé, I., *Historicus*, (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 159-60; Bailey argues that by the time the British and the American envoys (Troutbeck and McClintock were sent to Rhodes to present the US and the UK positions to the mediator) met with Bernadotte, the proposals had already been written. Ilan, on the other hand, notes that the report was not finished before their arrival. From Touval's point of view, McClintock and Troutbeck persuaded Bernadotte



alignment for the success of the UN's peace efforts.<sup>246</sup> In effect, the UK and the US did not manage to agree on a joint policy and as a result missed the opportunity to pressure the conflicting sides to abide by the UN postulations.<sup>247</sup> In his memoirs, Truman expresses his disapproval of the plan even though it “seemed to reduce the number of friction points... between the Jews and the Arabs.”<sup>248</sup> The American position on the Bernadotte report, however, switched from endorsement to rejection owing to the upcoming US presidential elections.<sup>249</sup> The Jewish constituency had shown in the congressional elections (February 1948) that any dissatisfaction with the American policy towards Palestine would alienate its votes.<sup>250</sup> This observation induced the State Department to change its Palestine policy; therefore, to attract more support from the Jewish community, the Democratic Party, in July 1948, based its platform on promises to Israel.<sup>251</sup> Initially, the State Secretary, Marshal, informed the UN of the US approval of the Bernadotte suggestions, but later Truman declared that the US would “oppose any territorial changes... not acceptable... to Israel.”<sup>252</sup> It turned out that only Britain, Brazil, Denmark, and China backed the Bernadotte plan.<sup>253</sup> Referring to the Bernadotte plan, Khouri notes, that the UN “allowed a golden

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to propose an international regime in Jerusalem. Pappé comments that the mediator was influenced not only by the envoys, but also by the developing situation in Palestine.

<sup>246</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 523.

<sup>247</sup> Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 26-7

<sup>248</sup> Truman, H. S. (1965). *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Years of Trial and Hope*. New York: New American Library. 195

<sup>249</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 30.

<sup>250</sup> Cohen, M. (2014). *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 350; Snetsinger, J. (1974). *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press. 119-20

<sup>251</sup> Cohen, M. (2014). *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 350; Snetsinger, J. (1974). *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press. 118-19; The platform emphasized the role of Truman in the adoption of the partition plan and the recognition of Israel by the President. Furthermore, it assured that the US would not support any territorial changes of Israel and would back up Israel's candidacy for the UN. (Snetsinger, 1974, p.118-19).

<sup>252</sup> Truman, H. S. (1965). *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Years of Trial and Hope*. New York: New American Library. 198; Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 28

<sup>253</sup> Khouri, F. J., “United Nations Peace Efforts”, in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 29

opportunity to slip by”, which had a negative impact on the following years of the UN peace efforts in Palestine.<sup>254</sup> Indeed, Bernadotte believed that the moment was favorable for a peace settlement.<sup>255</sup> Unfortunately, as the contemporary history of the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals, Bernadotte’s judgement that the time for a solution of the dispute was now or never proved right. The Palestinian conflict, after more than seventy years since the Count’s mediation efforts, still burdens the international community with its quest for a permanent peace. The most recent example of the “endless cycle of violence” within Palestine is the escalation of the dispute in Gaza.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup>Ibid. 27

<sup>255</sup> “The Ambassador in Egypt (Griffis) to the Secretary of State”, 15 September 1948, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Vol. V: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa (2)*, p. 1400

<sup>256</sup> United Nations, UNSCO, Statement by UN Special Coordinator Mladenov on the Situation in Gaza, 4 May 2019

### **3.Ralph Bunche: Is peace Near?**

This part also highlights the individual factor for the analysis of the dispute. Here, the contributions of Dr. Ralph Bunche to the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict are addressed. First, Bunche's involvement in the UN conflict resolution efforts is presented in virtue of his participation in UNSCOP. Later, the section examines Bunche's role as the acting mediator. This part concludes with the end of the first Arab-Israeli war.

#### **Ralph Bunche - Biography**

Ralph J. Bunche was born in Detroit in 1904 in an African American family. Bunche demonstrated his bright mind while he was still in High School. He graduated as the class valedictorian. Later, at the University of California Bunche's athletic capabilities provided financial support for his education as he was granted a scholarship for his achievements. He graduated in 1927 with major in international relations and once again, Bunche was the class valedictorian.<sup>257</sup>

Ralph received a scholarship from Harvard University and earned a doctorate in political science. He was the first African American to obtain a Ph.D. in the field of political science. In June 1928, while working on his Ph.D., he was invited to develop the political science department at Howard University in Washington. Teaching at Howard had a significant impact on Bunche as it was a leading black university in the United States. Ralph was involved in social activism and he was an active figure in the civil rights movement. He contributed to the fight against the discrimination on racial grounds not only

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<sup>257</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 41; Mann, P. (1975). *Ralph Bunche, UN Peacemaker*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 42-43.

by giving speeches all over the United States but also by publishing scholar works in the field of racial oppression.<sup>258</sup>

### **Association with the UN**

Apart from Bunche's achievements in the academic fields, he had also a leading role in international politics. Bunche's association with the United Nations began with the establishment of the organization.<sup>259</sup> During the San Francisco Conference in 1945, when the United Nations Charter was signed, Ralph served as an adviser to the delegation of the United States.<sup>260</sup> A year later, he joined the United Nations Secretariat. Trygve Lie, the United Nations Secretary-General, designated Bunche as a head of the Trusteeship Department of the UN (its function was to prepare non-independent territories for self-governing and independence).<sup>261</sup>

### **Work in UNSCOP**

Bunche was first exposed to the question of Palestine after the British decision to terminate its mandate and the creation of UNSCOP. Lie appointed the Assistant Secretary-General for Trusteeship Victor Hoo as head of the Special Committee. Bunche served as special assistant to Hoo in UNSCOP.<sup>262</sup> Even from the onset of the UN's involvement in Palestine, Bunche had a pessimistic view regarding the outcome of the

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<sup>258</sup> Kugelmass, J. (1996). *Ralph J. Bunche: Fighter for Peace*. New York: Julian Messner. 55-84; Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 37-49, 50-63.

<sup>259</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 1.; Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 111-139.

<sup>260</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 140

<sup>261</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 1.

<sup>262</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 140

efforts.<sup>263</sup> His negative conclusion was based on the fact that he considered all UNSCOP members to be incompetent.<sup>264</sup> In a letter to his wife Ruth, Bunche stated that any eventual success of the Commission efforts would only be due to a miracle.<sup>265</sup> That being the case, Bunche turned out to be the leading figure in UNSCOP as he did most of the work of the Commission. The lack of inner coherence within UNSCOP made its responsibility to draw up its report, in accordance with the General Assembly provisions, almost impossible.<sup>266</sup> Bunche proved to be a successful leader by taking all the work on the report.<sup>267</sup> In his efforts to find a solution to the inefficiency of the Commission, he suggested its division into subcommittees -- each supporting either partition or federation as the future of Palestine. Even though Bunche was part of the subcommittee on the partition, he also wrote the report in favor of a federation.<sup>268</sup> The unprofessionalism of the UNSCOP members resulted in Bunche's determination to leave the Commission.<sup>269</sup>

Ralph's main objective, while writing the suggestions, was to provide as balanced recommendations as possible.<sup>270</sup> Bunche's pursuit of an approach towards the conflict that would to some extent satisfy both parties was evident by his support for the federal future of Palestine.<sup>271</sup> He considered the separation into two states to be unjust to the Arabs. Bunche assessed that the main weakness of the partition plan was that it did not reflect the population proportions in Palestine. Later, Bunche's apprehension proved to be reasonable

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<sup>263</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 11-15

<sup>264</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 140

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. 140; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 41

<sup>266</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 147

<sup>267</sup> Ibid. 149

<sup>268</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 14-28; Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 148-9.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. 147-149

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 26

as the unfair foundations of the partition resolution paved the way for the deteriorating of the situation in Palestine. Not only the first Arab-Israeli war erupted but also the issue that became the main stumbling block to finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was formed -- the Arab Palestinian refugee question.

On the other hand, according to Ben-Dror, his arguments on the unfairness of the partition did not have a major impact on the Arab-Israeli dispute.<sup>272</sup> The suggestion for federal governance in Palestine was rejected by both Arabs and Jews.<sup>273</sup> Bunche's insight regarding the ultimate feasible settlement for the region was not shared within either Arab or Israeli leaders due to their obstinacy.<sup>274</sup> These observations again raise the question that no matter how much energy and efforts the international community made, it would not be sufficient to settle the issue unless the belligerent parties were willing to find common ground and compromise.<sup>275</sup> The effectiveness of the peacemakers depends highly on, as Khouri puts it, "the voluntary compliance of the disputants... or the willingness of the major powers to enforce its will."<sup>276</sup> Along this line of thinking, the United Nations efforts had to be concentrated on lowering the demands of the conflicting parties.

Another reason for Bunche's lack of support for the partition was the low-developed Arab territories within Palestine. The poor conditions in the Arab part made Bunche believe that they were not ready to exist without the economic dependence on the Israelis. However, the partition plan did not envisage full separation as it recommended the creation of an economic union. Hence, it took into account the economic immaturity of the

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid. 14-28;

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.28; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 37-75

<sup>274</sup> Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 37-75; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 27-28.

<sup>275</sup> Berger, E. (1993). *Peace for Palestine : First Lost Opportunity*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida. 234; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 2.

<sup>276</sup> Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 87

Arab community. However, the issue that Bunche considered was that the establishment of economic unity between Arabs and Jews would be impossible owing to their hostile relations.<sup>277</sup>

Bunche's negotiating skills proved useful during the Arab boycott of UNSCOP which was discussed in the first chapter. His attempts succeeded in inducing trust among some Arab representatives.<sup>278</sup> As a result, Bunche accomplished regular connections with members of the Arab community which later turned out to be an essential prerequisite for the conclusion of the armistice agreements and the end of the first Arab-Israeli war.

Bunche shared his dissatisfaction with the UNSCOP report in a letter to his wife, Ruth, where he expressed that even though the suggestions for the future of Palestine --the partition plan-- were his work, he realized that no solution would satisfy both Arab and Israeli demands.<sup>279</sup> Therefore, solely working towards an approach that would mitigate the positions of both sides would lead the path to a feasible resolution for Palestine.

With the endorsement of the UNSCOP report and the partition resolution, the UN Palestine Commission (UNPC) was created to supervise the implementation of the partition.<sup>280</sup> Lie appointed Bunche as the Principal Secretary of the Committee. He had the opportunity to recruit people so he invited some of his colleagues from UNSCOP to be part of his team.<sup>281</sup> It is obvious how resourceful was Bunche as the Secretary-General entrusted him such a responsible task. Lie, described Bunche as the "single bright element in the picture".<sup>282</sup> The paradox with Bunche's participation in the UNPC is that even though

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<sup>277</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 26.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid. 16-19

<sup>279</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 149-150

<sup>280</sup> Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly. A/364. 3 September 1947.

<sup>281</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 37

<sup>282</sup> Lie, T. (1954). *In the Cause of Peace : Seven years with the United Nations*. New York: Macmillan. 160

Bunche did not support the partition of Palestine for the reasons explained above, he turned out to play a key role for the implementation of the separation as he was the most experienced person on the matter within the United Nations.

### **Mediator's aide**

With the establishment of the United Nations mediator post, occupied by Bernadotte, Bunche was asked by the Secretary-General to depart to Palestine as the mediator's aide.<sup>283</sup> As stated in the previous chapter, Bernadotte did not have detailed knowledge on the Palestine issue and therefore Bunche was a useful attachment owing to his expertise on the conflict.<sup>284</sup> In other words, Bunche served Bernadotte as an information database on the Arab-Israeli situation.<sup>285</sup> Moreover, Bunche was already a well-known figure among Arab and Israeli leaders which might predispose easier negotiations with both sides, i.e. Bernadotte would make use of Bunche to induce the approval of Bernadotte's suggestions.<sup>286</sup>

The first Bernadotte plan was actually Bunche's merit as most of the suggestions were ideas of the latter.<sup>287</sup> Therefore, to some extent, it was Bunche's contribution to the Arab-Israeli conflict management that both Arabs and Israelis came to believe that

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<sup>283</sup> Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 302; Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 158.

<sup>284</sup> See: Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton.; Ilan, A. (1989). *Bernadotte in Palestine* [1st ed.]. Palgrave Macmillan; Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

<sup>285</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 53

<sup>286</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 53-102.

<sup>287</sup> Bernadotte, F., Bulman, J., & Lundström, A. (1951). *To Jerusalem*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 111; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 29;



Bernadotte was biased in their opponents favor.<sup>288</sup> However, it should be noted that Bernadotte approved Bunche's ideas, otherwise they would have not been incorporated into Bernadotte's plan.<sup>289</sup> Moreover, the mediator was in power to promote and seek an endorsement of the plan. In that sense, it was not solely Bunche's fault for the failure of the plan.<sup>290</sup>

Another significant impact on Bernadotte's mediation credited to Bunche was the increased involvement of the United States and the United Kingdom in the Palestinian situation.<sup>291</sup> Before the presentation of the first Bernadotte plan, the two powers did not demonstrate any influence on the matter.<sup>292</sup> After Bunche had a series of meetings with officials from the US, during which he emphasized the importance of joint US-UK policy regarding Arab-Israeli conflict, the participation of the two powers in the matter gained different direction, i.e. they declared their willingness to support the mediation efforts.<sup>293</sup> In order to prevent future settlement rejections from both sides, the US considered that it was essential to develop "a concerted US-UK position which would then be communicated to the Mediator and supported by our two governments with the principal parties."<sup>294</sup> Evidently, to progress with the settlement in Palestine it was crucial that Bernadotte and Bunche's initiatives were supported by the great powers that had high influence in the Security Council.<sup>295</sup> The key to the successful UN involvement in the Arab-Israeli dispute

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<sup>288</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

<sup>289</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 49-50.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 41-53; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 32.

<sup>292</sup> Heller, J. (1979). Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> "The Acting United States Representative at the United Nations (jessup) to the Secretary of State", 6 August 1948, in in Foreign Relations of the United States. 1948, Vol. V: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa (2), p. 1289

<sup>295</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 41-53; Di Mauro, D. (2012). *The UN and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : American*

was the realization that only the advance of a universal and coordinated policy of the international community would counteract the obstinate parties.<sup>296</sup> As a result of the concrete firmness of the United Nations, both Arab and Israelis would be pressured to make concessions and in that way, the path to peaceful Palestine would be led.

### **Acting Mediator**

As discussed in the previous part, after the submission of the second Bernadotte plan, the mediator was killed. After his assassination, Bunche was appointed as Bernadotte's successor.<sup>297</sup> His first task was to promote the revised plan (the second Bernadotte plan).<sup>298</sup> Meanwhile, the truce was violated by an Israeli military operation (Operation Yoav) in the Negev.<sup>299</sup> The Israelis, disappointed by the United Nations proposals, decided to take the matter in their hands by gaining control over the territories they deemed Jewish.<sup>300</sup> Touval implies that to some extent the Jews acted militarily as they knew from the Bernadotte's suggestions that "the territorial proposals would tend to reflect existing front lines and military realities."<sup>301</sup> The aim of Operation Yoav was to occupy the

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*Hegemony and UN Intervention since 1947*. Abingdon etc.: Routledge. 194; Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 26-7; Heller, J. (1979). *Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948*. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14(3), 515-534. 515-6.

<sup>296</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 32; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 46-53.

<sup>297</sup> Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 303.

<sup>298</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 55

<sup>299</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 34-35; Morris, B. (2008). *1948 : A History Of The First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press. 320-334; Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 46-47.

<sup>300</sup> Bailey, S. (1990). *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 45-46; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 34-35

<sup>301</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 56

whole Negev. In this context, Bunche endeavored to muster support for the second Bernadotte plan during the General Assembly meeting in Paris.<sup>302</sup>

As the Israeli attack in the Negev advanced, the Security Council on October 19 called for a “withdrawal of both parties from any positions not occupied at the time of the outbreak” and for negotiations via the UN mediator or directly.<sup>303</sup> The cease-fire was based on the suggestions in Bunche’s report to the Council.<sup>304</sup> The resolution, however, did not result in the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied, during its military offensive, territories. Bunche was determined to achieve compliance with the Security Council provisions and he dedicated his efforts in getting the Council to enforce the resolution.<sup>305</sup> He realized that it was time the Security Council provided “clear and forceful declaration” in order to bring about negotiations between Arabs and Israelis.<sup>306</sup>

While Bunche was trying to get Arab and Jewish officials to the negotiation table, the Israelis launched another offensive.<sup>307</sup> The military operation resulted in the Israeli occupation over Galilee.<sup>308</sup> Hence, the Palestinian territories under Jewish control rapidly increased. This situation provides a good example of the United Nations failed efforts to tackle the issue. Most endeavors of the international community quite often rendered meaningless due to the lack of a sanction mechanism. On the other hand, some authors such as Caplan, Berger, and Khouri justify the UN’s inefficiency with the fact that it

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<sup>302</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 34-35; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 56-59

<sup>303</sup> United Nations, Security Council, S/PV.367 S/INF/2/Rev. 1 (III), 19 October 1948

<sup>304</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The peace brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 57

<sup>305</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 123

<sup>306</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 188

<sup>307</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 56.

<sup>308</sup> Pappé, I., Historicus,. (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 168.; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 56-57.

possessed only “the power of persuasion”.<sup>309</sup> The main reason for the UN’s failure to prevent the truce violations may be attributed to the fact that at this stage of the Arab-Israeli conflict the United Nations was still a young organization.<sup>310</sup> Its development and internal dynamics were still under construction. Moreover, it had no previous experience in the field of conflict management.<sup>311</sup> At this time, the United Nations was making its first steps in peacekeeping. Another factor to be noted is the historical context of the first Arab-Israeli war. In 1948 the Cold War was gaining momentum and the Berlin crisis was one of the first serious challenges the world faced at the onset of the West-East rivalry. The pressure between the two great powers -- the United States and the Soviet Union, also members of the permanent five in the Security Council further obstructed the effective work of the UN.

While major UN state members were occupied with the Cold war, Bunche managed to induce the Security Council to take measures.<sup>312</sup> At the beginning of November 1948, the Security Council adopted another resolution.<sup>313</sup> It demanded withdrawal to the lines before 14 October (before the launch of operation Yoav).<sup>314</sup> What was different in this resolution was that it called for direct negotiations between Israelis and Arabs or through the mediator. It also envisaged the creation of “permanent truce lines” and “demilitarized zones”.<sup>315</sup> Furthermore, the resolution made a reference to Chapter VII (possible adoption of military or non-military sanctions to restore peace) of the UN Charter. In case the truce lines were not established, the mediator was given room for diplomatic maneuver. Now, Bunche had the opportunity to test his negotiating skills.

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<sup>309</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 2; Berger, E. (1993). *Peace for Palestine : First Lost Opportunity*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida. 234;

<sup>310</sup> Jones, B.D. “The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: ‘Responsibility without Power’”, in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 300

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 57

<sup>313</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 61, 4 November, 1948

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

The mediator submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council on 9 November. Bunche's proposal was based on the necessity of "transition from truce to a definitive end of hostilities" as a prerequisite for a peaceful settlement in Palestine.<sup>316</sup> It also recommended demilitarized zones to be supervised by UN officials and provided conditional demarcation lines in the Negev. Bunche instructed both Egypt and Israel to withdraw their forces in the Negev in accordance with the provisional lines.<sup>317</sup> The agreement of both parties marked the beginning of a series of successful diplomatic efforts towards implementing the main task of the mediator, stipulated in Resolution 186, i.e. to "promote a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine".

Bunche efforts bore fruit as the Security Council adopted Resolution 62, which incorporated Bunche's draft proposals.<sup>318</sup> The resolution called for the conclusion of an armistice between the conflicting parties.<sup>319</sup> However, Bunche was not satisfied with the tone of the Security Council.<sup>320</sup> Instead of ordering the sides immediately to start talks for an armistice, it called for negotiations. Evidently, Bunche realized that the situation demanded firm measures and only he had learned the lesson that the lack of solid pressure was ineffective.

The mediator had to come up with a strategy to motivate Arab-Israeli negotiations. Throughout the Arab community there was no consent on the matter of holding talks with Israel. While Egypt was willing to sit on the table with Israel, Syria strongly opposed.<sup>321</sup> Egypt officials were determined to negotiate with Israel as long as the Jewish forces

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<sup>316</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 189

<sup>317</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 58-69; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 37-39

<sup>318</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 57.

<sup>319</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 62, 16 November, 1948

<sup>320</sup> Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 190

<sup>321</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press.62-63

withdraw to their positions before Operation Yoav.<sup>322</sup> For its part, Israel refused to give up its military advance. Israel justified its position with the Egyptian defiance of the Security Council's call, 16 November, for an armistice.<sup>323</sup> In that sense, it is evident that both sides chose to adhere to those UN decisions that served their goals. This deadlock towards conducting armistice agreements is another good example of the fruitless UN activities in Palestine due to its failure to enforce its orders.

To make the situation even worse, Israel launched another offensive against Egypt. Bunche submitted a report on the situation to the Security Council.<sup>324</sup> The mediator's review concluded with criticism of Israel as it denied access to the UN observers to the truce area.<sup>325</sup> Bunche condemned Israel's conduct as impeding the progress of the armistice development. As a consequence of the mediator's report, the Security Council ordered "immediate cease-fire" and compliance with the previous two resolutions -- 61 (withdrawal to positions before 14 October, establishing a permanent truce, and demilitarized zones) and 62 (armistice talks).<sup>326</sup>

Bunche reported to the Security Council that both Egypt and Israel had agreed to terminate the hostilities in the Negev followed by negotiations in accordance with the UN instructions.<sup>327</sup> Finally, after so much time and efforts by the international community, an Arab state and Israel would discuss the future of Palestine.<sup>328</sup> Delegations from both countries arrived in Rhodes, the headquarters of the mediation team, on 12 January.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 64

<sup>323</sup> Ibid. 190

<sup>324</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Cablegram Dated 25 December From The Acting Mediator To President Of The Security Council Transmitting Report Concerning Fighting In The Negev*, 27 December, 1948

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 66, 29 December, 1948

<sup>327</sup> United Nations, Security Council, S/1205, 13 January, 1949

<sup>328</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 36-37

<sup>329</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 242-256

Conducting separate talks with the representatives of Egypt and Israel was the first task Bunche tackled. During these discussions, the mediator provided clarifications regarding the procedure of the joint talks. At the end of the meetings, Ralph came to believe that both sides were willing to cooperate.<sup>330</sup>

By realizing that the cease-fire would not endure unless accompanied by provisions for long-term negotiations, Bunche contributed significantly to the Arab-Israeli appeasement.<sup>331</sup> This realization influenced the change of direction Bunche undertook towards the conflict management in Palestine. The idea of armistice negotiations was Bunche's achievement.<sup>332</sup> The consent of the Arab states and Israel to hold talks under UN auspices and the consequent conclusion of the armistice was the first UN triumph in the region.<sup>333</sup> Even though it is not possible to evaluate the exact impact Bunche had, it is undeniable that he played a certain role. Thanks to Bunche's approach to foster talks with each Arab party to the conflict separately, the first Arab-Israeli war ended.<sup>334</sup> Bunche strived to take advantage of the disunity within the Arab community and in this way to assure that each Arab party would discuss its own interests rather than those of the entire Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>335</sup> In other words, Bunche strived to take advantage of the disunity within the Arab community and in this way to assure that each Arab state would discuss its own interests rather than those of the entire Muslim Brotherhood. This research does not

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 65-9

<sup>331</sup> Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 303

<sup>332</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 65-75

<sup>333</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 242-256

<sup>334</sup> Jones, B.D. "The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: 'Responsibility without Power'", in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323. 303

<sup>335</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 246

aim to analyze separately each discussion between Israel and the Arab states. It intends to address the outcome of the conclusion of the armistice agreements for the future of Palestine.

Egypt was the first country to conclude an armistice agreement with Israel (24 February 1949).<sup>336</sup> After the signing of the Egypt-Israel GAA, the rest of the Arab states also concluded agreements with Israel.<sup>337</sup> The GAAs did not settle the boundaries between the conflicting parties; they only specified the truce demarcation lines.<sup>338</sup> Nevertheless, the conclusion of the GAAs was the first successful step of the UN efforts towards a further peace settlement in Palestine. Unfortunately, however, they did not produce the anticipated result, which was the transition to “permanent peace in Palestine”.<sup>339</sup> An example of the significance of the GAAs is the fact that for years they had been “the only recognized framework of relations between Israel and its neighbors”.<sup>340</sup>

By virtue of his peace efforts during the first Arab-Israeli war, Bunche was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1950.<sup>341</sup> Bunche’s award had a positive effect on the United Nations mediation potential.<sup>342</sup> Although the GAAs failed to establish peace in Palestine, the

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<sup>336</sup> Pappé, I., Historicus., (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 178

<sup>337</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 49-50; Eisenberg, Laura Zittrain, and Neil Caplan. 2010. *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace : Patterns, Problems, Possibilities*(version 2nd ed.). 2nd ed. Indiana Series in Middle East Studies. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press. 16

<sup>338</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 242-256; Eisenberg, Laura Zittrain, and Neil Caplan. 2010. *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace : Patterns, Problems, Possibilities*(version 2nd ed.). Indiana Series in Middle East Studies. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press. 16

<sup>339</sup> Berger, E. (1993). *Peace for Palestine : First Lost Opportunity*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida. 219.

<sup>340</sup>Eban, A. S. (1972). *My Country: The Story of Modern Israel*. New York: Random House. 70-73; Urquhart, B. (1993). *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*. New York: W.W. Norton. 212

<sup>341</sup> McNair, J. (2002). *Ralph Bunche* (Journey to Freedom). Chanhassen, MN: Child's World. 10; Sveen, A. (2006, December 9). *Ralph Bunche*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1950/bunche/article/>

<sup>342</sup> Jones, B.D. “The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Wars: ‘Responsibility without Power’”, in Vaughan Lowe, Jennifer Welsh and Dominik Zaum (eds. *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 298-323



agreements introduced negotiating patterns for future tackling of the issue.<sup>343</sup> The principal shortcoming of the GAAs was the lack of details specifying the peace attainment.<sup>344</sup> Bunche determined the absence of a roadmap for peace out of fear that any specifics would thwart the negotiation progress.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 69-75

<sup>344</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 244; Berger, E. (1993). *Peace for Palestine : First Lost Opportunity*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida. 235

<sup>345</sup> Ben-Dror, Elad. 2016. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict : Mediation and the UN, 1947-1949*. Translated by Diana File and Lenn Schramm. Israeli History, Politics, and Society. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 244

## 4. The PCC and its failure to settle the refugee question

The last part of the thesis addresses the Palestinian Conciliation Commission (PCC) and its efforts to resolve the stumbling block in the Arab-Israeli negotiations -- the refugee question. The thesis here aims to explain why the repatriation issue was not solved through the perspective of the internal organization of the United Nations as well as from the implications of the Cold war.

### **Establishment of the Palestine Conciliation Commission**

As discussed in the previous chapters, the question of the Palestinian refugees had significant implications on the arrangement of the situation in the area. The vast number of Arab people, forced to flee their homes as a repercussion of the Arab-Israeli eruption of hostilities, was one of the main obstacles to the mediation progress in Palestine. The repatriation question gained momentum in the aftermath of the emergence of the Jewish state and the consequent Arab-Israeli hostilities.<sup>346</sup> The UN estimated that around 750000 Palestinian refugees fled their homes and settled in the territories surrounding Israel.<sup>347</sup> To find a solution to the problem, the United Nations adopted Resolution 194 on 11 December 1948, which established the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC).<sup>348</sup> Representatives from Turkey, France, and the United States constituted the Commission. The General Assembly Resolution envisaged that the PCC would assume the responsibilities of the UN

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<sup>346</sup> Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 53-57

<sup>347</sup> Morris, B. (2004). *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Vol. 2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1; Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 55

<sup>348</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 194 (III), 11 December, 1948

Mediator on Palestine.<sup>349</sup> In other words, the PCC was to eliminate the post of UN Mediator once the Commission was set up.

### **Responsibilities of the PCC**

Resolution 194 postulated that the “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date”.<sup>350</sup> It also provided that the refugees who would not desire to return should receive compensation for their property. As the GA resolution placed the PCC in charge of the refugee issue, the Commission was responsible for facilitating the relief of the displaced persons. The PCC also had to deal with the outline of the borders and make suggestions for the international regime of Jerusalem.<sup>351</sup>

The primary objective of the PCC, defined by the General Assembly resolution, was to enhance the progress of the peace process in Palestine.<sup>352</sup> The Commission was supposed to “assist the Governments and authorities concerned to achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them.”<sup>353</sup> The resolution instructed the PCC to conduct its obligations outright. However, the Commission officially started work on 17 January, a few days after the Israeli-Egypt armistice negotiations began.<sup>354</sup> Referring to the instructions of Resolution 194, the Conciliation Commission should have been the driving force of the peace settlement. Yet, in practice, it was not even functioning until after the first days of the Egypt-Israeli talks.

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 194 (III), 11 December, 1948

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 194 (III), 11 December, 1948

<sup>354</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 80; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 60

### **PCC - Conciliation Efforts**

During the first meeting of PCC, it was decided to place the headquarters of the Commission in Jerusalem.<sup>355</sup> The Commission members determined that the chairmanship of the Commission would be rotated every two weeks.<sup>356</sup> The Turkish representative, Mr. Yalcin, was chosen to be the first chairman and to be succeeded by the US representative. The first meeting also defined the practicalities of the future conduct of the Commission.

Even though Bunche hoped that the Commission would be ready to replace him at the armistice negotiations, the PCC, for fear of thwarting the advance of the discussions, decided to let Bunche lead the process.<sup>357</sup> On its part, the Commission embarked on a series of visits in the Arab states and Israel. As a result of the PCC meeting with representatives of both sides, it became evident that, apart from Transjordan, neither of the Arab governments were willing to enter peace negotiations unless Israel promised to settle the refugee question.<sup>358</sup> The Israeli authorities, however, did not alter their firm policy of making any concessions and refused to satisfy the preconditions of the Arab states. Thus, from the onset of its intermediary efforts, the PCC found itself into a deadlock situation.<sup>359</sup>

### **Beirut Conference**

In March, the Commission worked on the preparation of meetings between the PCC and the Arab governments in Beirut.<sup>360</sup> There were certain disagreements within the Commission regarding the agenda of the opening meeting in Beirut. While the American

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<sup>355</sup> United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, A/AC.25/SR.1, 17 January, 1949

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 60; Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 90-91.

<sup>358</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The peace brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 81

<sup>359</sup> Ibid. 84; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 66-71

<sup>360</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 64-66.

member, Mark Ethridge, considered that discussions on the main issues should start from the onset of the meeting, the French representative, Mr. de Boisanger, disagreed. According to Boisanger:

the Commission could go too far in the first meeting without forcing the Arab representatives to take a position which, in the presence of the other delegations, might be binding.<sup>361</sup>

On the contrary, Ethridge deemed practical that “a short relief period, an interim period and the period for repatriation or resettlement” set the agenda of the meeting.<sup>362</sup> The suggestion of Boisanger ultimately prevailed and the PCC decided not to discuss the details of the refugee issue, nor to mention the Israeli refusal to compromise on that matter.<sup>363</sup>

The Commission deliberated over how to approach the complex matter of the refugees. Ethridge considered that the PCC ought to negotiate with the Arab states in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 194.<sup>364</sup> He emphasized the capacity of Israel to accept a certain number of refugees and the need to assure that the Arab delegation acknowledged that fact.<sup>365</sup> The American representative recommended that “the Commission should persuade the Arab States to attempt to resettle the refugees by providing them with work, rather than with direct relief.”<sup>366</sup> In that sense, the PCC had to concentrate on finding a way to induce the Arabs to abandon their unrealistic demand for returning all the refugees in Israel. The difficult task of the Commission stemmed from the fact that it had to bring the Arabs to divert from their strong positions and compromise on

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<sup>361</sup> United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, A/AC.25/SR.25, 19 March 1949

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 86-90

<sup>364</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 60-69

<sup>365</sup> United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, A/AC.25/SR.25, 19 March 1949

<sup>366</sup> United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, A/AC.25/SR.27, 21 March 1949

the refugee question, while at the same time the PCC had to prove to the Arabs that it was not biased in favor of Israel. In other words, the first task of the PCC during the Beirut meetings was to make the Arab delegation realize the unrealistic nature its demand and as a result to recognize that a number of refugees would have to remain outside Israel.<sup>367</sup>

As anticipated, the refugee question was the primary subject throughout the Beirut Conference. Fortunately, the PCC mediation efforts proved fruitful. During the discussions, the Conciliation Commission succeeded in convincing the Arab states to make concessions to their precondition for negotiating a general peace settlement with Israel. All states, apart from Iraq, agreed to discuss the arrangement of the refugee issue after first negotiating other matters.<sup>368</sup> The conference resulted in planning another series of meetings in Lausanne, where the Commission would hold talks with Israeli representatives too.<sup>369</sup> This situation could be regarded as the first achievement of the Palestine Conciliation Commission. In spite of the complex matter of the refugee question, the Commission managed to overcome its obstruction and realized its goal, i.e. to prod both sides to start negotiating a general peace settlement.

### **Lausanne Conference**

The Lausanne Conference began in late April and in the first days the PCC had official and informal meetings with both Arab and Israeli delegations.<sup>370</sup> From the onset of the conference, the Commission representatives came to “the belief that a sincere desire existed on both sides to achieve positive progress toward the reestablishment of peace in

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<sup>367</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 59-61

<sup>368</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Conciliation Commission For Palestine, Third Progress Report*, 21 June 1949

<sup>369</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press. 82-84

<sup>370</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 76-100

Palestine.”<sup>371</sup> However, the question of the repatriation of the refugees again prevailed over the progress of peace negotiations. The Arab delegation adhered to its condition that Israel, in accordance with Resolution 194, accepted the principle of admitting the refugees in its territory as soon as possible. The rejection of Israel of this principle led to the Arab refusal to continue with the territorial negotiations.<sup>372</sup>

Both sides submitted to the PCC their own proposals on the arrangement of the displaced persons. The Israeli delegation suggested that if the territory of Gaza was consolidated into the Jewish state, the Israeli authorities would “be prepared to accept as citizens of Israel the entire Arab population of the area”.<sup>373</sup> The delegation declared that Israel would not accept any refugees unless their proposal was welcomed. The Arab proposal, on the other hand, insisted that the refugees from the areas of the Arab zone, occupied by Israeli forces, were granted the opportunity to return to their home outright. In this context, the mutually exclusive positions of both sides made no room for maneuver by the PCC. There was no proper action that would not lead to criticism that the PCC was partial and distrust by either side. The PCC conciliation efforts faced a standstill which seemed impossible to overcome.<sup>374</sup>

In May, the Conciliation Commission persuaded the delegations to sign a protocol, which provided a basis for the linkage between the territorial matters and the refugee question. Israel’s signing of the document was made after a preliminary declaration that the state “reserved its position” to “express itself freely on the matters at issue”.<sup>375</sup> Here, the question of the implications of the protocol on the further progress of peace negotiations

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<sup>371</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Conciliation Commission For Palestine, Third Progress Report*, 21 June 1949.

<sup>372</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 89-100

<sup>373</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Conciliation Commission For Palestine, Third Progress Report*, 21 June, 194

<sup>374</sup> Caplan(1997); Touval (1982).

<sup>375</sup> United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, A/AC.25/SR/LM/8, 12 May 1949; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc. 81-84

must be raised. Provided that Israel retained its right to non-compliance with the territorial lines set by the Commission, there was no point at all of the Israeli signature. Under these circumstances the protocol, even though it may seem to have been an achievement, proved vain as it did not alter the Arab-Israeli negotiation situation. The main issues, hindering the conciliation advance, were still unresolved and therefore the deadlock remained. Not a single step towards tackling the repatriation was made by this initiative of the Conciliation Commission.

### **The Impact of the US-Israel Relations**

From the perspective of the Principal Secretary of the Conciliation Commission, Pablo de Azcárate, the American representative did not perceive the sensitivity of the situation. In his narrative of the situation, Azcárate criticizes Ethridge for his impatience with the standstill of the negotiations.<sup>376</sup> The Secretary of the Commission acknowledged that “direct and rapid methods” would not prove fruitful. The American representative to the Commission, on his part, expressed his concerns about the repercussions of the unfair Israeli attitude towards the Arab Community. In a telegram to the US Secretary of State, Ethridge communicated his views on the Arab-Israeli negotiations. He was worried that the weakness of the Arabs, which resulted in a number of concessions to Israel, and any “unfair arrangements sponsored by UN and approved by the US would have serious repercussions and discredit US”.<sup>377</sup> In his efforts to prevent such events, Ethridge proposed exerting economic pressure on Israel; however, the White House did not support his initiative.<sup>378</sup>

This example illustrates the significance of the Jewish-American relations and their impact on the UN peace efforts. The justification of the US non-cooperation with

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<sup>376</sup> Azcárate, P. (1966). *Mission in Palestine, 1948-1952*. Washington: Middle East Institute. 137

<sup>377</sup> “Mr. Mark F. Ethridge to the Secretary of State”, 13 April 1949, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949, Vol. VI: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, p. 916

<sup>378</sup> Fraser, T. G. 2004. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (version 2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 56



Ethridge's efforts to pressure Israel may be explained with the significant influence of the Jewish diaspora in the American internal and foreign affairs. Among other things, the Jewish population in the United States constitutes an important electorate.<sup>379</sup> Therefore, the US policy, in the examined period, tended to be soft towards the Israeli conduct in Palestine, regardless of its defiance of UN orders. Furthermore, the advance of the Cold war also played a role in shaping the US policy towards Israel.<sup>380</sup> Israel was a US ally in the strategic rivalry between the West and the East. In that sense, the lack of US support for the American representative to the PCC may be explained by Washington's strive to secure its Middle East positions.

It cannot be evidenced whether provided that the Conciliation Commission and the United States had supported the methods of Ethridge the refugee issue would have been resolved. Yet, the implementation of his suggestions would have led to a different evolution of the Arab-Israeli relations, and, in particular, the development of the repatriation problem. On the other hand, it is worth recognizing Azcárate's point of view on the matter of procedure. If the Conciliation Commission had exerted pressure on Israel, the situation might have deteriorated further. For instance, Israeli authorities most likely would have instructed the Jewish delegation to leave the Lausanne Conference and Israel would have refused to negotiate under UN auspices.<sup>381</sup>

The unproductiveness of the Lausanne Conference continued and the United States resolved to increase its involvement in the Arab-Israeli matters. The US regarded the overcoming of the negotiations stalemate as its duty in order to preserve the American

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<sup>379</sup> Owendale, R. (2013). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. [Fourth edition.]. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 127; Snetsinger, J. (1974). *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press. 80; Cohen, M. (2014). *Britain's Moment in Palestine : Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-48*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. 449

<sup>380</sup> Waldman, S. (2015). *Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1948-51* (Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World). Palgrave Macmillan. 37

<sup>381</sup> Touval, S. (1982). *The Peace Brokers : Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*. Princeton etc: Princeton University Press.; Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954* (Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.

interests.<sup>382</sup> The US was aware that the arrangement of the refugee issue “would create a favorable atmosphere for a final political settlement” in Palestine.<sup>383</sup> The Assistant Secretary of State for the Near Eastern and African Affairs, McGhee, recommended that the US appointed “a strong representative”<sup>384</sup> to the PCC who would urge the Secretary-General of the UN to utilize an American administrator to head the Commission.<sup>385</sup> McGhee also proposed the establishment of the Economic Survey Mission (ESM) to foster the repatriation and compensation of the refugees as well as to examine the economic situation in areas affected by the Arab-Israeli fighting. In charge of the ESM was also urged to be an American official.<sup>386</sup>

The McGhee recommendations serve as another argument why the United Nations efforts did not contribute to the solution of the refugee question. The analysis of the suggestions again alludes to the US hamper of the Palestinian settlement. Throughout Ethridge’s function as a representative to the PCC, he did not gain the US support even though his initiatives seem to have been similar to those later urged by McGhee as essential features of the next US representative to the Commission. In this respect, the question of what caused the change in the US position should be raised. The current research notes that one of the main reasons for the failure to tackle the repatriation issue during the period under review was the American conduct.

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<sup>382</sup>“Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and African Affairs (McGhee) to the Secretary of State”, 13 July 1949, in *Foreign Relations of the United States. 1949, Vol. VI: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, p. 1218

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>384</sup> “Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and African Affairs (McGhee) to the Secretary of State”, 13 July 1949, in *Foreign Relations of the United States. 1949, Vol. VI: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, p. 1219

<sup>385</sup> The previous American representative to the PCC had resigned after the lack of US support for his initiatives in the Commission.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conclusion

The United Nations has been an active player in the Middle East peace settlement from the onset of its existence. The organization's engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict first began with the UNSCOP's departure to Palestine. The United Nations made a lot of efforts to resolve the dispute, as the observations in the previous parts suggest; yet, the young organization did not attain its primary goal -- a peaceful settlement in Palestine. Even today, more than seventy-two years after the UN's first encounter with the Arab-Israeli conflict, the issue still remains unresolved. Compared with the situation throughout the period under review, the only difference in the conflict nowadays is that the UN is no longer the only international platform for the conflict's peacemaking/peacekeeping. It should be noted that the dispute developed in a number of ways. For example, the number and the interests of the actors, both state and non-state, have altered. Furthermore, the region suffered a series of crises such as the Suez crisis (1956), Six day war (1967), the First(1987) and the Second Intifada(2000).

Even though the research observations evidenced that the UN's involvement did not influence the Arab-Israeli conflict in regard to the evolution towards peace, the international community did alter the situation's advance. First, by adopting Resolution 181, the United Nations gave incentive to the Jewish people in Palestine to establish their national home. From the perspective of some authors, discussed in the first part of the thesis, the outcome of the partition plan was the eruption of the Arab-Israeli war.<sup>387</sup> In other words, it was the UN's participation in the region that ignited the military confrontation between Jews and Arabs. This research, however, based on the analysis of the events under

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<sup>387</sup> Pappé, I., *Historicus*, (1992). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. London etc.: Tauris. 41

review, argues that war was not the immediate impact of the partition. It is clear that before the UN assumed responsibility for the Palestinian issue, the conflict between Jews and Arabs had already reached a stage of irreconcilability.<sup>388</sup> There was a constant flow of Jewish-Arab hostilities. In this sense, it would be more accurate to regard the result of Resolution 181 as an accelerator of the inevitable development of the Arab-Israeli relations. Therefore, the UN's efforts in Palestine did not themselves trigger the war. The Declaration of the State of Israel served as another accelerator of the military conflict. The UN's engagement in the dispute did not change the course of the conflict significantly by adopting R181; it only accelerated the occurrence of the inevitable evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict towards military violence.

Despite the fact that Bernadotte's mediation efforts did not resolve the dispute, in the long-term perspective, his efforts produced patterns for the future settlement encounters.<sup>389</sup> Being the first UN mediator, Bernadotte paved the way for the next intermediaries, not only in Palestine, but also in other conflicting regions. He also contributed to the increased US and UK involvement in the region, which later enhanced the efforts of Bunche and the PCC.<sup>390</sup> The long-term perspective of Bunche's mediation had greater importance. Thanks to the conclusion of the armistice agreements, not only the first war between Jews and Arabs ended, but also the agreements served as the political framework for the Arab-Israeli relations for years to come.<sup>391</sup> The research also addressed the impact of the US policy and interests on the conciliation efforts by the PCC regarding the refugee question.

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<sup>388</sup> Khouri, F. J., "United Nations Peace Efforts", in Kerr, M. (1975). *The Elusive Peace in the Middle East*. [1st ed.]. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.19-101. 88-89; Cohen, M., & Mazal Holocaust Collection. (1987). *The Origins And Evolution of The Arab-Zionist Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 458

<sup>389</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 30-31

<sup>390</sup> Ibid. 32

<sup>391</sup> Eban, A. S. (1972). *My Country: The Story of Modern Israel*. New York: Random House. 70-73

This thesis argued that the UN's efforts did not bear fruit, in terms of achieving peace, due to the obstinacy of the conflicting parties. Had both sides showed willingness to compromise, the outcome of the participation of the UN in the dispute would have been different. Another major reason for the UN inefficiency was, as Caplan puts it, owing to the fact that the intermediaries "had been armed only with the power of moral persuasion".<sup>392</sup> In this sense, if the UN had established a pressure mechanism, it might have accomplished a peace settlement. However, it is impossible to assume how the conflict would have developed.

The current research is mostly based on UN official documents, such as resolutions, meeting records and recommendation reports. Due to resource access restrictions, the study does not utilize official documents presenting the reactions of the belligerent parties to the mediation efforts. Another limitation of the thesis is the omission of the analysis of the influence of the Holocaust on the endorsement by the international community of the Jewish state. However, the above-mentioned limitations do not serve a significant role for the purposes of the thesis. Regarding the source restrictions, the study overcomes it by drawing upon a large number of secondary literature as well as primary sources such as biographies and memoirs of the leading figures in the conflict.

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<sup>392</sup> Caplan, N. (1997). *The United Nations, the Great Powers, and Middle East Peacemaking 1948-1954*(Futile diplomacy, vol. 3). London etc.: 2

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