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*Note de la direction des Nations Unies
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from United Nations Division
to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

SECRET

[Ottawa], March 24, 1949

FINANCING BY I.R.O. OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION INTO PALESTINE⁸⁷

The I.R.O. on May 18, 1948, stopped paying the transportation costs of Jewish immigrants into Palestine on the grounds that the country was an area of hostilities. Another reason, not openly expressed, was that the influx of Jewish refugees and other causes had driven many thousands of Arabs out of Palestine and that the Government of Israel had made no move to assume responsibility either for relief or repatriation of these persons.

2. There has been heavy pressure on the Executive Committee, both from the United States and from private Jewish organizations, to reverse this decision. Jewish groups in Canada have also made strong representations to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

3. At the last meeting of the I.R.O. Executive Committee in late January, a Canadian sponsored proposal was adopted which instructed the Director-General, before resuming payment, to ask the Conciliation Commission for an assurance that this action would not interfere with the execution of the Commission's task. The United Kingdom strenuously opposed the resumption of payments by I.R.O.

4. The Conciliation Commission has now refused to give an opinion on the grounds that the question is outside its competence. The Director-General, at the Executive Committee meeting in Geneva tomorrow, March 25, will therefore propose that I.R.O. resume payment as from February 1.

5. It does not appear that any useful purpose would be served by instructing Mr. Désy to continue his opposition to the resumption of payment by I.R.O. Many thousands of Jewish refugees are now pouring into Palestine, not only from I.R.O. camps in Europe, but also from North Africa, Bulgaria and countries of east Europe. The effect of a continued refusal on the part of I.R.O. might, therefore, be to leave Jews in I.R.O. camps who might have gone to Palestine while permitting other Jews, for whom the United Nations have no responsibility, to make their homes in the Middle East.

6. I accordingly attach for signature, if you approve, a telegram to Mr. Désy† suggesting that he support the Director-General's proposal, but make some statement to the effect that the State of Israel should accept some responsibility for the fate of the displaced Arabs.

J.W. HOLMES

⁸⁷ Note marginale/Marginal note:

Mr. Pearson[:] I've asked Mr. Holmes to take this up with you. E[scott] R[eid]