

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

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

held in New York on Friday,
4 November 1949, at 4 p.m.

Present :	Mr. de la Tour du Pin	(France)	- Chairman
	Mr. Savut	(Turkey)	
	Mr. Rockwell	(U.S.A.)	
	Mr. Azcarate		- Principal Secretary
	Mr. Abdel Chafi El Labbane		- Representative of Egypt
	Dr. Yusuf Haikal		- Representative of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom
	Mr. Edward Ghorra		- Representative of Lebanon
	Mr. Ahmad Shoukairi		- Representative of Syria

The CHAIRMAN recalled that before leaving Lausanne the General Committee had requested the Principal Secretary, during the Commission's recess, to follow up on certain questions which still remained unsettled. He paid tribute to the efforts of the Principal Secretary and the work accomplished by him in Jerusalem, and, on the basis of his report, summarized the situation as it stood at present.

Separated families. It was now possible to state that three of the Arab States had named representatives to work with the Israeli representatives, and lists were being studied by both parties. As regards Syria, there had been a misunderstanding; it appeared that the Syrian Government had not received the Israeli Government's correspondence, and no representative had been appointed. The Chairman therefore asked the Syrian representative present to communicate with his Government and inform the General Committee when and how Syrian representatives

could contact Israeli representatives to deal with the question. The Chairman expressed his conviction that the way was now open to a satisfactory solution of the problem.

Orange groves. The Chairman regretted to inform the Arab delegations that it would not be possible to establish the proposed mixed committee of experts to study the problem of preservation of the groves. This failure was due to the refusal of the Israeli Government to countenance such a committee or to permit access to the territory by the owners of the groves.

Cultivation of lands cut by the Armistice Line.

The Chairman recalled that the Technical Committee on Refugees had suggested measures to assist certain Arab families living near Tulkarm, whose farmlands lay on the Israeli side of the Armistice Line. The question had been submitted to the Special Committee set up by the Israeli-Jordanian Armistice Agreement, which had resumed meetings for the purpose. Negotiations were now in progress; and while no definite information had been received as yet, he could assure the Arab delegations that the Commission was in constant telegraphic contact with Jerusalem, and that as soon as information was received it would be communicated to the Arab delegations.

Arab blocked accounts. The Chairman recalled that a Mixed Committee of Experts had been established to deal with this question. The work had proceeded during the Commission's recess, and the General Committee had full confidence in the procedure set up by the Principal Secretary. The Commission's economic adviser had been left in charge of the necessary preparatory work, and was maintaining close liaison with both parties. No further details could be given at present, but he assured the Arab delegations that the question was receiving active consideration.

Mr. LABBANE (Egypt) endorsed the Chairman's tribute to the work of the Principal Secretary; he also extended a welcome to the new members who had joined the Committee and the delegations in New York, expressing confidence that the same spirit of friendly collaboration which had prevailed in Lausanne would be evident during the meetings in New York.

With regard to the reuniting of separated families

Mr. Labbane referred to the summary record of a meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission on 10 October, in which it was reported that an Israeli representative from the Department of Immigration had requested lists of the families concerned and had promised to submit his own lists of families in the sector of Gaza-Rafah, which had been established in conformity with the wishes of the Arabs in the Israeli zone. He understood from the Chairman's statement that those lists had now been established, and asked when they had been presented.

The CHAIRMAN replied that the last information received by the Commission had been dated 27 October. According to that information, the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom had agreed to the procedure on 26 October; both parties were to present lists at the following meeting, of which no report had as yet been received. As of the same date, the Egyptian representative had still been engaged in discussing procedure and no lists had been exchanged. The Lebanese Government had agreed to the suggested procedure and had submitted, on 27 October, lists totaling about 7,000 names. As regards Syria, duplicates of the correspondence from the Israeli Government had been despatched to Damascus. The Chairman hoped that the General Committee would be in a position to furnish further information at the next meeting.

Mr. LABBANE (Egypt), referring to the matter of the orange groves, said that his delegation had nothing further to add to the statements it had made in Lausanne, and could only add its regrets to those expressed by the Chairman. With regard to cultivation of lands cut by the Armistice Line, he drew attention to the three proposals made by his Government on the subject, as reported to the Commission by the head of the Egyptian delegation (SR/NYM.3).

The CHAIRMAN observed that the question of the Egyptian proposals still remained on the agenda of the Commission, which had not yet taken a decision thereon. As regards the preservation of the groves, he wished to state that the General Committee was not satisfied with the situation and did not consider that the matter was closed. The entire documentation on the subject had been furnished to the Economic Survey Mission; he did not know whether the

Mission would be able to achieve results, but in any case they had been informed of the situation.

Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) expressed his appreciation to the Principal Secretary and to the General Committee for the ground covered so far; if the success achieved had been limited in scope, he thought that no doubt existed as to the reasons for that lack of success. Like his colleagues, he regretted the failure of the Committee's efforts concerning preservation of the groves, but hoped that the subject was not as yet a closed one. With regard to the other three questions mentioned, he expressed satisfaction that they were receiving active consideration, and hoped that the progress made would be commensurate with the importance of the problems involved. As regards the position of his own Government in the matter of the separated families, he was convinced that there must have been a misunderstanding, which he hoped could be traced and clarified to the satisfaction of all.

He had one suggestion he wished to place before the General Committee. The question of compensation for property of refugees not desiring to return to their homes, while not at present an urgent matter, was nevertheless an outstanding item which had not as yet been touched upon directly. It was not necessary to consider the matter of individual claims at the present time, but since the question would require settlement eventually, he invited the attention of the General Committee to the matter, in order that the general principles to govern the eventual settlement might be established.

The CHAIRMAN affirmed that the General Committee was as eager to achieve results in all the matters pending as were the Arab delegations, and accordingly was sparing no effort to advance toward a solution in each case. He reiterated his delegation's long-standing interest in the question of the reuniting of separated families, and expressed his hope that the Syrian representative would assist the General Committee by providing all possible information, in order that further delay might be avoided. As regards the matter of compensation, the Syrian representative's observations were pertinent, and in conformity with article 11 of the resolution of 11 December 1948; they would be recorded and brought to the attention of the Commission. He pointed out that the question had already been dealt with, although it had not as yet been delegated to the