SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GENERAL REFUGEE CONGRESS

held in Lausanne on Friday,
13 May 1949, at 11:30 a.m.

Present: Mr. de Boisanger (France) - Chairman
       Mr. Yalcin   (Turkey)
       Mr. Ethridge   (U.S.A.)

       Mr. Azcarate   - Principal Secretary

       Mr. Aziz Shihadeh
       Mr. M. N. Hawwari   Representatives of
       Mr. Nassib Bulos   - the General Refugee
       Mr. Zaki Barakat   Congress

Mr. HAWWARI made a statement explaining the origins of the General Refugee Congress and its claims to be the only authority representing the refugees located in Palestine, drawing attention to the most important reasons why a prompt settlement of the refugee problem was essential, and listing several specific measures which it felt should be taken immediately, as matters of particular urgency (document ORG/13).

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Hawwari for his statement and asked that a copy of it should be communicated to the Commission for its further study. Many of the points mentioned were already being taken up with the Israeli delegation; not all had been satisfactorily dealt with, but the Commission was pursuing its inquiries with Dr. Eytan. The suggestion made for the establishment of a mixed survey commission, to appraise the condition of refugee property in Palestine, was a particularly interesting one, which would be given close attention.

Mr. YALCIN asked whether any approximate figures could be given regarding the number of refugees who had been separated from their immediate families.

Mr. BULOS replied that the question was a difficult one, since the Arab idea of "immediate" family relationship in this connection might differ from the western conception. He had no figures available at the moment, but would try to furnish approximate estimates.

In reply to a question from Mr. Yalcin regarding the relation between the General Refugee Congress and the Arab Higher Committee, Mr. BULOS explained that there was no relationship as such. The General Refugee Congress did not acknowledge the right of the Arab States or any other organisation to represent the refugees located in Palestine itself (excluding the Gaza area).

The CHAIRMAN congratulated the representatives of the General Refugee Congress on the clarity of their presentation of the essential problems. The Commission would study Mr. Hawwari's statement carefully and take up all points mentioned in it with the Israeli delegation.