

SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND
H.M. KING ABDULLAH OF TRANSJORDAN AND
HIS EXCELLENCY TEWFIK PASHA, PRIME
MINISTER OF TRANSJORDAN

held at King Abdullah's Palace in Chouleh
on 20 February 1949

Present: H.M. King Abdullah
H.E. Tewfik Pasha - Prime Minister of Transjordan

Mr. Yalchin (Turkey) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary

Speaking in general terms, the KING and his PRIME MINISTER stressed the necessity of leading the Jews back to a spirit of moderation; they should not be allowed to believe that the Arabs appeared at these negotiations as vanquished people. They emphasized on the other hand that peace was necessary to all and that peace in Palestine was closely linked to the general peace.

Although at the beginning of the conversation the Prime Minister maintained that the idea of convening a preparatory conference of the Arab States was not acceptable because the only result would be a loss of time, at a later stage the King and the Prime Minister agreed to participate in such a meeting, it being clearly understood that if the assembly of Arab States could not be brought to enter into peace negotiations with Israel, the Government of Transjordan would immediately undertake negotiations for a separate peace. In a private conversation with Mr. de Boisanger, the Prime Minister strongly insisted that this preparatory conference of the Arab States be held in Beirut.

On the subject of refugees, the Prime Minister explained, in answer to a question by Mr. Ethridge, that in the first place the right of the refugees to return to their homes should be recognized and guaranteed. If the Government of Israel were to refuse to permit them to return, the Government of Transjordan was

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prepared to facilitate their permanent settlement either in Transjordan or in the Arab part of Palestine. This would raise the question on the one hand of indemnities to be paid by the Jews and on the other of the necessity of foreign financial support. The Prime Minister added that a law had been passed a few days previously giving to all the refugees the right to apply for Transjordanian citizenship and to obtain a passport. The number of applications was very high and in the Prime Minister's opinion this fact made it possible to assert that at least in territory occupied by the forces of Iraq and Transjordan, the solution of the refugee problem was beginning to take shape. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that in one or two months approximately 80% of the refugees would be in Transjordan, which was the country that offered them the greatest facilities for the exercise of their trades and professions. In the Prime Minister's opinion, only those refugees who had left immovable property in territory occupied by the Jews would wish to return. These would not be more than 8 or 10% of the total number.

With regard to Jerusalem, the King declared categorically that its retention by the Arabs was an absolute necessity. He added that Jerusalem under Jewish domination was a dagger pointed against the heart of Transjordan. The military evacuation of Jerusalem would present grave dangers. The Arabs should re-acquire the Arab quarters of the New City and in any case should have control of the railway station of Mount Zion. He stated that he assumed that the reference of the Chairman to a possible solution consisting of a kind of "suzerainty" of the United Nations with two mandates to the Jews and the Arabs for their respective zones, had simply been made in order to give an example.

The Prime Minister declared that no official contacts with the Jews had taken place. Individuals had been able to meet and discuss questions of common interest.

The Prime Minister declared unequivocally that the Israeli-Transjordan negotiations at Rhodes would be of an exclusively military nature. He added that Transjordan was very interested in its conversation with the Commission.