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LETTER DATED 1 MARCH 1971 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ISRAEL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you on 22 February 1971 by the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and the United Arab Republic (A/8286, S/10130) concerning Jerusalem.

That letter contains many distortions and falsifications. For example, the statistics which appear on page 4 of the letter do not refer to the city of Jerusalem but to the entire district. They are taken from the Survey of Palestine, where they are entitled "The Total Population of the Sub-District of Jerusalem including the Rural Population of the Sub-District". This same source confirms that Jews constituted the majority of the urban population of Jerusalem in each of the years 1922, 1931 and 1944 - the first two figures being census returns, and the third an official projection prepared by the Statistical Services of the Mandatory Government (in 1922, 33,971 Jews of the total 62,578; in 1931, 51,222 Jews of the total 90,503; and in 1944, 97,000 Jews of the total 157,080).

In this connexion it may be noted that the Jewish majority in the city of Jerusalem existed many decades before the British Mandate. Thus we find in Baedeker's Palestine and Syria (Leipzig, 2nd ed., 1894, pp. 53-54) that according to statistics for the year 1887 there lived in Jerusalem 28,000 Jews out of 43,000 citizens. The accurate statistics for the year 1905 are 40,000 Jews out of 60,000 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 13th ed., vol. 15, p. 335).

It is a gross distortion to state that a confiscation of lands took place in Jerusalem and it is in contradiction to details contained in annex II of the

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Arab letter. The truth is that Jewish and Arab lands were expropriated without any punitive element or discrimination, for purposes of public development and housing. Some of the owners of the lands in question, Jews and Arabs alike, have already received full compensation, and negotiations with the remainder over the compensation to be paid are continuing. Acquisition of land for such purposes is a common feature of public administration all over the world. In Jerusalem, resort was frequently had to it by the Jordanian authorities when they were in usurped control of part of the city.

Similarly, the preparation of a master plan for any city is the customary procedure of modern urban development throughout the world. In Jerusalem, the municipal authorities are doing their best in this direction through consultations with world-renowned experts.

The passages in the letter of the two Arab representatives adverting to the evacuation of the Old City are another instance of factual distortion. They in fact refer to the reconstruction of the Old Jewish Quarter, which had been destroyed with premeditation by the Jordanian authorities during their 1948 aggression and misrule. That destruction had encompassed thirty-nine synagogues and places of learning, apart from residences and other Jewish public buildings. The Jews have inhabited the Old City of Jerusalem from its earliest recorded history. However, between 1948 and 1967 the Jordanian Government uprooted and expelled all the Jewish citizens, and transformed this quarter and with it the whole of the Old City into an area utterly clear of Jews (Judenrein). Moreover, the Jordanian Government prevented free access to the Jewish Holy Places, in flagrant violation of its international obligations.

It is a matter of record that the two States whose representatives signed the letter of 22 February 1971 are the only States in modern history which exerted maximum efforts to destroy the city of Jerusalem by armed force. In 1948 the two Governments attempted to conquer Jerusalem and in the process resorted to heavy bombardment and shelling of the besieged city. I already described Jordan's policy in the occupied part of the city in my letter to the Secretary-General of 5 March 1968.^{1/} Later, in June 1967, the Government of

^{1/} Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-third Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1968, document S/8439. (Also issued under the symbol A/7064).

Jordan resumed its aggression against Jerusalem and turned it into a battlefield after rejecting an Israeli appeal through General Odd Bull, head of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, expressing Israel's desire to remain at peace with Jordan.

I have the honour to request circulation of this letter as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(Signed) Yosef TEKOAH
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
