

The intransigence of the Arabs and Jews to meet ~~together~~ with the commission frustrated its members almost beyond endurance. Here were these ~~most~~ baffling, intricate issues <sup>H/</sup> pertaining to boundaries, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and refugees <sup>H/</sup> to be thrashed out and the commissioners couldn't even get the leaders of the two sides into the same room.

The Commission divided its ~~members~~ into committees <sup>tees</sup> to study in depth the specific problems and these committees conducted interviews with the Arabs and ~~then~~ with the Jews and then suggested solutions to each side, <sup>which</sup> ~~The solutions~~ were promptly rejected.

<sup>Recognizing</sup> Deciding the ~~Commission~~ needed <sup>to</sup> get better acquainted with the heads of the Arab world, who so far had refused even to meet with <sup>Commission</sup> ~~its~~ representatives <sup>to</sup> and learn directly from ~~them~~ their thoughts on these problems, the Commission set out early one morning <sup>in</sup> on two Turkish airline DC-3s to face <sup>the Arab leaders</sup> ~~them~~ directly.

Eight years later, when King Ibn Saud Abdul Aziz al Faisal al Saud, ~~the~~ son of the famous King Ibn Saud, ~~came~~ <sup>ed</sup> for a visit ~~to~~ the United States, Mark wrote a full-page article for the Courier-Journal about <sup>that</sup> ~~this~~ tour of Saudi Arabia. It is the only writing, other than official dispatches, <sup>that</sup> he ~~has~~ ever <sup>did</sup> ~~done~~ concerning his experiences as the United States member of the Palestine Conciliation Commission.

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<sup>#</sup> <sup>"since"</sup>  
~~SIXXX~~ "Since Egypt was pretty much the key... to peace in the Middle East, we flew [first] to Cairo... he wrote <sup>There they</sup> and had several sessions with Farouk's Cabinet ministers." <sup>the report continued</sup>

"We took off from Cairo... <sup>"</sup> and headed for Jiddah, the airport of Mecca on the Red Sea; passed over Mount Sinai with its monastery where priceless documents have recently been discovered, and, instead of heading straight for Jiddah, veered over toward Medina where Mohammed is buried. It is the second most sacred city to the Arabs...." <sup>+</sup>

<sup>AP?</sup> "Mr. Yalcin <sup>the</sup> Turkish delegate/was a Moslem to whom going to Mecca/was like going to heaven. (He later made Mecca.) He told the Turkish pilot to set us down at the Medina airport and he would go into town. Nobody except the six Moslems aboard could go into Mecca, except at the risk of being torn to pieces. We were 'infidel dogs.' <sup>( ) ok here or [ ]</sup>

"It was a fine idea except for the fact that there was no airport at Medina. The charts said there was a strip of marl (decayed rock) and sand on which planes could land. But Medina is an oasis surrounded <sup>medea</sup> by the desert, and, if there had ever been a landing strip, it had been obscured by drifting sand. <sup>ok on [ ]?</sup>

"The pilot decided to try it anyway. We went in fast because of low mountains around us; bounced three or four times like <sup>a</sup> kangaroo when the plane wheels hit the rock, and banked up sharply under heavy gunning by the pilot. We barely missed a camel grazing on thorn grass, a peasant's hut, and the mosque wherein Mohammed's body lay.

"I thought certainly I would sleep with the prophet that night."

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After Medina, the Commission resumed its journey to Jiddah, which Mark described as "a hell hole of a town on the Red Sea where the seaborne pilgrims bound for Mecca land to make the 35- or 40-mile trek inland. Nevertheless it is the official capital of Saudi Arabia ~~that~~ that is, the capital where all the foreign emissaries must live. Because of that, the Foreign Minister, who was Faisal, second surviving son of old Ibn Saud... had his palace there....

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"A couple of hours after our arrival," Mark continued, "we were called for in Cadillacs and driven to his <sup>[Faisal's]</sup> palace. <sup>The</sup> [Faisal's] council room, as big as the Crystal Ballroom at the Brown Hotel, was wall-to-wall carpeted in the handsomest green and white Bokhara rug I have ever seen, and <sup>done</sup> ~~don~~ in Louis XIV décor.

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"We had coffee, heavily scented with Indian spices, and talked for about two hours. It was obvious that what was to be said about Saudi Arabia's policy as to Israel would be said by the old King.

"Next morning we set off for Ibn Saud's home town and principal capital, Riyadh, about <sup>five hundred</sup> 500 miles away.

"On another plane that accompanied us and preceded us in landing were the Chief of the Cabinet, the Finance Minister, and other principals of the government. Most of them were Lebanese or Syrians. Old Ibn Saud drew his advisers principally from the countries around him, although one of his sons was Minister of War and another the Foreign Minister.

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"We sat down on a macadam runway... and were escorted to two Bedouin tents put up on the desert. There, on magnificent Persian rugs that had been spread over the sand, we were given the welcome coffee and then escorted to the Crown Prince's palace, two or three miles away.

"It is an oasis, with a few trees growing around it. A burro was hitched to a water wheel, and drew the precious commodity up from the well.

"Fabulous oil revenues have since provided the royal sons with infinitely more palatial residences, but this was not in that class. It was a sandstone structure built around a hollow square with Moorish balconies over an inner court. There was primitive electric lighting <sup>H</sup> furnished, I was told, by a generator on a truck. The palace had two bathrooms of sorts, but they did work."

After Mark described the bare furnishings of his room <sup>H</sup> an iron cot <sup>H</sup> he told of his ride, before his appointment at the King's palace, around <sup>Riyadh</sup> ~~Riyadh~~. In a Cadillac, of course. "There was a road from the town out to the King's palace," he wrote, "but mostly we rode up wadis (dry creek beds). The tire consumption must be terrific... We were not taken into the town. Ibn Saud was never keen for his people to have contact with outsiders. He allowed no newspapermen and only recently has there been radio communication or even a railroad.

"The sect that Ibn Saud headed, the Wahabi, is the most fanatical or orthodox of all Mohammedan sects. The Koran is civil as well as religious law. A non-Moslem is an infidel, and his dress is repugnant to the tribesmen who flock into Riyadh and to the townspeople.

"So we drove around the fringes of the town. At that we had an incident.

"In our plane crew was a pert Turkish girl dressed in Turkish airline dark blue with a jaunty hostess cap over bobbed hair.

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town, and in they strolled. The foreign dress of the men was bad enough, but the bobbed hair, the uncovered face, and a dress so short that it revealed more leg than an Arabian had seen outside his harem, set off a mob demonstration, and the crew had to be rescued by the police."

The King's palace, ~~sitting~~ <sup>in</sup> in the desert on a 3,000-foot plateau, impressed Mark considerably. ~~It was~~ a great walled compound about the size of two city blocks. Some of the buildings were four and five stories high. When the group reached the King's residence, they were escorted to the council room on the second floor.

"Along the corridors leading to the council room, and indeed in the room itself," Mark said, "the King's bodyguard, about fifty of them, crouched on the floor. All of them had scimitars, and a few of them, pistols.

"Ibn Saud was seated on a throne in one corner of the room. After shaking hands with us, he indicated seats adjoining him on either side....

"The old King was a most imposing man. He stood six feet four; but he was already afflicted by arthritis....He sat with a cane across his lap.

"He was dressed in his winter garb <sup>1</sup> a brown camel's-hair robe with trousers underneath and a coarse cloth shirt. On his head was the kashmir <sup>hallaiah</sup> ~~kharia~~ surmounted by the royal cord of the house of Saud. He had on green socks and what looked like carpet slippers....

"He spoke in a soft voice and what he said was translated by a little Egyptian who <sup>stood</sup> crouched in front of him. He literally

squatted without moving during the whole hour and a half and repeated the performance at dinner. He told me later he was Ethiopian and a graduate of the University of Cairo. He spoke <sup>English</sup> with a perfect British accent.

"Ibn Saud made it quite plain he would have no truck with Israel; that the Israelis were interlopers, and that he would give the other Arabs any help he could. He wasn't a garrulous man; he had lived by directness and he was most direct with us."

Ibn Saud ended the conversation by announcing it was time for him to pray; he would see the Commission again at dinner.

9 | When Mark was back at the prince's palace, the chef de cabinet arrived, bearing gifts. For each of the three commissioners <sup>there</sup> was a brown camel's-hair winter robe just like the King's, a kashmir <sup># zffiyeh</sup> khafia with the gold-and-black royal cord, and a most handsome sword of Damascus <sup>steel</sup> blade. The handle was covered with ivory and the scabbard with gold leaf. The commissioners were told it would be "most courteous" if they would don the Arab dress for dinner, <sup>so</sup> ~~of course they did.~~

At dinner Mark was on the King's left, which presented him with a problem ~~when it came time to eat.~~ He told it like this:

"The long table was piled with food: roast lamb, camels' meat, whole chickens, mounds of rice two feet high and stuffed with pine nuts. There were fruits of all kinds, mostly from the United States (the oranges were labeled 'Sunkist').

"Knowing the King was a devout man and on a strict diet, I lied and told him that I couldn't eat meat, as I belonged to a sect in the United States that banned it. He was quite sympathetic ... and asked if I could eat fowl.

"When I said I could, he turned to the Sudanese behind him

and said a few words.... The big black leaned over me, grabbed a whole chicken off a tray, tore it in half with his hands, and put it down on my plate. I was stuck with it.

"Ibn Saud ate black bread soaked in camel's milk, out of a wooden bowl."

The King talked to ~~Mark~~ <sup>in the article</sup> mostly about Franklin Roosevelt whom, so Mark wrote, "he admired extravagantly. He thought Roosevelt the greatest man who ever lived."

"'We wouldn't be in the fix we are now if he were alive,' he said to me. 'He knew the Arabs.'

"Then he told me about meeting Roosevelt at Bitter Lake when the President was on the way back from Yalta. The President ~~sent~~ <sup>to</sup> had a destroyer pick him up at Jiddah. The King and his entourage pitched their tents on the destroyer's deck, slaughtered their own sheep, and prepared their own meals, according to the Koran.

"'I was shocked when I saw Mr. Roosevelt in a wheelchair,' the King said. 'I had always thought it was unmanly to use a chair, no matter how <sup>crippled</sup> you were. But when I saw him in it, I thought that if he could do it, great as he was, so could I.'

"The King had intimated that he would like a wheelchair too, and the President had given him the one in which he was sitting.

(He also gave Ibn Saud a plane.)"

After dinner, the King and the commissioners went to a reception room for coffee, which was just about the last straw for Mark. "I was never so tired of coffee as I was that day," he mourned to the Courier's readers. "I must have had twenty cups. It was sweet, spicy, cloying, not coffee at all in our sense." ~~But~~ <sup>Fortunately</sup>, this coffee-drinking session didn't

last long<sup>and</sup> The Commission soon got the time-to-leave signal.

"We had been briefed on a good many things before we saw the King," Mark explained. "One of them was that we must not cross our legs or our feet in his presence.... Another was that we must not eat or hold the coffee cup in one hand or the other, I've forgotten which. One hand is unclean to Moslems. But the most positive briefing we got was that when the King had his second cup of coffee and waggled it in refusal when a third was offered, the evening was over. We watched for the signal and departed promptly."

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The next morning the Commission took off for ~~Dharahan and~~ Baghdad.

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Mark summed up the results of <sup>that</sup> ~~this~~ part of the tour succinctly: "We had had an Arabian adventure, even if we accomplished nothing for peace."

and, on their way to Baghdad, they ran into a terrific dust storm, the worst Mark ever saw. The dust was so thick <sup>people</sup> they couldn't see one another in the plane. It was terrifying, <sup>but</sup> they came out of it after half an hour and landed safely in Baghdad. They had tea with the regent of Iraq, who was crazy about horses and wanted to talk bloodlines with Mark all the time. He even knew Man-O'-War's bloodline, which was more than Mark did. As far as Israel was concerned, <sup>the regent</sup> ~~he~~ ~~too~~ refused to recognize <sup>its</sup> ~~her~~ existence.

Then the commissioners went <sup>next</sup> to Damascus <sup>where</sup> and there Mark found his old friend, Sam Inglisi, who had been the ~~Srian~~ Syrian delegate on the Balkan Commission. He had been thrown in jail

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after a coup d'état, but was now out. However, he would be in jail again after another <sup>coup</sup> ~~coup~~ before Mark left the Middle East. During the Commission's visit, <sup>English</sup> ~~he~~ was secretary to the Syrian prime minister.

The Syrians gave a splendid banquet for the Commission, but it was spoiled for Mark by Syria's representative to the United Nations, who was home on leave ~~and was~~ half tight and exceedingly talkative, ~~He~~ expounded all evening about what the United Nations should do for Syria. ~~but~~

~~However,~~ when <sup>Mark</sup> ~~he~~ reached Beirut, <sup>was</sup> ~~he~~, in his words, ~~was~~ "sick as a horse," <sup>with</sup> ~~He had~~ what is <sup>is called</sup> called in that part of the world "gypsy stomach." ~~Everybody goes through it,~~ <sup>and</sup> Mark's <sup>seizure</sup> was caused by eating big, fat shrimp about the size of horseshoes. He found out later why they were <sup>so big</sup> ~~fat~~. The Lebanese dump their sewage on the shrimp beds.

"And just my luck," <sup>ed</sup> he recollects, "it was my turn to be chairman of the Commission. I tried to get the French delegate to carry the conversations with the Lebanese foreign minister and the prime minister, but he refused to do it. He was really a timid man. So, with <sup>odious</sup> fever 103 I had to preside. And my physical condition wasn't helped by the proceedings. Every time a member of the Commission mentioned Israel, the prime minister jumped to his feet and shouted: 'My God, don't mention that word!' It was hell!"

Yes = Syria's UN representative Beirut the next day? led all the commissions to Beirut?

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