



UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Letter dated 25 May 1949 addressed by Mr. Walter Eytan, Head of the Delegation of Israel, to the Chairman of the Conciliation Commission.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of a [memorandum* dated 25 May 1949](#), containing a summary of the views submitted to the Conciliation Commission by the delegations of the Arab States.

My delegation gladly avails itself of the Commission's invitation to make any observations it may care in regard to the points of view set out in this [memorandum](#). The Lausanne talks have now been in progress for over four weeks, and it is unfortunately apparent that a wide gulf still separates the views of the Arab delegations from those of my delegation. My delegation has consistently taken the widest possible view of these deliberations, seeking to find a solution for all outstanding questions within the framework of an all embracing peace settlement between Israel and the Arab States. We have done our best to demonstrate that there is an organic link between the problems still outstanding, and that it is impossible to approach them piecemeal or to tackle one without reference to the others, if the present talks are to lead to a successful conclusion. We have stated repeatedly, in the name of our Government, that we are willing to co-operate in the solution of the refugee problem—to take an example—if this solution is seen organically as part of a final settlement between the Arab States and ourselves.

The Arab delegations have, with equal consistency, refused to talk of an over-all settlement and have concentrated all their attention on one of the many problems that still await solution, wholly disregarding the others. This narrow view of our present negotiations has, understandably, led to no results. The [memorandum of 25 May](#) proposes the return to their homes of refugees coming from certain areas. This proposal begs a very large number of questions, into which I do not consider it useful to enter again at the present time, as the Arab delegations have shown no inclination whatever to discuss them. The [memorandum](#) as a whole is based on the particularist and unrealistic view of the Palestine question which has marked the approach of the Arab delegations throughout, and which fails altogether to take account either of the situation as it exists to-day or of the aim of peace we must strive to attain.

I should like here to repeat what I have already had an opportunity of telling the Commission—that my delegation has instructions to make every effort towards the final liquidation of the Palestine conflict, the establishment of sincere peace and normal relations between Israel and the Arab States, and the stability of the Middle East as a whole. My delegation has believed all along, and continues to believe, that the ultimate objective of the Lausanne talks must be the establishment of permanent peace; and within this context it has been prepared from the beginning, and is prepared to-day, to co-operate fully with the Arab delegations in finding a solution for the refugee problem. The Arab delegations appear, however, to have authority to discuss one question, and one question only. Their instructions seemingly disregard everything else, as has been clear from the start and is confirmed by the [memorandum of 25 May](#) transmitted to us by the Commission.

In the sincere hope that success may yet attend our deliberations, I venture to suggest to the Commission that a determined effort should be made to persuade the Arab Governments to face the problems at issue in a spirit of greater realism. I am sure that peace in the Middle East must be the ultimate object of the Arab States as well as of Israel, and that it is within the power of the Commission to demonstrate to their delegations that the course they have pursued hitherto has brought them no nearer, and can never bring them any nearer to that goal. To persist in making demands that bear no relation at all to realities cannot possibly advance the cause of the Arab States, and still less the cause of the refugees which they have at heart. Proposals such as those set out in the [memorandum of 25 May](#) offer no sort of basis for negotiation.

My delegation earnestly trusts that the Commission will find a way to turn the present talks into useful and realistic channels, and that the peace we all desire may yet be achieved.

I am,
Yours faithfully
s/ Walter Eytan
Head of Israeli Delegation

* [Document IS/18](#)