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24 January 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication from the President of the Rockefeller Foundation  
Concerning the Future of the Palestine Museum

The attached letter from the President of the Rockefeller Foundation, concerning the safety and future administration of the Palestine Museum, is circulated for the information of the Members of the Commission.

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

49 West 49th Street, New York 20

Office of the President

January 9, 1948

Sirs:

During the recent World War, The Rockefeller Foundation was glad to do all that it could to assure the preservation of buildings, monuments, and objects which represent the common heritage of civilization; and to this end, we made substantial grants to indicate the location of such objects in order that, if possible, they might be spared unnecessary damage.

It is in this same interest that I now, as President of the Foundation, am addressing this letter alike to the Colonial Office of the British Government, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine and the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

As these authorities are doubtless aware, there exists in Jerusalem, just outside the Old City, the Palestine Museum in which have been assembled the most important remains of the past of this area; mainly, objects from the Roman and Medieval Period, but likewise including objects of both Arab and Jewish origin. As such, the museum and its contents may be regarded as representative of this common heritage of the civilization of the past. With its laboratories, library and students' rooms, it has become a model to neighboring countries. It serves Trans-Jordan as well as Palestine and employs both Arabs and Jews.

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It will be remembered that the Palestinian Government in 1927 in accepting the personal pledge in the amount of \$2,000,000 of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the former Chairman of the Board of The Rockefeller Foundation, toward the erection and endowment of this museum agreed that "the responsibility for the erection of the museum will be assumed by the Palestine Government and that its future administration will likewise be carried on by the Palestine Government in such advisory relations with an International Advisory Committee as the Palestine Government may deem feasible."

While deeply appreciative of the difficulties which unfortunately prevail today in Palestine, may I express the hope that the authorities concerned will share our belief that all due precautions should be taken, first and in the present situation, to safeguard the building and the treasures it contains; and further to assure the continuance of competent and disinterested administration of the museum in such governmental authority as is established in this section of Palestine.

Please be assured of our deep appreciation of any consideration which can be given this matter.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

Raymond B. Fosdick

United Nations Special Committee  
on Palestine  
United Nations  
Lake Success  
New York