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25 February 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from the Agudas
Israel World Organization, addressed
to the Chairman of the Palestine Commission

The following communication has been received from Agudas Israel
World Organization, dated February 23, 1948, addressed to Dr. Karel Lisicki,
The Chairman of the Palestine Commission of the United Nations.

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AGUDAS ISRAEL WORLD ORGANIZATION

February 23, 1948

The Chairman of the Palestine Commission
of the United Nations

Dr. Karel Lisicki
Lake Success, New York

Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned Agudas Israel World Organization is representing religious orthodox Jewry the world over, independently organized in 28 national branch organizations on basis of traditional Torah-Law.

In Palestine, our branch organization, headed by the most prominent rabbinical and worldly leaders of religious Jewry in that country, represents at least 20% of the entire Jewish population.

We are not belonging to the Zionist Organization and were, therefore, never represented in and by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, because Zionism considers religious law as a matter of private conscience whereas, for historical Judaism, in our conception, religion is - for more than four thousand years - the very essence and the constitutional basis of Jewish nationhood. We also diverge in principle from the Zionist religious party fraction, Mizrachi, which tries to safeguard religious interests as a permanent minority within the Zionist Organization, with more or less success.

Being thus a completely autonomous, independent democratic organization in Palestine, we have to claim, in accordance with the Assembly Resolution of November 29th, to be consulted by the Palestine Commission of the United Nations with respect to all the problems, connected with the establishment of a Jewish State and a Jewish Government in the framework of the planned partition.

The fact of our spiritual, organizational and political autonomy, duly recognized by the Agency itself, has never prevented us from cooperating in certain political and economic actions with the Zionists, especially with the Jewish Agency. Confidential, uncommittal talks have also recently taken place and continue in Palestine as well as here in New York between Agency-and Agudah-leaders concerning the future Council for the preparation of the Jewish Government.

We wish, however, to reserve all our rights as an independent democratic organization, representing organized Palestine orthodox Jewry and we should be obliged for a formal acknowledgment of our legal claims to be consulted.