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4 March 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from Central Union  
of the Palestine Landlords' Associations

The following communication, dated 23 February 1948, has been received from the Central Union of the Palestine Landlords' Associations concerning destruction of Jewish property.

4 March 1948

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YCENTRAL UNION OF THE PALESTINE LANDLORDS' ASSOCIATIONS  
Tel-Aviv, Allenby Rd. 73

23th February, 1948

Mr. Karel Lisicky  
Chairman of the United Nations  
Palestine Commission,  
Lake Success,  
New York, N.Y.

Your Excellency,

We have the honour to confirm the text of the telegram cabled to you on February the 9th, 1948, which is as follows:

"BRITISH ARMY CONTINUING UNJUST DANGEROUS ACTION EXPLODING HOUSES BELONGING INNOCENT LANDLORDS FOR ALLEGED ACTS UNKNOWN PERSONS UNCONTROLLED BY LATTERS STOP PRACTICE THREATENING SPREAD ALL OVER COUNTRY STOP PRAY IMMEDIATE DESPATCH COMMISSION PALESTINE INQUIRE CHECK ILLEGAL RUINOUS ACTION ARMY".

2. In addition we wish to bring to your notice the facts in full:

On November the 30th, 1947, the day after the voting in the United Nations Assembly on the partition of Palestine, Arab bands specially organised and trained began to attack Jews with firearms and destroy Jewish property. Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem were the first to suffer. All properties in mixed quarters had to be abandoned and acts of arson, explosion, looting and destruction began without any intervention of the British Police or Army.

3. As time went by and the United Nations failed to react, the Arab bands "perfected" their methods. Nazi prisoners were smuggled in from Egypt to train the bandits in using explosives, and they began to blow up houses belonging to Jews, especially in the commercial center of Jerusalem. All this was done at a distance of only a few hundred meters from the Police and Army Headquarters respectively. Then the British Army did intervene, and Jewish houses which were out of reach of the bandits were evacuated by the British Army by force and blown up, under the pretext of their being used as Jewish defence posts. In that way scores of houses belonging to Jewish owners were demolished, in some cases, with the furniture.

4. In no case was there even an allegation that the owner of the property was in any way involved in the alleged shooting, nor that he had any control over the persons who are alleged to have used the property for the alleged shooting.

5. Our representations with the Palestine authorities and the Army Headquarters have been of no avail, as a few days after our protests more houses were blown up in the same manner, including a synagogue.

6. We wish to point out that the above wholesale destruction of property is much more than a loss to our members, to whom no other guilt can be attributed than that they erected the houses and invested all their savings in it. In view of the acute shortage of housing in Palestine, these acts of sheer vandalism, if allowed to go on, are calculated to cause a congestion and calamity to the civilian Jewish population.

This illegal and unjust destruction can only be explained as part of a "scorched earth" policy on the part of the authorities, designed, in the long run, to make it difficult for the United Nations Palestine Commission and the Jewish State to cope with the housing situation. Its immediate objective however is to

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cause a break down in the morale of the Jewish population, who, if the systematic destruction of their property goes on without intervention on the part of the United Nations, should recognize that they are in a hopeless position and that they can expect no help from anyone - ergo they must submit the dictates of Whitehall.

7. The only way of checking this dangerous process, is for the Commission to come to Palestine immediately, or if this be impossible to send a special Security Commission, with the authorization of the Security Council, to inquire into the acts of the British Army and recommend action as a result of their inquiry.

We cannot believe that the collective wisdom of the nations embodied in the United Nations cannot stop the mandatory power from destroying property belonging to innocent citizens, and we hope the Commission will take speedy action to prevent the spread of such crimes against humanity and the Atlantic Charter.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed)

S. Shoshani  
Chairman of the Central Union