

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

COMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

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Memorandum dated 18 July 1949 addressed by the Neturey Kartho of the Orthodox Jewry, Jerusalem, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The following memorandum is circulated for the information of the Committee.

Honoured Sir,

On behalf of orthodox Jews, the old residents of Jerusalem, we have the honour to address you in the following matter:

We, the orthodox Jews, who are the source of Judaism, who believe in our Heavenly Father and follow the teaching of His divine laws, are the founders of the early Jewish Yishuv in the holy land. Our forefathers came to this country at great peril and in conditions of great strain and difficulty have our families been established here. Their goal in coming to live in the Holy Land was inspired simply by the urge to make their dwelling place and raise their children and future generations in an atmosphere of truth and sanctity and to be guided at every step by our God-given law for the unbreakable bond between Jewry and the Holy Land is the same Torah which has lightened our darkness in exile and proved the solid foundation of our existence in faith and hope. As it is written in the 105th Psalm "God hath given to them the lands of the nations and the strivings of the kingdoms have they inherited that they may guard and heed His holy teaching". Our aim and the aim of our ancestors in coming here had no political or other purpose and brought no injury to anybody for we have been enjoined and bidden to seek the welfare and peace of the land in which we dwell and thus have

we lived in peaceful and neighbourly goodwill with all residents in the Holy Land.

When Palestine came under the charge of the League of Nations and Great Britain became responsible as Mandatory the majority of the Jews in the country were strictly orthodox. At that time the Zionists succeeded in bringing into the Holy Land a growing stream of Zionist immigrants - people whose ways of life and godlessness were viewed by orthodox Jews established here, with alarm and dismay - fear at the possibility that our children would be misled by the ungodly and dismay at the growing influence and determination of the godless Zionists to be recognised as the representatives and leaders of all Jewry over the whole world. Whatever its origin, present day political Zionism is in direct conflict with Jewish God-given Laws. The Zionists quickly replaced orthodox religious schooling by a national system of education and having taken all sections of the Jewish Community under their wing, these have been organised on a foundation which is alien to Judaism and in fact is so planned as to eliminate religion.

The spiritual leaders of Orthodox Jews in the Holy Land at that time then came out, together with all our sages over the world and Jews who had their faith at heart, into an open campaign against the Zionist domination in the Holy Land. Our Rabbis and sages proclaimed that those who do not adhere to the teaching of our holy laws do not come within the fold of Jewry and do not bear the name of Israel and can never be looked upon as representing the Jewish nation. With a great public outcry our spiritual leaders backed by orthodox Jewry all over the world appealed to the Mandatory Government and to the League of Nations who, after much deliberation of the whole matter with the Mandates Commission, passed a law giving authority to orthodox Jews in exercise of their freedom of conscience, to opt out of the Community organised under Zionist auspices and represented by the Zionist Vaad Leumi which went by the name of Knesseth Israel. This law, although it meant that all official power had been taken out of the hands of orthodox Jews and passed to the Vaad Leumi, nevertheless still granted religious freedom to the orthodox Jews by conferring on them the right to form a separate Jewish community, free and independent of Zionist domination and

influence, so that their way of life and education would be pursued without let or hindrance.

Now that the United Nations Commission has handed over the Holy Land to Zionist rule, this act appears (Heaven forbid) to set the seal upon the fate of the remaining orthodox Jews in the Holy Land because the various Zionist parties are well experienced and determined to uproot the religious element and to remake the Jew into something altogether different. This has wrecked our hopes and our peace of mind and makes nought of the faith which inspired our ancestors to keep alive the Jewish spirit and teaching in the Holy Land.

In general, orthodox Jewry was opposed to the creation of a Jewish State, more particularly a State under Zionist domination. Testimony to this effect was given before the United Nations Commission when that august body held its sessions in Jerusalem, by the Chief Rabbi Dushinsky (of blessed memory) and by Rabbi Benghis who has replaced Rabbi Dushinsky as head of Orthodox Jewry in Jerusalem.* A memorandum to this effect was also submitted but so far, nothing has resulted from these pleadings and representations. We now therefore approach you with the following petition. We feel justified in demanding this from you because, in our opinion, we still come under your charge. We believe that it is by divine will that the United Nations have been made responsible for our welfare in succession to the League of Nations, and since the Mandatory Government resigned trusteeship of the Holy Land, this country and its people come under your care. It therefore rests with you to protect us for we, the orthodox Jews, are counted among the inhabitants of this Holy Land, and we will not give up the right to claim your protection. In the name of humanity, justice and righteousness we appeal to you not to forsake us and not to make us subservient to an authority whose principles and practices violate all that we have been taught to hold sacred and to cherish, and whose avowed intention is to undermine our religious existence. In general therefore we ask you to deliver us from Zionist domination in whatever manner you may deem to be fitting.

* A/364 Add.2, Oral Evidence presented to UNSCOP at public meetings, page 206.

Our appeal to the United Nations therefore takes the following form: -

1. That a decision be taken and made effective that the whole of Jerusalem, the Holy, should remain under International charge. That this remains a town in which orthodox Jews may live in freedom and independence.
2. To substantiate the fact that in future we, the orthodox Jews, shall be under the protection of the United Nations and that we be given United Nations passports.
3. That the United Nations immediately appoint a responsible person or persons from among its members whose duty it will be to safeguard the rights and interests of orthodox Jews in our Holy Land.

We are confident that in your wisdom and experience, you will understand and appreciate our heartache and all that we have left unsaid even better than we can express it. The very fact that we are compelled to make this appeal speaks for itself. We pray you to do everything possible through the United Nations to lighten our burden and to help us achieve the peace and tranquility which we seek in the service of our Heavenly Father.

We sign ourselves, with the highest respect,

Your most gratefully,

SIGNED

Rabbi Amram Blau
Rabbi Hlaron Katzinelinbyen