

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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English

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Memorandum dated 25 March 1949 from the President of the Apostolic Commission with the Maronite Patriarchate, addressed to the Chairman of the Conciliation Commission, concerning the solution of the Palestine problem

Profiting by the opportunity afforded by the Conference being held in Beirut for the settlement of the Palestine question, the Apostolic Commission with the Maronite Patriarchate, which represents the largest Christian community in the Middle East, has the honour to lay before you its views concerning this matter.

We desire, first, to tender our thanks for your unceasing efforts directed, in the name of the United Nations, toward the re-establishment of peace in the countries of the Middle East, and for the generous assistance you have rendered to the unfortunate refugees of Palestine.

Secondly, we consider it our duty to draw your attention to the necessity of a final solution of the whole Palestine problem. This solution, however, will not produce the desired results unless Jerusalem is given a special juridical status. It is a fact that this city constitutes a religious center for Christians, Moslems and Jews; consequently, in order to eliminate all sources of conflict among them, it will be necessary to set up an international regime for the city, the administration of which should be entrusted to neutral Powers.

The other problem to be solved is that of the unfortunate Palestine refugees. The only equitable solution is to repatriate them, to indemnify them insofar as possible for their losses, and

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to resettle them in their homes. This would not be too much to ask of the United Nations, which adopted the Declaration of Human Rights.

If that solution is not possible, we request that the refugees be established immediately in those neighbouring countries which can absorb them--Transjordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt.