

is now about to embark. They are most sincerely anxious to lend their fullest support to the success of that inquiry and to place their experience and their knowledge freely at the disposal of the Committee. We should not like to find ourselves in a position where the danger of our fundamental rights being prejudiced in advance by the terms of reference should militate against our full and effective co-operation. I say again that we feel sure nothing of the sort has been intended, but we simply would like respectfully to warn against any such complication arising.

These are our brief and preliminary comments which we have taken the liberty of making at this early juncture, and we naturally reserve the right to make additional comments should they be necessary

ANNEX B

1. STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARAB HIGHER COMMITTEE MADE AT THE MEETING OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE ON 9 MAY, 1947

Mr HENRY KATAN (*Arab Higher Committee*): First of all, allow me to express to you and, through you, to the General Committee and the General Assembly, the sincere thanks and deep appreciation of the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine for the opportunity you have given us to appear before you to-day. We are also grateful for the great efforts you have spent on the preliminaries of this discussion and for the interest you have expressed in hearing the Arab case, which are evidence of your desire to do justice in this cause.

I propose to limit my remarks to the fundamental elements of the problem, only to those elements which would assist the Committee in its task of determining the terms of reference of the proposed Special Committee. Before doing so, however, I beg to ask for your indulgence, for I am not a public speaker, and I am speaking in a language other than my own.

I come to you as a representative of the people of Palestine, as an Arab whose roots are deeply imbedded in that tortured land. The Arab people are deeply anxious to find a just and lasting solution to the problem before you because it is their own problem—the problem of their present life and their future destiny. No one is concerned with it as much as they are since it involves their very existence as a people. With this existence threatened, with the future of our children in doubt, with our national patrimony in danger, we come to you, the representatives of the organized community of nations, in the full assurance that your conscience will support us in our struggle to hold that which is dearest to any people's heart—the national right of self-determination, which stands at the basis of your Charter.

It may be well to start by sketching a picture of Palestine prior to the First World War. Palestine was then included in the Ottoman Empire as part of the Province of Syria; but this inclusion did not in any way alter or effect the Arab character of Palestine. It had been inhabited for several centuries by Arabs; its customs, traditions, and culture are Arab; its town and villages were Arab. Those are the facts. No amount of propaganda or distortion can change the Arab character, the Arab history, and the Arab national characteristics of Palestine.