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## **A Letter from Erskine Childers, 1958**

Printed in English, this document features a letter from Erskine Childers an Irish author and journalist, found among the collection of Elyas Kusa on 23 December 1958, the letter encloses several questions regarding the displacement of Palestinians in 1848 and forcing them to leave their villages, cities, and homes.

Back Lodge  
Fernbank  
Churchtown  
Co. Dublin  
Ireland.

December 23, 1958.

Your Grace,

Your letter was waiting for me here when my wife and I finally reached Dublin from our Middle Eastern tour. I am exceedingly grateful to you for writing.

I am also shocked beyond words, and I respectfully extend my sympathies to you in this matter of Your Grace's name being so consistently used. Abba Eban quoted you in the U.N. debate on U.N.R.W.A. in 1957 and again this year. I must tell you that, despite so much contrary evidence one of the key factors that led me, until now, to continue to write in my article that they were some Arab exhortations to leave was your name.

I write now to ask your permission to help clear up this matter in the book that I am now writing. I should like to publish your letter to me in the book - or, if that is not feasible, to be able at least to write that I have received a specific denial from you.

I should state my bona fides. I am not an anti-Semite. I am desperately concerned for the safety of the Jews who have been brought to Palestine; I have worked, in the United States, on commissions seeking to combat anti-Semitism in American higher education;

But I cannot, at the same time, pretend that I approve of the present external policy of Israel as led by Mapaid Zionism; and I shall be writing to this effect, very carefully, in my book. It is a book on the Middle East as a whole, in which my primary aim is to point to realities that should govern the search for peace in the area under stable, progressive, non-communist leadership. Obviously, one section of the book will deal with Palestine and, in that concern, with the refugee problem.

Since writing to you, I have discovered that you are a Sponsor of New Outlook, with whose Editorial Board I had the privilege and pleasure of meeting and talking in Tel-Aviv. I mention this as another way of indicating to you that I believe you can repose trust in me in giving me permission to quote you on this question of use of your name to support the present allegations.

As one final point of reference, you will find in the July issue of "Encounter" magazine a 10,000 word article of mine entitled "Impasse in the Holy Land".

Incidentally, Your Grace may be interested to know that, since one of the other standard "sources" quoted in this matter is the use of radio by Arab leaders to exhort evacuation, I have just finished going through every Arab radio broadcast monitored from November 29th 1947 to June 30th 1948. There was not one single appeal to leave: there were repeated appeals to the Arab civilians to stay.

I shall await your answer, Your Grace, urgently, with interest and hope that it will convey your permission. In the meantime, my thanks to you again, if only for setting my mind at ease.

Respectfully,  
(Sgd) Erskine B. Childers.

P.S. May I ask you one other question. There does seem to be a certain amount of evidence that, in the case of the Haifa Arab population, some kind of recommendation to evacuate was made to them. I was, of course, told this outright in Jerusalem. But I have also gathered, from non-partisan sources, that with Jewish occupation of the city, it was expected that it would be bombed by Arab aircraft, and civilians were accordingly



20. 10. 1941

