

PALESTINE ROYAL COMMISSION
NOTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN ON THURSDAY,
7TH JANUARY, 1937
Secret (44)

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FORTY NINTH MEETING --- PRIVATE

PRESENT: The Rt. Hon. Earl Peal, G.C.S.I., G.B.E. (Chairman)
 The Rt. Hon. Sir Horace George Montagu Rumbold, Bt.,
 G.C.B., G.O.M.G., M.V.O., (Vice-Chairman)
 Sir Egbert Laurie Lucas Hammond, K.C.S.I., C.B.E.
 Sir William Morris Carter, C.B.E.
 Sir Harold Morris, M.B.E., K.C.
 Professor Reginal Coupland, C.I.E.
 Mr. J.M. Martin (Secretary)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. P.G. Heathcoat-Amory

Witness: Mr. D. Ben-Gurion,
 Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency

EVIDENCE OF MR. BEN-GURION.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ben-Gurion, I think you wanted to discuss the attitude of the Arabs towards Zionism?

A. Yes, and I will start at the end, perhaps.

Q. As connected with the underlying causes?

A. No, I do not mean that. I will start with this, that my last words at the public session were not mere words. Only last week there was an invitation to certain of our leaders to send a representative to Syria and they met the new Prime Minister, Jamal Bey Mardam, and the Minister of Finance, Shukri Kuwatly. I will tell you what the Prime Minister said to our representative; this was only four days ago. "The Syrian Government is now busy in establishing our vital interests in this country, but at the first opportunity we will try to continue the negotiations." We had had negotiations before the Treaty, about three or four months ago. "Shukri Bey Kuwatly has already told me what he has said to you, and I have nothing to add except to express my hope that the thing will be arranged sooner or later. I am very sorry that there is still not peace in Palestine between these two peoples, but this quarrel is rather a family quarrel; it is not a quarrel of strangers, and therefore I am optimistic with regard to the future. Besides the racial kinship between the Jews and Arabs, there are concrete vital interests which require peaceful relations between Jews and Arabs, and the statesmen of the two peoples must understand this and set accordingly." We have very reliable information from Iraq that when Aouni Bey Abdul Hadi was there (he returned yesterday) he tried to suggest that there was danger in Zionism, and he was told they did not accept his view. They were rather looking upon the Palestine problem in another way, and they, the Government of Iraq, were talking to him of

the benefits which Zionism had conferred on Palestine, and which could be conferred on all the countries around especially Syria and Iraq, when the Palestine problem would be solved. That is what Aouni Bey Abdul Hadi was told in Iraq. Now I will give you briefly our relations with the Arab leaders here. I admit that there is opposition among the Arabs to Zionism; there is no doubt about that. It is due to many causes. It is a national feeling. It is the belief of their leaders that this is an Arab country, and should not be changed. It is a dislike of foreigners. It is intolerance, which is inherent perhaps in them, I do not say in their religion, but in their education and upbringing. It is fanaticism. It is different levels of culture. It is also the great ambition of the leaders, because when there is trouble some leaders are more influential, and the fact that our work benefited the country did not do away with this opposition, for the simple reason, first of all, that not all the Arabs of Palestine benefit. There are about 800,000 or 900,000 Arabs in Palestine, and it does not benefit all of them, either directly or indirectly, but even those who benefited did not know it, and even those who know it must not be grateful; there is no such thing as gratitude, especially among such a people, and perhaps there is another reason – the nature of the Arab National Movement. As I mentioned before, in my public evidence, it is different from our National Movement. They do not care to improve the conditions of their people. I have been in Palestine for more than thirty years; I studied the question before the War; I have Arab friends. When I first came to Palestine I was a worker; I came to work on the land; I was an agricultural worker, and I worked together with Arabs; I know Arabs in all walks of life. It had never occurred to the Arab leaders that they should do anything to better the conditions of the people, either the fellaheen or the workers, or the small shopkeepers and others, either culturally or economically. There is no such thing. I know of nothing that has been done for the last thirty years by their leaders, and after all there are some very rich Arabs in this country, perhaps more than you know, but they have never tried to do anything for their people. They do not care about it. It is a purely political Movement. I quite understand it. Haj Amin el Husseini thinks: “Why should there be a British High Commissioner; if there were not, I should be Prime Minister.” I really do not blame them; it is natural, but there is nothing constructive about it; it is purely political. Then the expression of it is, first, opposition to England; secondly, opposition to Jews. But, I think, it is a mistake to judge the extent and intensity of this opposition from the last disturbances; I am afraid you will make a mistake if you do that. It is not the whole of the Arabs who are opposed to it; it is a minority; it is an active minority I agree. The others are practically not heard, and they are perhaps eighty percent of the Arab people. They have no means of self-expression; they are not given the chance of being heard; they are uneducated; they are unorganized; they are oppressed; they have been oppressed for centuries by these people who are their leaders. It is not as it is with us; we have chosen leaders. They have no chosen leaders; they have masters. It is only the minority which is politically active which is heard, and the great majority of the people are indifferent to the Jews; I do not say they are the friends of the Jews; why should they be? We have very few friends in the world. There is no reason why they should be our friends, but they are not afraid of us; they have nothing to be afraid of. If there is a festival in Tel-Aviv thousands of Arabs come there; there are thousands of them working in our colonies, and never will an Arab be afraid to be among Jews; an Arab child or an Arab woman could be alone in the streets of Tel-Aviv at night. There is also among the intelligent section of the Arabs a section which is, I would not say very friendly towards Zionism – I do not see any reason why they should be friendly to Zionism – but they are not against it, and they want co-operation with the Jews. I will give you a few instances. I have met Arab leaders who recognize, first of all, that we are right. It is unpleasant for them, but they tell me

we are right – and then there are the Jews to reckon with as a fact; it is an accomplished fact, they believe; the Jews are here, and they will come here; there is such a tremendous urge among Jews to come back to Palestine that they cannot stop it even if they would like to stop it; it is a fact, and they, as a realistic people, recognize facts; and then there is a third reason, they believe that there may be some political and economic advantages from an understanding with the Jews.

PROFESSOR COUPLAND: Political advantage?

A. Yes, I will come to that. Economic co-operation is much easier, and it exists, although of course it has not existed in the last six months, but there is economic co-operation between Jewish and Arab villages. There are friendly relations in the villages in the Emek; they visit each other, and their children come to our festivals and our children go to their festivals, and they are co-operating when they are in trouble; for instance, rats, and other agricultural problems in Palestine. There is cooperation among Jewish and Arab workers. There is co-operation between Jewish and Arab grove-owners.

Q. There is not much, is there?

A. Not very much, but there is some co-operation. It was interrupted during the disturbances, as is natural, but generally there is co-operation. Political co-operation is much more difficult. We have tried many times to come to terms even in the political field. I will give you only a few instances. In the last three years, since I and my friend Shertok have been in charge of the political affairs of the Agency here, I have met Aouni Bey Abdul Hadi. He was at that time without any influence whatsoever. Now he is very influential. He is the head of the Istiqlal party, but at that time his party had very little political influence. I went to him because I knew that he was not a man with political ambitions, at least at that time. He was a man who cannot be bought; he has no office, and he is an important Arab Nationalist. I thought that if I could come to terms with him, it would be worth while to get a man who was not biased, and who could not be bought, and who really cared for the future of the Arab people. It is only if such people come to terms that it is lasting. I said to him: "We are here; we will come here whether you like it or not. You do not like it, and I can understand why you do not like it, but here we are; it is a fact; you will not prevent us from coming; why should we fight each other, perhaps we can help each other." He said: "How can you help us?" I said: "You have large countries, Syria and Iraq, that want to be developed; otherwise no political change, whether it is under a mandate or an Independent State, will affect the destiny of your people, but it will always be the same until you do what we are doing, creative work, economically and culturally raising the level of the people, improving agricultural conditions, education, and so on; this is the real thing to do. We can help you in that if you will help us." Then he said: "Well, you will be here, but we will still be under England and France." I said to him: "As I am being frank with you about our aim, I am telling you that we do not mean to have a spiritual center in Palestine; we want to have millions in Palestine; we do not want to be here at your mercy; we want to be a free people." He asked me "How many do you think you can have here?" I said: "In this part of the world, at least four million."

SIR HORACE RUMBOLD: Four million in Palestine?

A. Yes.

SIR LAURIE HAMMOND: Total population is that?

A. No, I mean Jews. I am telling you what I said to him. This is my conviction, that in this part of the country, Palestine, we can bring in at least four million.

CHAIRMAN: Four million Jews?

A. Yes, not in one year, or even in ten years, but perhaps in 30 or 40 years.

Q. How many Arabs are there in the country?

A. At that time there will be about two million Arabs.

Q. A total population of six million?

A. Yes. I believe in time, with modern methods of industry, Haifa will be a town of one million Jews. It may sound ridiculous to you; perhaps it is ridiculous, but we are an optimistic people. I remember that when I came to Palestine what is now Tel-Aviv was sand. Probably an economic expert would have said, "To build a city here, it is mad." But we were mad, and we were ridiculed, but we had to do it and we did it; we have to do it. I saw what people could endure during the War. Before the War nobody would have believed that people could endure what they endured for four years of War, because there was a necessity, and for us Palestine is a question of life and death. It can be done. I was telling you about my conversation with Aouni Be Abdul Hadi. I said to him: "We are attached to England; we will do nothing without the knowledge and without the consent of the British, not only because of gratitude, we are grateful, but not only because of gratitude; we are coming here as Europeans; we know we are facing the desert on the north, the east and the south; it is not only essential for us to bring in many Jews, but also to bring to Palestine European culture and to maintain that standard and not to sink down to the level of the country, and it is for us a live necessity to be connected with the greatest civilized Power in the world." Then he said: "Then I see no basis. I reported this to the High Commissioner because I did not want to proceed without having authority, and I was glad that I was encouraged by the High Commissioner. He said: "All right, go on." Then I met some of the other leaders. I did not continue to negotiate with Aouni Bey Abdul Hadi. At the time, Aouni Bey had no influence; he was almost the single member of his own Party, the Istiqlal Party. We met some other people from Syria and from Egypt, and specially the Palestinian leaders, and for months there were negotiations. I will give you an outline of what was the basis of those negotiations. I am sorry I cannot give you the name because I bound myself to this gentleman that as long as nothing practical came out of it, [it] should be a private affair. But he was a Moslem, a very distinguished Bosmel – in order not to create a wrong impression I will say it was not the Mufti, although he knew all about it. I will make the story very short. I will give you very briefly what were the lines of the agreement; that we should together if it be accepted by the Government, and I gave the High Commissioner an outline of the basis upon which I wanted to negotiate with the Arabs, we the Jews and the Arabs, with the consent of Government, should work out a plan of agricultural development, not for the whole country at once, which would be too big a job, but we would take a district, and say; "By intensification we

can raise the standard of the fellaheen; we can better their conditions; and we can make a place for new settlers. We will work it out together, and we will see to it that not a single Arab cultivator is displaced, but he should not only remain, but his conditions should be improved, and, by intensification, new room should be created for new Jewish settlers. We should work out together a plan to develop industry with Jewish and Arab capital, and Jewish and Arab labor. I made it clear that we wanted economic co-operation not on the lines of Jewish capital and Arab labor, but we wanted co-operation of Jewish capital and Arab capital, Jewish labor and Arab labor, because otherwise it would be very dangerous. That there should not be this distortion of co-operation, Jewish capital and Arab labor, because labor does not regard itself as being benefited by the employer, but, on the contrary, as being exploited by the employer, and if they belong to the same race it does not matter; if they belong to different races it may become a very dangerous thing. That was the economic basis. Then political co-operation for the transition period, and I will call the transition period the period when the Jewish national home will not be fully established, when it is not yet rooted and able to stand on its own feet; during this transitional period Jews and Arabs will, on a basis of equality, participate in the actual government, not in a Legislative Council....

PROFESSOR COUPLAND: An Executive Council.

A. Yes. Why not a legislative council? Because when a Legislative Council has no executive power, it must be an irresponsible body, especially if the legislative power is held by one race and the executive power by another race, but they should actually participate in government. At first there should be one Jew and one Arab, and later perhaps in five years' time, two Jews and two Arabs.

Q. On?

A. In the Government, on the Executive Council.

Q. Would you make that a little more clear? Do you mean now? There are only four on the Executive Council now, you say there should be?

A. I say one Arab and one Jew added to the existing Executive Council.

Q. One Arab and one Jew?

A. Yes, and later on, perhaps two Arabs and two Jews, and still later on, more, do it gradually.

Q. You would always put two Arabs against two Jews?

A. Yes. This was the basis of our discussions, and when the actual Government of Palestine in the future will become autonomous, a free country, it will keep its attachment to the British Empire. It will also be, for economic purposes, connected with the neighboring Arab States. Those were the main points. As I said, it was not the Mufti, but the Mufti knew of it. It was decided that I should go to Geneva to meet the Syrian-Palestinian Delegation there, which consisted of the Emir Shekib Arslan and Ihsan Bey el Jabri. I told them of the negotiations and

what had been discussed, and I am sorry to say that those two gentlemen did not behave as gentlemen. It was understood that it was a private discussion and that nothing should be published until something came of it. We even discussed the question of who should make this agreement. The Jews on their side had an Organization, but who would make the agreement for the Arabs? I put this question to His Excellency. There was a plan drawn up and we agreed that we of the Jewish Agency would make the agreement for the Jewish people, and it was agreed that an Arab Congress should be called, and this plan should be brought before them for approval. Emir Shekib Arslan said he could not agree to that. First of all he did not believe that England would allow the Jews to become more numerous in Palestine. Then why should he?

There could be an agreement only on the basis, if we undertook to remain a permanent minority in Palestine. I said "No." Ihsan Bey el Jabri took another view, but Arslan is an older man, and Jabri did not contradict him, but it was understood that it was a private conversation and that nothing should be published. Three months later I was sorry to see that in a paper called "La Nation Arabe" this discussion was published, and not only published, but it was distorted.

Q. Did you give us the date of that?

A. It was September 23rd, 1934, in Geneva. There were two things ascribed to be that I did not say. I said that all the Arabs on the land would remain, that not a single Arab should leave, and I pointed out that Palestine was a land of emigration before the War, that thousands of Arabs had to leave Palestine every year, but it became a land of immigration after the War, and not a single Arab would leave the country. In their paper, they put into my mouth the reverse. They also ascribed to me the remark that the Jews would mobilize their forces with the Syrian Arabs, but I told them the same thing about the French as I had told them about the British; I said: "We will do nothing against the French; we will help you only in a constructive way."

Q. You said you would do nothing to help the Syrian Nationalists against the French Government.

A. Yes, nothing. We did not despair in our endeavors to come to an agreement; we had meetings with Arab leaders again, this time with Christian Arabs. It happened three days before the disturbances; we met and started a discussion of a political understanding, and we were to meet the following week. In the meantime the disturbances broke out. We met through a common friend, and he was doubtful as to whether the meetings could continue after what had happened in Jaffa. He asked me whether I was ready to continue, and I said: Yes, and we continued until he had unfortunately to leave for Turkey, and I had to go to England. But later during the disturbances we continued to meet. We met leaders in Syria before they became a Government, and afterwards, and we have met leaders in Egypt, and I know what has been going on in Palestine during the tension of the last six months, and still I believe in an understanding. Perhaps every Jew is a born optimist, but with my thirty years' experience of Palestine, I have no doubt whatever that this enmity is a temporary thing. I believe with the Arabs outside Palestine we shall come to terms. They tell us, and they are right: we will not do anything over the heads of the Palestinian Arabs, that it's a proper view to take. But they see the whole problem. They are not mixed up with the petty ambitions of the local leaders, and I think, after we come to terms with the Arabs in Iraq and with the Arabs in Syria, it will also influence the Arabs in

Palestine. The Arabs yesterday decided to appear before the Commission after their visit to Iraq. That shows something.

SIR LAURIE HAMMOND: When you say you will come to terms with the Arabs in Syria, with the Arabs in Iraq, what have you got in your mind as to coming to terms with them?

A. That they should understand what we are after here, and that it is not against the Arabs, that it may benefit the Arabs. We do not want their actual help, but their sympathy and understanding, and that they should bring their influence to bear on the Arabs of Palestine to come to terms.

PROFESSOR COUPLAND: The reason why they would come to terms and show a certain sympathy with you would be that they recognized the financial and other help which you could give to them for the development of their countries. That is the basis of it?

A. Yes, certainly, intellectual help, scientific help, organization, and also some moral help. We know the Jews are not very influential, although they are regarded as a rich people, but morally and financially we can help. But there is a difficulty which I must point out. When I am asked why we have not succeeded up till now – I do not want to be misunderstood, I do not want to blame the British Government – but it is a fact that the main obstacle to an understanding is our connection with the British Government. They want to get rid of the British rule. It is perhaps natural, and they regard us as agents of British Imperialism. I doubt whether our attachment to Great Britain means anything to the British Empire. The British Empire could stand without the Jews, but they regard us as the agents of British Imperialism, and as long as we are not ready to help them in their fight against the British, they say to us: You are no use, you are against us. The second reason is even more important. They say: “Why should we grant you a possibility of unlimited expansion in Palestine; Great Britain will never let you become a strong community. They need you to oppress us, but they will not let you become very numerous in Palestine; then why should we do it.” It is in the minds of the Arabs that the National Home policy is only a temporary expedient, a temporary experiment, and they may get rid of it. Then why should they come to terms with us? They could have the whole show for themselves, not only Iraq and Syria, but also Palestine. There are a few pre-requisite conditions, for an understanding with the Arabs.

First of all, the Arabs must be convinced that we have come to stay, that it is a serious business. It is not a temporary expedient, it is not an experiment; it is a historical necessity. It may be an unpleasant fact, but we are here and the Arabs are here, and as we have to take them into account – not only because there are 800,000 Arabs here, but there are millions around us – they also must take us into account; we are also a fact, and it is a fact they will have to accept: The Jews are here and they will come. They say at present: We know you must come, but as long as we can fight against it we shall fight against it. After all, they say, when the Balfour Declaration was made, it was not fully realized at the time what it meant. There were different conceptions at that time, and nobody could know what would happen. Great Britain could only give permission for the Jews to come. They did not know whether they would want to come, and they did not know what national conditions might prevent them coming, as in the case of Russia, where the Jews want to come and cannot.

Nobody knew what the outcome of it would be. But when the Arabs recognized that it is a serious thing, not only in the eyes of the Jews, but also in the eyes of Great Britain, and if there

is no hesitancy, they will accept it. They believe now the policy of Great Britain in Palestine is a policy of hesitancy. When they realize it is a serious business, that Great Britain means it seriously, then they are a practical people, and there are statesmen among them, they will come to terms. I believe that we have something to offer them, not politically. We are a helpless people, politically, but intellectually, economically, morally, we have something to offer the Arabs, and they need it. Therefore, in spite of what has happened, I am not pessimistic in regard to the relations between Jews and Arabs. I am afraid I have taken up a lot of your time, but I have a few words to say about the underlying causes. I am sure you have heard a lot about them. The Italo-Abyssinian War is one, and I think, chronologically, this war started the disturbances. There are also happenings in Egypt and Syria. But I ask myself what is really, politically, the underlying cause. What should we find out? If we find causes that cannot be removed, then nothing can be done. It may be it is the Jews coming to Palestine. That is a cause that cannot be removed. We are here and we are coming. I heard it said by some of the Palestine officials that one of the underlying causes what the debate in Parliament on the Legislative Council. When Dr. Weizmann was asked about this debate, he was against it.

CHAIRMAN: He told us that.

A. But that also cannot be removed. The British Parliament cannot be told it must only say what is pleasing to the Mufti in Palestine. After all, there is freedom of speech in the British Parliament. And likewise we cannot remove Mussolini, and I am afraid he was one of the causes. Italian money was helping the Arabs. Also we cannot remove communism; although Russia has also something to do with these disturbances. We have to find out the causes that can be removed, and when removed may prevent the recurrence of disturbances. What are those causes? I think there are two. One is the numerical weakness of the Jewish community. The Arabs believe they can finish us off. They have their own way of doing business, not only in Palestine. I do not blame them. They were brought up in this way. It has happened in other countries. It happened in Syria in 1860, and it happened in Iraq with the Assyrians, and I am sure if there were no Jews in Palestine the Christian Arabs would have been massacred on many occasions. It is their way with minorities, and when they believe they can massacre weak minorities, they will do it. I think this cause could be removed. I see no reason why the Jewish community in a very short time cannot become numerically so strong as to remove any temptation from the Arab to massacre them. I believe in a short time, in a few years, the Jewish community in Palestine can be increased to such an extent as to remove the temptation from them.

SIR HORACE RUMBOLD: Dr. Weizmann told us that.

A. I only heard his public evidence. I am convinced of that. The second cause which can be removed, and when removed, I think the disturbances will not happen again, is the following: They believe the national home is not the settled policy of the British Government, and that Great Britain can be frightened away. This cause, too, could and should be removed, and if removed will prevent new disturbances. It is sometimes said they are due to the increase in Jewish immigration. When you take the former disturbances, for instance the disturbances in 1920, you see there was almost no immigration. There was a disturbance in 1921; there was an immigration of a few thousands. There was a big immigration in 1924 and 1925, and there was

quiet; 1926, quiet; 1927, quiet. There was again a disturbance in 1929, when there was a small immigration of a few thousands.

There was a big immigration in 1933, 1934 and 1935, and I know it was the opinion of the Government of Palestine, at least the opinion of the High Commissioner, with whom I have the privilege to come into contact from time to time, that until the beginning of the Abyssinian trouble, Palestine was safe; there was complete security. Of course, there were always articles in the Arab press against Jewish immigration, and the British Mandate, and so on, but it was our feeling, and the feeling of the Government, that there would be no trouble until the Abyssinian War broke out. I do not believe the disturbances here are due to immigration.

SIR HAROLD MORRIS: Surely that is the opposite to your previous argument, that one of the causes is the numerical weakness of the Jewish community. If they thought it was getting stronger they would say: Now is the time to strike.

A. Because they believed it could be stopped. They believe it is not a settled policy of Great Britain, and that by terror Great Britain can be frightened into changing the policy. I do not think this is the only cause of the disturbances. There are many, I admit, and I have not enumerated them all; I have pointed out those causes which can be removed, and which, if removed, would I believe prevent a recurrence of trouble, if once they knew it was a settled policy.

SIR LAURIE HAMMOND: One of your remedies is increased immigration?

A. Increased immigration and an improvement in the position of the fellaheen. They are really the people who are suffering. They have no voice in affairs, and they really need improvement. I do not say that their position is worse than the position of the fellaheen in Transjordan, Syria or Egypt; on the contrary. But they are living in Palestine. We are living in Palestine, and in Palestine a higher civilization is being created. In comparison their position is bad, and it should be improved. I believe if you had a settled policy to improve the position of the fellaheen and to increase as quickly as possible the Jewish community, you will have no more trouble in Palestine. Of course, one can never be sure, but as far as one can see, there would be no more trouble in Palestine.

Q. You ended rather as you began, with the great necessity for improving the position of the fellaheen, and if you remember you said there was no effort on the part of the Arab proprietor or the rich Arab to do anything for the poor Arab?

A. That is so.

Q. We have had evidence from your co-religionists which rather struck me as grudging funds for that purpose. Some of them took the view that the Jews contributed the major portion of the revenues of the country, and that therefore the major portion should be spent on them and not on improving the position of the Arabs. You know to what I refer?

A. Yes. I think it is perhaps a misunderstanding. I think we should never grudge it if Government does anything for the fellaheen, and for the Arabs in general, but especially for the fellaheen, but our complaint is why are we excluded? There is an impression that the Jews are

rich and should look after themselves. I know there are rich Jews, but there are many poor ones. It seems to be thought that if some Jews are communists then all the Jews are communists; if some are rich, then all the Jews are rich; but we are a poor people. It is not likely that you know, and I do not wish to waste your time, of the efforts we have to make among the Jewish people all over the world to get the means to do our work here. We are a poor people and we are complaining against our exclusion. I believe Dr. Weizmann said we want the Government to improve the lot of the fellaheen, and we should never grudge that; we should welcome it.

Q. The point appeared to be this. Here you are, the Jews, with undoubtedly a higher civilization than the Arabs, much higher demands for social services, and the point put before us and pressed upon us by several Jewish witnesses was that they were not given what they needed for their development. I put it to some of them in examination. I said, do you not think the duty of the Government comes first to the poor down-trodden fellaheen. They ought to be looked after. They are the really poor portion of the community. It was not accepted.

A. I will give you concrete example which will make clear our point of view. Take the health services. I do not know the details of what is done for the Arabs, but Government is helping the Arabs almost exclusively. There is a health service organized by the Jewish workers. There are rich Jews but there are Jewish workers in the colonies and the factories, who have very little wages, 20 or 25 piasters a day, and they do not work every day. They may get £2 or £3 a month. They maintain a health organization. Are they as a poor section of the population entitled to Government help? That is what we are saying, that the Jews should not be excluded because there are some rich Jews.

Q. The other question I want to put to you is this. I am not for a moment questioning your sincerity. You said there are thousands of Arabs working in our plantations, orange groves, and so on. Is it not a fact that the Government here had to pass an act to prevent picketing to stop Jews picketing some of the orange groves because they were employing Arab labor?

A. I must say I regret this Act of the Government. I will tell you why. First of all the Government is not consistent. If there is an Act against racial picketing, there should be an Act against racial strikes. Why is a racial strike legal and racial picketing illegal? Secondly, if an employer, say one in England, dismissed his workers in order to get cheaper workers, are the workers entitled to have a strike? If there is a right to strike, and to peaceful picketing, they are entitled to it.

Q. Was this a case of the orange plantation managers dismissing their Jewish workers in order to replace them by Arabs, or was it not the case that there were Arabs – as you state yourself, thousands of Arabs, was it not a case of these men being turned out?

A. I am going to explain that. If an employer dismisses his workers to get cheaper labor they have a right to peaceful picketing. But here a very strange situation was created by Government. If an employer dismisses a Jewish worker to take on a Jewish worker at lower wages, he can have a picket, but if the cheaper worker is an Arab he cannot do it. It is not right. We are in principle out for Jewish labor....

Q. That we have been told, because you want to train them.

A. Without our Jewish labor there is no Jewish community, and Jewish national home. It is a sham.

Q. You have not answered my question.

A. I will come to it. In Palestine there is this question between Jews and Arabs. There are not only two races. There are in Palestine two levels, two standards of life. It is not that there are Jewish workers and Arab workers on the same basis. It is a case of dear labor and cheaper labor. If we do not take special measures to get a place for Jewish workers then by the force of economic laws no Jew would be employed in this country because the employer can get a cheaper worker. The Jew, as an employer, after all, is flesh and blood, and while there are many employers who care for the national ideal, for the Jewish people, there are also many very selfish employers, and if they could get a worker at ten piasters a day, why should they employ a worker at twenty piasters a day? If no measures were taken no Jew would be employed in this country, because the Palestinian Arab worker is cheaper, and if there were not enough Palestinian Arabs, the employers would bring in cheap labor from Egypt and Syria. If there was no Arab labor in this country, they would bring in labor from outside. It would be a mockery of our national home. We have to defend ourselves, and we have to take special measures.

Q. Do I understand you therefore justify the picketing?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Then how do you reconcile that with your statement, not made once but several times, that not a single Arab should be displaced by a Jew coming into the country?

A. We do not want do-operation of Jewish capital and Arab labor. I consider this very dangerous. I know how this Ordinance was made. There was a colony Kfar Saba. Since this colony was established, Jewish labor was employed. I happened to work there myself, and then one of the employers dismissed his Jewish workers. If he had brought in Jews, say from the Yemen, on cheap rates, we should be justified in picketing him, why are we not justified in picketing him when he brings in cheap Arab labor? Certainly we have brought in pickets.

PROFESSOR COUPLAND: I think Sir Laurie Hammond's point is not so much that Jews were turned out and Arabs brought in, but Arabs were turned out and Jews were taken.

A. We do not want Arabs to be turned out.

SIR LAURIE HAMMOND: Do they get turned out?

A. No. We are getting turned out. There was only a case in these disturbances, when they left all the Jewish colonies. They struck.

Q. The suggestion is that the Arabs are only turned out and Jews taken on as a result of the disturbances?

A. All those pickets were in the Sharon colonies. In all these colonies from the beginning Jewish labor was employed exclusively.

Q. Have there been any pickets anywhere else?

A. There may have been some in Petach Tikwah, about six or eight years ago, when there was unemployment in Petach Tikwah, and they brought in laborers from other places for picking oranges, but otherwise it would be justified.

Q. Those are the only cases?

A. The only ones I know of.

Q. The last point I wanted to ask you was, you referred to the intensification of the fertility of the land and how you could get more settlers on to it. That, I presume, means irrigation. Without irrigation you cannot do it, without water?

A. It means two things, reclaiming the land which is not cultivated, and considered uncultivable, and that is almost half of Palestine, as in the Negev, and it means irrigation. It means those two things.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

(The witness withdrew.)