

ARAB PALESTINIAN COMMITTEE
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اللجنة الفلسطينية العربية
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His Excellency Lord Peel
Chairman of the Royal Commission Investigating the Question of Palestine
c/o the British Embassy in Cairo

Your Lordship;

Please allow a Palestinian residing in Cairo to submit to your honourable commission a partial report about the situation of the Palestinian Arabs residing outside their homeland. I have tried repeatedly to travel to Jerusalem to submit this information in person. Unfortunately I have failed to make the trip because I do not hold a passport as a result of the policy of the British Palestine Government vis à vis the emigrant Arabs of Palestine. I have tried to obtain a temporary Laissez-passer that would allow me to travel to Jerusalem before you left Palestine, but I did not succeed in obtaining one. From this introduction you can realise that there is a sad catastrophe that has hit me as well as my compatriots among the emigrant Arab (Palestinians) who have been denied their citizenship. Since you have left Palestine and arrived in Egypt, I am sending you my deposition by registered mail via the British Embassy in Cairo.

- Subject matter -

I, Mohamed Ali Eltaher, President of the Arab Palestinian Committee in Egypt, and former publisher of the Ashoura newspaper, originating from Nablus in Palestine, a landowner in the areas of Jaffa and Nablus, and belonging to the Eltaher family who resides in these two cities since the Arab conquest until now. My family counts about 300 members including brothers, sisters and cousins all living in Palestine.

In order to speed up the Judaisation of our country, the British Government of Palestine has passed laws and made decisions and resorted to legal tricks that led to stripping the citizenship of emigrant Arab Palestinians and turned us into non-Palestinians! The British Government of Palestine has denied us our Palestinian identity in order to negate our natural rights in our country and prevent us from being associated with it or returning to it. There are 40 to 45,000 of us residing outside Palestine, mostly in Central and South America, as well as in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the United States.

In the meanwhile, the British Government of Palestine has been granting Palestinian citizenship to all the Jews in the world and facilitates their entry into Palestine to settle and own property. Your Lordship, is there any injustice in history that surpasses this injustice?

- Worst Injustice -

As I am writing to Your Excellency I have in front of me a cable from Warsaw dated 13 January 1937 that was published in Arab newspapers published on January 14 in "Al Moqattam". The cable provides a spectacular description of the Polish Parliament's grumble about the behaviour of the Jews and their evils that prompted the parliament to issue legislation putting end to their deeds.

I also have in front of me a cable from London also dated January 13, 1937 published by Al-Ahram daily on January 14 about a debate in the South African Parliament about the grumble caused by the Jews and their ill-doings. There a third cable from South Africa dated January 17, published in Al-Ahram on the 18th indicating that South Africa has prohibited the Jews from entering its country to protect its national identity and prevent bloodletting.

I equally have in front of me the history of your respected king Richard the Lion-Hearted, who is very well recognised in the history of Palestine. This history indicates that in 1189 the king had made decisions to slaughter the Jews and persecute them in punishment.

It is impossible for anybody to believe that the whole earth and its advanced governments will agree on inflicting injustice on the Jews. Yet it is clear that the behaviour of the Jews and their crookedness that are to blame. Therefore there is something in their instincts that humanity refuses to accept.

The British Government who controls South Africa did not allow it to become a homeland for the Jews. Besides, it did not stop the government of this southern country from putting together legislation to protect the ethnic makeup of the country.

But Britain allows the killing of the strong and sound Arab element and remove him from Palestine for the sake of accommodating the Jews. If the strong nations and major kingdoms cannot withstand the Jews and are fed up with them, at a time they represent a small intruding community, so how about us Palestinians at a time they constitute one third of the population. Your British government even offered them our country, provided them with protection and took sides with them.

Not one Jewish criminal has been hanged since the occupation until now. But then many Arabs were hanged and later found innocent. Ask the Government of Palestine when it pardoned the Jewish policeman Khankir who killed a whole innocent Palestinian family in 1921 with his gun. Then ask the Government about the hanging of those who robbed the English Archbishop after that.

The British Armies did not destroy any Jewish home during the latest uprising despite the proven fact that the Jews had fired on the Arabs and on a police patrol. That is without mentioning the tens of villages that were destroyed just upon accusation.

Your Lordship, this is indeed horrible, and it is not befitting that an advanced, honourable country and one of the cornerstones of modern civilisation such as Britain be responsible for such actions in front of the world and in front of history.

- How did they take away our citizenship? –

In 1924 we heard that the Government of Palestine had issued a Citizenship Law. It published it in the Official Gazette in Jerusalem, which only public service employees read, but it did not publish it outside Palestine. Imagine how could the emigrants get notice about this law!

Then we read in Arab newspapers that whoever wanted to prove his citizenship had to contact British Consulates. So I went to the Consulate in Cairo to confirm my rights. I was told that the consulate had not received any instructions, and that it will publicize such once they are received from Palestine. However, Your Excellency, they never published anything over the past 12 years!

Hence I remained in Egypt and carried a Temporary Transit Permit issued by the Egyptian Public Security Administration, which indicated that I was “a Temporary Palestinian Resident in Egypt”. However the Egyptian Government withdrew the Transit Permit, so I remained without permit as well as without either a passport, or citizenship, or any documentary evidence as to my identity. All that because the British Government, which rules over my homeland Palestine, chose to deny us our natural and humanitarian rights in order to accommodate the foreign Jews settling in our country under the protection of British bayonets.

Thus thanks to the Balfour Declaration I ceased to be either a Palestinian or an Egyptian. This Your Excellency at a time I own agricultural land in Palestine on which I pay income tax to the Government of Palestine. I also possess family endowments in Nablus and Jaffa, and me, my brothers and sisters, as well as my cousins have lived for ages and eternally in Palestine. How can this be allowed Your Excellency?

- The Government of Palestine takes sides -

Among the strange partiality by the Government of Palestine is that a Palestinian Arab who wants to enter Palestine is only allowed by its government to enter as a “tourist”. And if he resided more than the allowed period the Palestine Police deports him by force and prevents him from further re-entry for ever!

As for the Jews, our country is open for them as you have witnessed while in Palestine. Ten years ago the Government of Palestine has even dispatched a senior British official to countries of Central Europe and Poland to encourage the Jews to come to Palestine. This official was given the authority to encourage them and facilitate their travel as well as issue them Palestinian passports!

As a sign of further partiality of the Government of Palestine is that it left the borders without effective control and neglected guarding the coasts and thus enabled thousands of smuggled Jews to enter the country illegally. Arab newspapers have complained about this

situation, which led Arab youths and boy scouts to organize a coast guard watch to lead the Palestinian Police to the boats loaded with Jewish immigrants when they get off along the coast. But the Government of Palestine prohibited the guards from operating and decided to punish any Arab who undertakes to guard the shores. This resulted in turmoil in the country that led eventually to the Revolution of 1933.

- The Arabs and Britain -

I wrote about the partiality of the Government of Palestine in my newspaper "Ashoura", which led the government to prohibit entry of the newspaper into Palestine! British staff in Palestine used to do that to me and others and more without shame, at a time we stood against our Muslim Ottoman government during World War I, and called for an alliance with the British and the allies against the Ottoman state expecting that they will stand by Arab independence. But the British have robbed the people of each God-given right by force, then they took away our citizenship and offered our country to the Jews as a gift. Then they forced us to accept this inequity using weapons and bombs. There is no doubt that Your Excellency has noticed the result of destruction and devastation in the cities and villages as a result of what was done to us by the police with support from the army.

- Conclusion -

Since you will be holding a session in London to hear the testimony of the Jewish Mr. (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, I ask Your Excellency to kindly organise a short session in Cairo if possible so that I could reply to your questions and to submit official documents supporting this memorandum. Among the documents I will submit to Your Excellency you will find two strange notifications, addressed to me last year by the Government of Palestine. One contains a warning to deport me from my homeland which I was visiting, the second document consists of a request to pay income tax on the 25 dunums (25,000 m²) orange grove I personally planted near Jaffa, and which is worth five thousand Pounds. The government has issued the notice to leave the country at the same time it warned me to pay the due taxes, all during the same month!

Your Excellency, I have based my request to hear me and receive my memorandum because I believe that your esteemed commission has been dispatched to listen first and foremost to the complaints of the Arabs. This includes my complaint and that of the other Arab emigrants which is indeed among the most tragic of complaints.

Sincerely yours;

Mohamed Ali Eltaher – From Nablus
President of the Palestinian Arab Committee
Publisher of Ashoura newspaper

