



## **Jewish Sovereignty: Ze'ev Jabotinsky at the Peel Commission**

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Wednesday, Aug. 18 at 7:00 PM EDT

### **Course Description:**

Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky (1880-1940) gave up a career as a celebrated European journalist, poet, and philosopher to lead the Revisionist Zionist movement and to help found the Jewish Legion of the British army, the first all-Jewish fighting force to see action in many centuries. In the 1930s, Jabotinsky was reluctantly forced to confront the hostile shift in policy of the British government toward Zionism. Appearing in 1937 before the Peel Commission, established by Britain to determine the causes of Arab unrest, Jabotinsky delivered one of the great Zionist speeches. His eloquence heightened in the face of the disaster threatening European Jewry, he passionately expounds on the simple proposition at the heart of Zionism: the Jews must be allowed a state of their own. In this seminar, we will explore this speech's themes and legacy.

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What does Jabotinsky mean to signify by the expressions “antisemitism of men,” “antisemitism of things” and “xenophobia of Life itself”? What idea of Jewish suffering in the Diaspora is he rejecting?
2. Why is a Jewish majority Zionism’s “minimum” demand, according to Jabotinsky? Is his logic correct?
3. In what ways does Jabotinsky think Zionism’s success would or would not be a hardship for the Arabs of Mandatory Palestine? Do you agree?
4. What is Jabotinsky’s criticism of the British administration in Palestine? What is the alternative?

## Pre-State Timeline

- 1910 Kibbutz Deganya Aleph Founded (First Kibbutz)
- 1919 Ben Gurion Founds Achdut HaAvoda, unifying the labor movement
- 1920 Jabotinsky arrested and sentenced to 15 years for possessing illegal arms; Haganah founded.
- 1923 Jabotinsky leaves the WZO to found Revisionism, Betar, writes “The Iron Wall.”
- 1929 Arab Riots, Hebron Massacre
- 1930 Shaw Commission leads to “Passfield White Paper” limiting Jewish immigration and land purchases.
- 1930 Jabotinsky exiled from Palestine, Brit HaBirionim is active (1930-1934, Abba Ahimeir)
- 1931 Irgun founded as splinter of the Haganah (Jabotinsky becomes “supreme commander,” (1936) Begin takes control in 1943)
- 1933 Jabotinsky begins to call for mass evacuation of Jews from Eastern Europe, negotiates with Polish government.
- 1935 Jabotinsky and Ben Gurion meet in London; Jabotinsky founds NZO.
- 1939 MacDonald “White Paper” WW2 begins, Irgun suspends activities against the British, fights with them against Nazis.
- 1940 Irgun splits; Lehi formed (reformed in 1942 by Shamir), continues “terrorist” activity against the British, seeks to expel the British.
- 1940 Jabotinsky dies of a heart attack.
- 1944 Begin ends Irgun cooperation with Britain, declares aim of driving out the British from Palestine. The *Saison* begins.
- 1945 Ben Gurion and Haganah join (limited) armed struggle against the British; *Saison* ends.
- 1946 King David Hotel Bombing (Irgun)
- 1947 Sergeants Affair
- 1948 Altalena Affair

## Timeline of Jabotinsky’s Life

- 1880 Jabotinsky is born in Odessa
- 1897 Drops out of high school to become a journalist; succeeds in creating a huge following.
- 1902 Jailed for two month in Odessa for writing anti-Czarist articles
- 1903 Kishinev Pogrom. Jabotinsky volunteers to distribute aid, meets Bialik, translates “City of Slaughter” into Russian, becomes a committed Zionist. Establishes the Jewish Self-Defense Organization in Odessa. Attends Sixth Zionist Congress, where Herzl proposes settling Uganda.
- 1907 Marries Anya, his love from childhood.
- 1908 Is appointed WZO representative in Turkey.
- 1910 Son Eri is born
- 1914 Translates Edgar Allen Poe into Hebrew
- 1915 Works to establish the Jewish Legion together with Joseph Trumpeldor
- 1917 Serves as an officer in the Jewish Legion, fights for the British in Palestine. Balfour Declaration issued.

**1919** Begins to train Jews on the Yishuv in self-defense and military tactics.

**1920** Voluntarily turns himself in after comrades arrested for possessing arms, and is sentenced to 15 years, but is released after a few months with a general pardon by the new British governor.

**1920-1939** Calls for mass evacuation of Jews from Eastern Europe. Is virtually alone in foreseeing the disaster to come.

**1923** Leaves the WZO to found Revisionism, Betar, dedicated to establishing a Jewish state, with a Jewish majority, on both banks of the Jordan. Writes "The Iron Wall."

**1925** Betar thrives in Eastern Europe.

**1927** Writes "Samson" (later sells manuscript to Hollywood for \$600, film grosses \$11 million)

**1928** Visits Tel Aviv, attracts great crowds.

**1930** Is exiled from Palestine by the British. Testifies at the Shaw Commission. Leads to "Passfield White Paper," restricting Jewish land purchases and immigration.

**1935** Writes "The Five"

**1935** Meets Ben Gurion in London in attempt to end strife between Labor and Revisionist Factions. Ben Gurion fails to carry it, Jabotinsky founds NZO, is the spiritual head of the Irgun underground.

**1937** Testifies before the Palestine Royal Commission

**1939** MacDonald "White Paper" limits Jewish immigration to 75,000 over five years, and then ends it, limits Jewish land purchases to 5% of the Mandate. White paper rejected by both Jews and Arabs. Jabotinsky instructs his followers to prepare to fight the British.

**1940** Dies of a heart attack while visiting a Betar chapter in New York State, Ania is in London during the Blitz, Eri is jailed by the British in Palestine. States in his will that he wants to be reburied in the Jewish state, but only at the request of its PM.

**1964** PM Levi Eshkol reverses Ben Gurion's decision and brings Jabotinsky's bones to Jerusalem for reburial.



commodate themselves more easily to Zionism if, as its leadership then believed, it de-emphasized its final aims or was even willing to abandon them. In his view, colonization and everything else depended on political achievements and ultimately, therefore, on power.

After the outbreak of the First World War Jabotinsky went to northern and western Europe as a roving correspondent for a liberal Moscow daily. Once Turkey joined the war in October 1914, on the side of Germany, Jabotinsky was certain that the future of Jewish aspirations in Palestine rested with the Allies. Turkey, he was sure, would be dismembered, no matter what the outcome of the war; hence, the Jews had to fight on the Allied side and share in the military effort to occupy Palestine. The feeling of most of the Zionist leadership (Chaim Weizmann, who then aided Jabotinsky, discreetly, was the one notable exception) was that neutrality was the policy to follow in the war. Almost singlehanded, Jabotinsky finally won British consent to the formation of three Jewish battalions, the first of which (the 38th Fusiliers) fought with Allenby in the campaign in Palestine in 1918. He himself enlisted as a private and was soon made a lieutenant.

When the war ended, Jabotinsky was the least hopeful of all the Zionists that there would be real support from the British or smooth relations with the Arabs during the expected period of mass immigration. During the Arab riots of 1920, he organized a self-defense corps in Jerusalem and was jailed by the British military administration and sentenced to fifteen years for the illegal possession of arms. This caused a storm, and he was soon pardoned and the conviction was subsequently revoked. Jabotinsky's reputation was now at its height. He was elected to the Zionist Executive in 1921, but almost immediately he and Chaim Weizmann were at odds. Jabotinsky believed in rapid mass immigration to Palestine and in major dependence on Jewish military and police units; Weizmann trusted the British, or at least believed that nothing could be done without their consent, and wanted a policy of careful colonization. Other issues were involved, as well, so that within two years Jabotinsky resigned, charging that the policies of his colleagues would result in the loss of Palestine.

Jabotinsky returned to Zionist work in 1925, when he organized a new Zionist party, the Revisionists. After a decade in which he was ever more out of tune with the official leadership of Zionism as too minimalist and compromising, his group left the movement entirely in 1935, to found the "New Zionist Organization." Illegal immigration into Palestine during the 1930's and the direct action of the Irgun against the British from that period until 1948 were conducted with

special daring and *élan* by groups under his influence. Jabotinsky died on a trip to the United States in 1940.

The pages below represent the whole of his direct testimony before the British Royal Commission on Palestine of 1937. This group, known also as the Peel Commission, was directed to inquire into the Palestinian impasse, after the Arab riots and guerrilla warfare of 1936, and to make recommendations for its solution. It suggested a plan to partition Palestine, which was soon abandoned by the British government. Jabotinsky appeared before this body on behalf of his New Zionist Organization. What he said there stands as an instructive summary of his mature views.

#### EVIDENCE SUBMITTED TO THE PALESTINE ROYAL COMMISSION (1937)

*House of Lords, London  
February 11, 1937*

THE CONCEPTION OF ZIONISM which I have the honor to represent here is based on what I should call the humanitarian aspect. By that I do not mean to say that we do not respect the other, the purely spiritual aspects of Jewish nationalism, such as the desire for self-expression, the rebuilding of a Hebrew culture, or creating some "model community of which the Jewish people could be proud." All that, of course, is most important; but as compared with our actual needs and our real position in the world today, all that has rather the character of luxury. The Commission have already heard a description of the situation of world-Jewry especially in eastern Europe, and I am not going to repeat any details, but you will allow me to quote a recent reference in the *New York Times* describing the position of Jewry in eastern Europe as "a disaster of historic magnitude." I only wish to add that it would be very naïve, and although many Jews make this mistake I disapprove of it—it would be very naïve to ascribe that state of disaster, permanent disaster, only to the guilt of men, whether it be crowds and multitudes, or whether it be Governments. The thing goes much deeper than that. I am very much afraid that what I am going to



say will not be popular with many among my coreligionists, and I regret that, but the truth is the truth. We are facing an elemental calamity, a kind of social earthquake.

Three generations of Jewish thinkers and Zionists, among whom there were many great minds—I am not going to fatigue you by quoting them—three generations have given much thought to analyzing the Jewish position and have come to the conclusion that the cause of our suffering is the very fact of the Diaspora, the bedrock fact that we are everywhere a minority. It is not the anti-Semitism of men; it is, above all, the anti-Semitism of things, the inherent xenophobia of the body social or the body economic under which we suffer. Of course, there are ups and downs; but there are moments, there are whole periods in history when this “xenophobia of Life itself” takes dimensions which no people can stand, and that is what we are facing now.

I do not mean to suggest that I would recognize that all the Governments concerned have done all they ought to have done; I would be the last man to concede that. I think many Governments, East and West, ought to do much more to protect the Jews than they do; but the best of Governments could perhaps only soften the calamity to quite an insignificant extent, but the core of the calamity is an earthquake which stands and remains. I want to mention here that, since one of those Governments (the Polish Government) has recently tried what amounts to bringing to the notice of the League of Nations and the whole of humanity that it is humanity's duty to provide the Jews with an area where they could build up their own body social undisturbed by anyone, I think the sincerity of the Polish Government, and of any other Governments who, I hope, will follow, should not be suspected, but on the contrary it should be recognized and acknowledged with due gratitude.

Perhaps the greatest gap in all I am going to say and in all the Commission have heard up to now is the impossibility of really going to the root of the problem, really bringing before you a picture of what that Jewish hell looks like, and I feel I cannot do it. I do hope the day may come when some Jewish representative may be allowed to appear at the Bar of one of these two Houses just to tell them what it really is, and to ask the English people: “What are you going to advise us? Where is the way out? Or, standing up and facing God, say that there is no way out and that we Jews have just to go under.” But unfortunately I cannot do it, so I will simply assume that the Royal Commission are sufficiently informed of all this situation, and then I want you to realize this: The phenomenon called Zionism may include all

kinds of dreams—a “model community,” Hebrew culture, perhaps even a second edition of the Bible—but all this longing for wonderful toys of velvet and silver is nothing in comparison with that tangible momentum of irresistible distress and need by which we are propelled and borne.

We are not free agents. We cannot “concede” anything. Whenever I hear the Zionist, most often my own Party, accused of asking for too much—Gentlemen, I really cannot understand it. Yes, we do want a State; every nation on earth, every normal nation, beginning with the smallest and the humblest who do not claim any merit, any role in humanity's development, they all have States of their own. That is the normal condition for a people. Yet, when we, the most abnormal of peoples and therefore the most unfortunate, ask only for the same condition as the Albanians enjoy, to say nothing of the French and the English, then it is called too much. I should understand it if the answer were, “It is impossible,” but when the answer is, “It is too much,” I cannot understand it. I would remind you (excuse me for quoting an example known to every one of you) of the commotion which was produced in that famous institution when *Oliver Twist* came and asked for “more.” He said “more” because he did not know how to express it; what *Oliver Twist* really meant was this: “Will you just give me that normal portion which is necessary for a boy of my age to be able to live.” I assure you that you face here today, in the Jewish people with its demands, an *Oliver Twist* who has, unfortunately, no concessions to make. What can be the concessions? We have got to save millions, many *millions*. I do not know whether it is a question of rehousing one-third of the Jewish race, half of the Jewish race, or a quarter of the Jewish race; I do not know; but it is a question of millions. Certainly the way out is to evacuate those portions of the Diaspora which have become no good, which hold no promise of any possibility of a livelihood, and to concentrate all those refugees in some place which should *not* be Diaspora, not a repetition of the position where the Jews are an unabsorbed minority within a foreign social, or economic, or political organism. Naturally, if that process of evacuation is allowed to develop, as it ought to be allowed to develop, there will very soon be reached a moment when the Jews will become a majority in Palestine.

I am going to make a “terrible” confession. Our demand for a Jewish majority is not our maximum—it is our minimum: it is just an inevitable stage if only we are allowed to go on salvaging our people. The point when the Jews will reach a majority in that country will not



be the point of saturation yet—because with 1,000,000 more Jews in Palestine today you could already have a Jewish majority, but there are certainly 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 in the East who are virtually knocking at the door asking for admission, i.e., for salvation.

I have the profoundest feeling for the Arab case, in so far as that Arab case is not exaggerated. This Commission have already been able to make up their minds as to whether there is any individual hardship to the Arabs of Palestine as men, deriving from the Jewish colonization. We maintain unanimously that the economic position of the Palestinian Arabs, under the Jewish colonization and owing to the Jewish colonization, has become the object of envy in all the surrounding Arab countries, so that the Arabs from those countries show a clear tendency to immigrate into Palestine. I have also shown to you already that, in our submission, there is no question of ousting the Arabs. On the contrary, the idea is that Palestine on both sides of the Jordan should hold the Arabs, their progeny, *and* many millions of Jews. What I do not deny is that in that process the Arabs of Palestine will necessarily become a minority in the country of Palestine. What I do deny is that *that* is a hardship. It is not a hardship on any race, any nation, possessing so many National States now and so many more National States in the future. One fraction, one branch of that race, and not a big one, will have to live in someone else's State: Well, that is the case with all the mightiest nations of the world. I could hardly mention one of the big nations, having their States, mighty and powerful, who had not one branch living in someone else's State. That is only normal and there is no "hardship" attached to that. So when we hear the Arab claim confronted with the Jewish claim; I fully understand that any minority would prefer to be a majority, it is quite understandable that the Arabs of Palestine would also prefer Palestine to be the Arab State No. 4, No. 5, or No. 6—that I quite understand; but when the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite versus the claims of starvation. No tribunal has ever had the luck of trying a case where all the justice was on the side of one party and the other party had no case whatsoever. Usually in human affairs any tribunal, including this tribunal, in trying two cases, has to concede that both sides have a case on their side and, in order to do justice, they must take into consideration what should constitute the basic justification of all human demands, individual or mass demands—the decisive terrible balance of Need. I think it is clear.

I now want to establish that this condition was perfectly well known, perfectly realized, and perfectly acknowledged, by the legislators re-

sponsible for the act known as the Balfour Declaration and subsequently for the Mandate. The paramount question was Jewish distress. I was privileged myself to take part in our political negotiations with France, Italy, and England, from 1915 to 1917. I was also associated with others who conducted those negotiations. I can assure you that the main argument mentioned in every conversation with the Italian ministers, with M. Delcassé in France, with Lord Newton here, with Lord Balfour, with Mr. Lloyd George, and with everybody else, was the argument of the terrible Jewish distress, especially keen at that moment. England, France, and Italy, three Liberal countries, happened to be Allies of Tsarist Russia. I need not describe to gentlemen of your generation what it meant to any Englishman, whether Liberal or Conservative, when he read in the newspapers, especially in 1915 and 1916, certain information as to the fate of the Jews in the Russian sector of the war. It was the common talk everywhere—the feeling that something should be done to relieve that disaster, and the feeling that that disaster was only an acute expression of a deep-seated, chronic disease that was alive everywhere. And I claim that the spirit that created the Balfour Declaration was that spirit, the recognition that something should be done to save a people in that position.

My Lord and Gentlemen, here we come to the beginning of a very sad chapter. I will do my best to put it to you as moderately as I can. You will certainly use patience and perhaps more than patience with a man who has to tell you about a very great disappointment. I always thought before coming to England that if a civilized country, a civilized Government, assumed a trust, internationally, under *such* conditions, with *such* implications, dealing with a people who have so long suffered and who have so long hoped and whose hopes are, after all, sacred to every Englishman—I expected that Government to sit down and prepare a blueprint, a plan "how to do it." Under whatever interpretation of the "home" promise, there should have been a plan how to build it; what were to be the implications of "placing a country under such administrative, economic, and political conditions as might facilitate the establishment" of whatever you mean by the Jewish national home.

That was one condition—a Plan; and the second condition was letting it be clear to all that that was the trust they have accepted and "That is what we are going to do." That blueprint or planning should begin with a geological survey of both sides of the Jordan in order to ascertain what parts of the territory are really reclaimable, cultivable; a scheme for their amelioration and reclamation; a scheme of a loan



which should be launched and which the Jews would have to provide, to pay for the amelioration and parcellation, and for creating a land reserve on both sides of the Jordan, out of which both Jewish and Arab applicants for agricultural settlement could be satisfied. Further, a plan of industrial development calculated to provide sustenance for large-scale immigration; a plan of what tariff laws and customs measures should be adopted in order to protect that development; a plan for a taxation system, as in every country under colonization, adapted to assisting the new settlers and newcomers.

Finally, measures for guaranteeing security. A nation with your colossal colonizing past experience surely knows that colonization never went on without certain conflicts with the population on the spot, so that the country had to be protected; and as the Jew never asked to be protected by someone else, the Plan should embody the Jewish demand that they should themselves be allowed to form a protecting body in Palestine, or at least a considerable part of it. Especially there should be a very careful selection of Civil Servants. Such a work, unparalleled, unprecedented, certainly needs Civil Servants first of all sympathetic, and secondly, acquainted with the work. There should be some special examination, some new branch of the Service. That is what everybody expected. I need not tell you how totally disappointed we were in hearing, instead of all that, the expression "muddling through"—hearing it even mentioned as something desirable and commendable as a system; on more solemn occasions it was called "empiricism" and sometimes "going by horse sense." I do not know if all this is good for the Empire; it is not for me to judge. I can only say that we have greatly suffered under this absence of system, this deliberate aversion from making plans while undertaking something very new, very important, and very responsible. We have suffered terribly. Yet, whenever we complained, we got the strange reply: "The man on the spot knows better." May I submit most respectfully that the Mandate was granted to Great Britain by fifty nations because those fifty nations believed in Britain's collective experience and conscience, and especially in the fact of their close control over the man on the spot. The idea of control by a nation over its executives is an English idea. We Continentals learned it from the English. So, in our submission, the Mandatory Government cannot discharge its Mandatory duty by selecting even a genius and appointing him as the man on the spot. But that was practically always their reply: "We have appointed a man on the spot, let him do it, and we shall wait and see." Or sometimes we got another reply—"Probably the Government is administered quite

satisfactorily, because both Jews and Arabs have grievances and complaints." We never could understand this. Is my duty, for instance, with regard to my children or with regard to my two clients, sufficiently discharged if I have managed to make myself obnoxious to both of them? I do not think so.

We were terribly disappointed by the absence of a system and plan. We were even more disappointed by the absence of the second requirement: clarity. The Arabs were never told what the Balfour Declaration was meant by Lord Balfour and all the others to mean. They were never told. Here again, My Lord, I am going to limit myself, as being perhaps a sufficient illustration of that attitude to truth, to recall a little story which has been told to this Commission in Palestine: that instead of writing on coins, etc., "Eretz Israel" they just write the two Hebrew letters for E. I. Why? What is the meaning of it? If the country is to be called Eretz Israel, Land of Israel, if that is the name avowed, then print it in full; if it is something which cannot be allowed, remove it. But the "way out" adopted in this case illustrates the whole "system," which is to hint that there is the Balfour Declaration, and perhaps there is something in it, but then again perhaps there is nothing in it. That has been the "system" from the beginning to the end. If questioned, I am prepared to support this reproach by many facts, but I believe the Royal Commission have already had sufficient information to form their own judgment.

A very important factor in implementing the Mandate is looking after security. I presume the Commission have already had time to draw their own conclusions as to that, but it is my duty to remind them of a few aspects of it. In Palestine we were threatened with pogroms; we were telling so to the Government for years and years, but they went on cutting down and cutting down on the number of troops in Palestine. We said: "Remember that we have children and wives; legalize our self-defense, as you are doing in Kenya." In Kenya until recently every European was obliged to train for the Settlers Defense Force. Why should the Jews in Palestine be forced to prepare for self-defense underhand; as though committing a legal offense? You know what a pogrom means in Jewish history; we know what pogroms mean in the history of Mandatory Palestine. The Jews have never been allowed to prepare for that holy duty of self-defense, as every Englishman would have done. We had in our case to prepare by underhand methods, with insufficient equipment, with insufficient drilling, in an amateurish way. I really do not know how a Government can allow or tolerate such a state of things after three experiences, of which 1929



was a terrible one. . . . I am sorry if I am getting excited and I apologize to the Commission and hope they understand the reason for it; but I do not think I have overstepped the boundaries of logic in submitting to this Royal Commission my case.

If you cut down the troops in Palestine far beyond the limit of safety, and the explanation is that the British taxpayer does not want to give his money nor his sons, that is quite natural, but we—the Jews of all parties—have for years been demanding: “Why have you disbanded the Jewish Regiment? Why not allow the Jews to take over: our men and our money under British command and under British military law?” I do not claim a “Jewish Army” before there is a Jewish State; we want the Jewish Regiment just as it existed during the War, rendering decent service. Why should the impression be created in this country that we want Johnny, Tommy, and Bobby to defend us? We do not. If, in the building of Palestine, sweat and gold have to be employed, let us give the sweat and let us give the gold; if blood has to be shed by the defenders of Palestine, let it be our blood and not English blood. But that suggestion has always been turned down.

As I said: I know the attitude of this Commission in refusing to dwell on the actual course of the riots, and I have to bow before it. On the other hand—here again I must ask, not about this Commission, but about the Colonial Office, about the Mandatory Government: Is there a plan, is there a line of action? Mr. Eden in Geneva, most formally, in so many words, promised the League’s Council that “a Royal Commission” had been appointed to investigate the prevailing unrest, that they would investigate the facts; and the Permanent Mandates Commission was persuaded to abstain from asking questions until “a Royal Commission”—I do not say *this* Royal Commission—had investigated actual events. This Royal Commission is, of course, sovereign to refuse to do so, and I can understand their motives, but My Lord, where is then that Royal Commission which *will* investigate who is guilty? Because I claim somebody is guilty, I claim that a tremendous amount of ammunition for the Arabs has been allowed to percolate into Palestine both before and during the events, I claim there was neglect of duty in examining the first victims. I claim there is something I want to understand but do not understand in the fact that while a general strike in Jaffa was in progress, there was no general strike in Haifa. I want to understand whether it is true there had been some gentlemen’s agreement, a “revolt by leave” in one part of Palestine, but no revolt where it was requested

by somebody in office that there should not be revolt. I want to understand why Mr. Kawkaji was allowed to depart from Palestine in state; why the bands were allowed to disband; why there was no subsequent disarmament of the population. I want to know why it is that such things can happen in a country and nobody is guilty, nobody is responsible.

With this famous theory of the man on the spot, I want the man on the spot to stand before a Royal Commission, before a Judicial Commission, and I want him to answer for his errors. Sometimes even a humble man like myself has the right to say the words “*J'accuse.*” They are guilty. They are guilty of commission, omission, neglect of duty. If I am not mistaken, somebody has to answer to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations who gave you the Mandate. Who is going to answer? I am informed that, instead of by this Royal Commission, a report on the events will be presented in a general way in the report of the Palestine Government to the League of Nations—the party whom we accuse will present it. I submit to this Royal Commission: Among your recommendations as to remedies (because you are requested in your terms of reference to mention remedies) the first is to find the guilty ones and to punish them. Also inquire about the Supreme Moslem Council, or whatever is the official description of that group of persons headed by His Eminence the Mufti and the other gentlemen. The Government gave them a sort of diplomatic immunity. The Government negotiated with them. I submit most respectfully and humbly that some independent Commission, independent of the Colonial Office and independent of the man on the spot, should inquire and investigate into this question of guilt. I believe it is guilt, and I believe that the person guilty should be punished, and that is what I humbly demand.

As to the remedies, the main remedy in my opinion is the Plan and the truth. Arabs and Jews should be informed what the real implications of the Mandate are. To my way of thinking there is only one way of interpreting the Mandate. And a Scheme should be prepared. We call it a Ten-Year Plan. In our opinion it should embrace agrarian reforms, taxation, and customs reforms, a reform of the Civil Service, opening up of Trans-Jordan for Jewish penetration, and assurance of public security by the establishment of a Jewish contingent and by the legalization of Jewish self-defense.

At the same time, I think on the Jewish side too, reforms are necessary, for we have also committed many errors in our own systems. In my opinion it all culminates in the reform of the Jewish Agency. I



was asked by Lord Peel whether we represented a body distinct from the Jewish Agency. Yes. We claim that the Jewish Agency *de facto* does not today represent the whole or even the majority of Zionist Jewry and we think the time has come when this body should be rebuilt, with the consent of the Mandatory, on the basis of universal suffrage, because the problem of Zionism today has really become the interest of practically everybody in Jewry, no longer only of adherents of a particular political group. We think that reform is quite timely and it might put an end to many abuses which I cannot deny. One of them will be brought to the knowledge of this Commission in the report of the "Betar"—the British Trumpeldor organization—on the distribution of certificates, about which this Commission have received, to my great regret, misleading information from some other Jewish representatives.

CHAIRMAN: Are you going to tell us where it is misleading? What is the main point?

ANSWER: Yes, if you will allow me another ten minutes. There is a suggestion that when we are asking for what I am asking for, that we are trying to involve this Empire in formidable complications and obstacles. I deny it. To the best of my belief I affirm, and I am not the only one, that should Great Britain go this way and really help us to save the Jewish people as it was meant and promised in the Balfour Declaration, the course of this great experiment will be as normal as the course of any other great enterprise of social evolution. We utterly deny that it means bringing Great Britain into conflict with world Islam, we utterly deny that it means a real physical conflict with the neighboring states, we deny all this. It has been exaggerated beyond any recognition. It is not true. Given a firm resolve, made clearly known to both Jews and Arabs, all this would be performed with the normal smoothness of any other equally big colonization enterprise.

As to keeping the country quiet and avoiding disturbances: I have already submitted—try what has never been tried—try re-establishing the Jewish Regiment as part and parcel of the permanent garrison. Try legalizing Jewish self-defense. It is anyway almost inevitable. Jewish self-defense is "practically" legalized today; it is and it is not; it "should not" exist, but it does exist; it "should not" be armed, but if it is armed, well . . . and so on. Well, I think the decisive step should be made in the necessary direction.

You have, of course, heard of compromises and halfway houses which are being suggested, including cantonization, or the parity

scheme, or the cultural rapprochement, or the Jews "giving in" and so on. Believe my sincerity, and it is the sincerity of the whole Movement, the sincerity of every Jew I am now trying to voice: We wish a halfway house could be possible, but it is perfectly impossible. We cannot accept cantonization, because it will be suggested by many, even among you, that even the whole of Palestine may prove too small for that humanitarian purpose we need. A corner of Palestine, a "canton," how can we promise to be satisfied with it? We cannot. We never can. Should we swear to you we would be satisfied, it would be a lie. On what other point can we "give in?" What can the "concession" be on the part of Oliver Twist? He is in such a position that he cannot concede anything; it is the workhouse people who have to concede the plateful of soup, and there is no way out of it. We do not believe in any compromise on those lines. Cantonization is a dream and parity is a lie. It will never be enforced or believed by anybody; and trying it again and again means prolonging the state of things which in my submission has led to the riots of 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1936, and it will lead again to the same result.

There is only one way of compromise. Tell the Arabs the truth, and then you will see the Arab is reasonable, the Arab is clever, the Arab is just; the Arab *can* realize that since there are three or four or five wholly Arab States, then it is a thing of justice which Great Britain is doing if Palestine is transformed into a Jewish State. Then there will be a change of mind among the Arabs, then there will be room for compromise, and there will be peace.

It is my very unpleasant duty to wind up by taking into consideration a melancholy pessimistic contingency: What will happen if what the Jews desire cannot be conceded by Great Britain? I wish I could omit mentioning that contingency for many reasons, personal reasons, Jewish national reasons, but to omit it is impossible. We are asked very often: "Whatever is meant by the Balfour Declaration was promised in 1917, but since then perhaps the British people have honestly come to the conclusion that they cannot do it." I deny it. I affirm they can; but when I am asked, when any Jew is asked: "What, are the Jews going to pin us down to the promise and to say—you have promised the pound of flesh, pay us the pound of flesh?" Gentlemen, here I answer you in the name of the most extreme of Zionist parties: "No!" If Great Britain really is unable to do it (not unwilling, but unable) we will bow to her decision, but we then shall expect Great Britain to act as any Mandatory who feels he cannot carry out the Mandate: give back the Mandate. . . .



SIR LAURIE HAMMOND: To whom?

ANSWER: And do it in a way which will not harm the safety of the Jews who trusted you and came to Palestine on the chances of a Zionist future. This means letting a certain time elapse while the Mandatory together with the Jews will look for the alternative. I hope that time will never come. I am fully convinced that it will not be necessary. I believe in England just as I believed in England twenty years ago when I went, against nearly all Jewish opinion, and said: "Give soldiers to Great Britain!" because I believed in her. I still believe. But if Great Britain really *cannot* live up to the Mandate—well—we shall be the losers; and we will sit down together and think what can be done; but not that Great Britain should go on holding the Mandate and pretend it is "fulfilled" while my people are still suffering in the Diaspora and still only a minority in Palestine. No, that cannot be done. That is not cricket. Therefore, Gentlemen, I submit it cannot be done, and it shall not be done.

I thank the Commission very much for their kindness and attention. I beg your forgiveness for having kept you for an hour and a half.