

Southern Palestine, may be regarded as being the most representative Arab leaders in the occupied part of Palestine.³³

On the following day Weizmann paid a visit to Ismail Husseini, where his cousin the Mufti Kamel Husseini was also present. Weizmann tried to allay the fears of his hosts on various questions which have caused alarm among the Palestinians and

touched upon the question which agitates most closely the minds of Arab leaders, viz, the Land Question. He assured his hosts that expropriation or the driving out from Palestine by economic means of the Arab proprietors or Arab fellaheen was the last thing he desired.³⁴

Ormsby-Gore reported that the two Arab notables were guarded in their replies. His report, however, overlooked an important incident, which reflected the political mood in Palestine, that took place in Jerusalem during the Commission's visit to the Holy City.

The incident has three known versions. *The Palestine News* which was issued by the British in Cairo towards the end of the War, reported, in its issue of 25 April the following item:

A group of Muslim literary figures in Jerusalem presented, on the 11th and 12th of April, a play 'The Maid of Adnan and Arab Chivalry' at the Rashidiah School Club. A big map of Palestine was conspicuously displayed in a prominent place in the club with the following lines of poetry inscribed under it:

The Blessed Land of Palestine
Is the Land of the sons of Ya'rub
O the best land of all do not despair
I have no other love but you,
We shall sacrifice our souls for your sake
And you shall soar to great heights
Until you become like the sun in its zenith
Giving light to East and West.³⁵

An agitated Weizmann provided a more animated account of the same incident, which took place on the 11 April, in a report to Ormsby-Gore on the political situation in Palestine:

... Both speakers used the kind of language which would be appropriate if an attempt were on foot to enslave and ruin the Arabs of Palestine. They called on the Nation to awake from its torpor, and to rise up in defence of its land, of its liberty, of its sacred places against those who were coming to rob it of everything. One speaker adjured his hearers not to sell a single inch of land. Nor is that all. Both speakers took it for granted that Palestine was and must remain a purely Arab country. In fact, a map of Palestine, bearing the inscription 'La Palestine Arabe' was prominently displayed, and the speeches concluded with the expressions 'Vive La Nation Arabe'.³⁶

In contradistinction to the Arab attitude, Weizmann described a Jewish meeting where a warm tribute of gratitude was paid to the British Government for Balfour's Declaration. In view of these considerations, Weizmann concluded that the British should authoritatively explain to the Arabs the exact meaning and scope of the Balfour Declaration and then proceed to tell them 'that it is their duty to conform to it'.

A week after Weizmann submitted his report to Ormsby-Gore, Storrs retorted with a strongly worded rejoinder in which he described Weizmann's account as misleading and blamed the Zionists for the prevailing tension in Palestine. He also criticised the Zionist Commission for refraining from making public announcements of a nature that would 'dispel the pardonable anxieties of the Arab population of Palestine'.³⁷

An Intelligence Report filed during the third week of April provided 'a good idea of the angle from which the man in the street regards the whole business':

The political effect of the visit of the Commission is not a favourable one so far. . . Christians and Moslems do not feel any easier in their minds about their future, and are still fearful of their rights being interfered with in case of the realisation of what they imagine are the Zionists' aspiration; they are going ahead in forming Committees to look after their own interests.³⁸

In a revealing letter to Judge Brandeis, a leading American Zionist, Weizmann confirmed the above report of the situation:

The non-Jewish Community, especially the Arabs, both Mohammedan