

As for an explanation for this situation where imports and exports of sesame were almost equal with the local seed being of a better quality and lower price than the imported one, findings from the Colonial Office records show that, in Smith's words:

When some of the Colonial Office staff expressed surprise over this curious situation, one official minuted that the High Commissioner had told him that although there was no proof, he was convinced that the explanation was a deliberate boycotting by Jews of an Arab product. Members of the Colonial Office admitted that they had suspected as much.⁹²

However, it was only after the 1929 Arab rebellion that the imposition of an import tax on sesame and other crops was considered. A tax of £P 3 per ton was imposed in 1930.⁹³ Whether this tax was sufficiently protective is questionable given the relative high prices of imported seeds.⁹⁴ The data on import and export of sesame seeds do not shed any light on that because it was, after 1930, included in the more general category of "beans, seeds, and nut for expressing oils." The only separate data for sesame seed imports after 1930 are for 1942, 1943, and 1944 when they amounted to 573 tons, 9,115 tons, and 7,381 tons, respectively.⁹⁵ No separate entries for export of sesame seeds are given. However, there are export figures for *tahini*, an extract of sesame seeds, for 1942,

⁹²Smith, 175.

⁹³*Survey I*, 453.

⁹⁴M. F. Abcarius in his book, *Palestine Through the Fog of Propaganda* (London: Hutchinson & Company, 1946) did not think it was "in any way protective," 165.

⁹⁵*Abstract 1944/45*, 69.