



UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
REPORT DATED 19 JULY 1949
SUBMITTED BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
TO THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION

The Technical Committee after receiving your telegram dated 28 June, ^x accompanied by Mr. Delbes, agricultural expert, visited a certain number of orange groves in the districts of Jaffa and Ramleh on 7 July and in the region of Tulkarm on 8 July.

Your telegram dated 7 July ^{xx} reached the Technical Committee in Tel Aviv on 8 July after our first survey in Jaffa and Ramleh had taken place. The Technical Committee had already made appointments with the Government of Egypt, and it was arranged that Mr. Delbes, the expert, would proceed with the examination of files in Tel Aviv with Jewish officials and to visit the orange plantations in the region of Acre.

The percentage of orange groves visited during our survey approximates 1/3 of all Arab orange plantations in Israel. This visit was of course, not of a profound nature except in certain instances.

The expert is now in the process of drafting his [report](#) which will be available within several days and it will be forwarded to you at once with the added comments of the Technical Committee.

This present [report](#) would probably have been somewhat more precise if we had received the maps of orange groves (owners and acreage) promised us by the Israelis on 8 July.

The findings of the expert indicate that a detailed study with a view to determining the extent of definite destruction (economic aspect) and to evaluate the compensation due in case of non-return of plantations to their owners (compensation aspect) would necessitate (if such study is to be completed within two months) the use of eight neutral experts working as four teams composed of two members per team. Another suggestion would be to add to each team one Arab and one Jewish expert — making a total of four members for each team.

The following is a brief summary of findings:

Arab orange groves visited	Percentage of Arab plantations visited	Percentage of Arab plantations destroyed from among the plantations visited
Jaffa	30	70
Ramleh	30	50
Acre	70	50
Tulkarm	20	30

If an extrapolation is allowed on the basis of these figures and if it is granted that the total Arab orange grove acreage actually cultivated was 120,000 dunums before the outbreak of war, more than 60,000 dunums could now be considered destroyed. It is also possible that by the end of the present dry season this percentage of destruction may increase by 20% thus making a total of 70% destruction.

2. Conservatory measures.

Of the plantations visited, approximately 25% have been the object of conservatory measures and can be considered as saved. These conservatory measures consist in ploughing, irrigation and use of fertilizers.

These measures have in a few instances surpassed simple conservation practices and have improved the previous state of certain of these orange plantations. If this represents a definite trend of Israeli policy the matter of final compensation or the resumption of control of these groves by Arab owners will be rendered more difficult because of the investment in terms of labor and material presently being made by the Israeli Government which could lead to the possibility of an Israeli claim for services rendered.

3. Survival of plantations receiving no conservatory care.

If the original stock or trunk of the orange tree is weak and the nature of the soil of the plantation is permeable, plantations receiving no care will be dried up by the end of 1949. On the other hand, if the stock of the tree is strong and the nature of the soil less permeable the plantations could probably survive without care until 1950.

4. Possibilities of Rehabilitation.

The possibilities of rehabilitation of orange groves are very limited at present because of the great number of hydraulic installations destroyed and the lack of skilled labor.

The Israeli Government has promised to compose for the Technical Committee, by 20 July 1949, a short report on the subject of destroyed plantations. They will also furnish a more detailed report within a period of two months. We hope to receive at the same time the Israeli detailed map of Arab plantations, by block and owner. The Technical Committee considers this map as an important point of departure for an extended study of Arab orange groves.

Endnotes

^x Transmitting the Commission's instructions to contact Israeli authorities in order to examine the condition of the orange groves.

^{xx} Approving association of experts with Technical Committee in its examination of the orange groves and transmitting request from the General Committee for information concerning the total area of groves under irrigation and of groves destroyed by the war ([document Com.Gen./SR.20](#)).

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