

## AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH

JERUSALEM PALESTINE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

CABLE ADDRESS : MONUMENTS

February 7, 1947

Dear Nelson,

Prof. Jeffery's two telegrams will have explained the situation to you. We had some very hectic days here, with Mrs. Jeffery very near hysterics, and Prof. Jeffery resigned to going to Egypt, and everybody running around in circles, getting Egyptian visas for the Jefferys, phoning Transjordan for any available accommodation, seeing the American Consul (who by the way refused to interfere in any way) etc. In the end, Prof. Jeffery was persuaded by his wife and myself to try and apply again to the District Commissioner and get permission to stay. Fortunately, he was successful in this. American citizens are unaffected.

The situation here is very bad. All of it, of course, is this time of British origin. I imagine you have read in the American newspapers of the wholesale evictions from Rehavia. People are absolutely desperate. There is in fact nowhere to go, especially as many people have prepaid their rent one or two or three years in advance, and it has been officially said that they have to go on paying the rent for the apartments they have vacated. People are seething with fury and indignation, and there is absolutely nothing one can do about. There are rumours that the original plan was to take all of Rehavia, but that for the moment they have only taken a part. There is nothing or nobody to prevent them from taking anything they want, since there is no other purpose behind the evictions except the wish to spoil, destroy and humiliate. People are asked to leave within 48 hours, and when they say that they have nowhere to go, the answer is often: "You wanted to bring in 100,000 refugees and said there was room for them". The worst of all is the feeling of insecurity and malevolence. Nobody knows what is going to happen, and there are rumours of all kinds. People are hoarding food, as there are persistent rumours that the British mean to paralyse food distribution as far as possible. This is partly confirmed by today's paper, where it says that the British Government has forbidden ships to load goods in Australia consigned to Palestine. The British women and children being sent within 3 days out of the country and the herding together of the remaining British officials in security zones, with military escorts for every step, are making for a panicky atmosphere. Many of the British were highly indignant, and one man even resigned when his wife did not receive permission to stay and returned with her to England. Clark of Barclays said he would close the Bank and leave if his wife were not permitted to stay, and so she was allowed to stay. All the houses and flats left by the British who are now all forced to live within the security zones, are kept empty, and the government refused all responsibility for trying to find rooms for the evicted people. Iliffe too had to leave, <sup>here</sup> much to his regret, and has gone to live in the German Colony. The Petries left too; with the old lady's usual luck, she now got passage to England for herself and Ann free. She meant to go anyway in a few weeks.

The School is all right, and I should say that as far as one can tell, it will continue to be so. The possibility of Arab riots is very vague, as I think it highly unlikely that the Jews will get anything near good enough for the Arabs to riot about. People are in a terrible mood, far worse than during the most threatening days of the war. Cafes are empty, people don't buy clothes. Jewish leadership does

nor inspire confidence either. Everything the British will do to oppress the population makes willing recruits and sympathizers for the terrorists. The impression here is overwhelming that that is exactly what is wanted by the British. The army wants a showdown in order to get their hands on government in Palestine, and if in the process Jewish economy in Palestine is damaged, so much the better. They want to make our life a misery so that any solution, even a very bad one, seems acceptable.

Runner is leaving on the Marine Carp on February 14th. The others are staying on. I imagine you will have received a letter from Miss Brown about the offer of Pope's Hostel allowance and her job. She seemed overjoyed at getting this job with Reuters, since the insecurity of her position was a great strain on her nerves. The prospect of troubles does not seem to deter her.

Dr. Berman is ill and at the Hadassah. He had a severe attack of vertigo and nausea, and must stay in bed there for about 10 days. The doctors say something has gone wrong with the labyrinth in his ear.

As far as getting people to stay at the School is concerned, I think one has to exercise a great deal of discretion. Up to now none of the evicted people have applied, and I should think that the likelihood of their wanting to live in this neighbourhood is very small. Prof. Jeffery thought that we ought to take some of them if they apply, but you can rely on me to be very careful.

With best regards to everybody in your family,

sincerely yours

*Dina Pommerantz*