

peasants.

Zeita covered an area of about 5,358d. and was inhabited by about 906 peasants. In 1923 Rutman, a Jewish capitalist, filed a claim to the Land Court of Nablus, the district in which Zeita belonged, saying that all Zeita land was his property. His claim was refused on the basis that his papers were false and did not match the real size or description of the village. (31) Two years later, in 1925 the land was surveyed by one Samsonoff, a licensed surveyor and another claim was prepared by Rutman. However, in order to avoid the Nablus Court, the new map produced claimed that Zeita belonged to Khadera settlement which was in Haifa district. When the case was presented to Haifa Land Court headed then by a Judge Strumza, the judge accepted Rutman's claim and a court order evicting the 906 villagers was issued. For five years, until 1930 the cultivators refused to leave the land saying that they had all the necessary documents to prove that the land was theirs. The insistent fight of the peasants against Rutman's claim forced the High Commissioner Chancellor to investigate the case.

When the case was investigated in 1930, the "Committee of Investigation" found that the real owners were the peasants themselves and that Rutman's papers which included a map for the land and an estimate of the area were all fake. What is more important is that Judge Strumza himself was found to be the main figure responsible for faking the papers, accepting a bribe by Rutman and lying to the court, which he headed. By an order from Lord Passfield, Judge Strumza was stripped of his position. In the process of faking the evidence, it should be added, three major collaborators were involved: a Zionist merchant, Rutman, an Arab land dealer, Samara, and the head of the