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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is devoted to the study of the role played by Haj Amin al Husseini in Palestine Arab politics during the period 1930-1937.

After a short introduction, the first part of the study will retrace his rise to power. It will describe his background and youth (Chapter 1), his appointment to the office of Mufti of Jerusalem (Chapter 2), his election to the office of President of the Supreme Moslem Council (Chapter 3), and his political activities until 1929 (Chapter 4). The last chapter of the first part will be devoted to an analysis of his character and personality.

The second part of the study will be devoted to the examination of the events and happenings which followed the disturbances of 1929 and which laid the basis for all future developments during the 30's, namely the Arab Delegation to London in 1930 (Chapter 6), the report of the Shaw Commission (Chapter 7), the Hope-Simpson report and the Passfield White Paper (Chapter 8) and the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann (Chapter 9). Chapter 10 will be devoted to the Wailing Wall Commission and its report and Chapter 11 to the Islamic Congress in Jerusalem in 1931.

In the third part of this study will be examined the central issues of the Palestinian political life, namely the Land problem, immigration and constitutional development, as well as the Development Scheme which was an important issue during the early 30's (Chapter 12). Also in this part which covers the political developments until 1937 will be examined the disturbances of 1933 (Chapter 13) and the Mufti's relations with the British (Chapter 14). Chapter 15 will dwell on the concept of "Armed Struggle" and the problem of Jewish Arms.

The Arab Revolt of 1936 is examined in Part IV. Chapter 16 is devoted to the Mufti's views and activities during the first phase of the

revolt, and Chapter 17 to the Royal Commission, the partition plan and the Mufti's escape.

The concluding Chapter (18) presents an evaluation of the Mufti's leadership.

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PREFACE

I am very happy to express my deep gratitude to all those who have helped me in the preparation of this thesis. Although they are here thanked collectively, their contributions are remembered individually and most gratefully.

I am indebted to the Head and staff of the Public Records Office in London, the Israeli State Archives, Jerusalem, the Hagana Archives, Tel-Aviv and the National Library at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

I am most indebted to my supervisor, Professor E. Kedourie, for all his help and advice which he has given me during my work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- The Arab Executive - The Secretariat (bureau) of the Arab Executive Committee.
- Cab. Con. - cabinet conclusions.
- C.I.D. report - Palestine, Criminal Investigation Department political reports.
- C.O. - Colonial Office
- C.P. - Cabinet Papers.
- C.S. - Chief Secretary
- Col. Sec. - Colonial Secretary
- F.O. - Foreign Office
- The H.A. - The Hagana Archives
- Hansard - Hansard, House of Commons Debates 5th Series.
- Hansard, Lords. - Hansard, House of Lords Debates 5th Series.
- I.S.A. - Israel State Archive
- O.A.G. - Officer Administering the Government
- P.M.C. - Permanent Mandates Commission
- P.R.O. - Public Record Office
- W.O. - War Office
- The Z.A. - The Zionist Archive.

Note:- For spelling of Arabic names I used "the system of transliteration from Arabic into English for official use" used by the Government of Palestine during the Mandate.

## INTRODUCTION

Among contemporary international problems the Arab-Israeli conflict in and over Palestine is one of the longest and bitterest ones. It practically started following the first world war<sup>1</sup> which caused a change of sovereignty in the Middle East. Ottoman domination was replaced by British and French rule through the application of the Mandates system, under which the two mandatory powers were called upon by the covenant of the League of Nations to render administrative advice and assistance to the ex-enemy territories so as to enable them to achieve full national independence.

The Mandate over Palestine, however, was intended to carry out the promise of securing the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine as contained in the Balfour Declaration.

This declaration was understood, at the time, by the Arabs - as well as by the Jews - to contain much more than its British sponsors really meant, namely that the Jews would be given predominant positions in the country and that Palestine would become a Jewish State under British hegemony.

To fight this threat the Arab National movement in Palestine<sup>2</sup> organised itself and in the 3rd Palestinian Congress<sup>3</sup> which assembled in Haifa in December 1920 and decided to struggle for the abolition of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a local Arab government under a certain kind of British control.

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- 1 Though it goes back to the first moves of Jewish immigration and settlement during the last decade of the 19th century
  - 2 For the ideology of the movement see Ch. 1 "The Ideology of Arab Palestine" in my wider work "The Arab National Movement in Palestine during the 30's" which will be published shortly.
  - 3 For the first two Congresses, and the early stages of the national struggle see Chapter II 'Developments until 1929' in my work Op-Cit.

These aims - by and large - did not change all through the period of the British Mandates. Through the first decade of the Mandate, ~~the~~ ~~first decade of the Mandate~~, the Arab National movement was led by the Arab Executive Committee elected in this Congress to supervise and direct the national activities but already in the early twenties, the young Haj Amin el Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, and the President of the M.S.C. started to emerge as a national leader, and following the 1929 disturbances he appeared as the first and supreme leader of the Palestinian Arabs.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the role played by the Mufti in the Arab National movement and in Arab Palestine politics during the period 1930 - 1937.

A subject of particular interest will be the question of the Mufti's relations with the British. His earlier extremism and later developments when he collaborated with Nazi Germany during the 2nd World War gave rise to the current allegation that he was an anti-British extremist all along.<sup>4</sup>

This allegation cannot be reconciled with the available evidence which proves beyond doubt that at different times, the Mufti adopted different attitudes depending on the situation.

The study would show that the Mufti - on many occasions and for a number of years - was willing to co-operate with the British authorities in order to obtain some advantage or another for the Arab cause and for himself, and that, on other occasions, however, he used his influence to organise opposition to the Government.

This behaviour conforms with what was termed "the two-faced policy" of Arab individuals and groups<sup>5</sup> in order to ensure themselves on all fronts.

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4. See for instance Ch. Sykes Op.Cit p.68

5. Both Sir H.Luke and Sir J.Shaw who served as C.s.'s in the Palestine Administration, and Mr. E.Danin and Y.Palmon, the Jewish experts on Arab affairs, spoke to me of this phenomenon. I purposely am using the term "two-faced" which denotes a statement of fact and not the term "double-faced" which denotes disapproval.

And finally, I would like to qualify the scope and contents of this study. This is not a study of the Palestine problem, and, therefore, no attempt has been made to analyse the British, Jewish, or even the general Arab viewpoints in this controversial issue. However, since the subject of the Mufti's policy is intimately bound with, and can be understood only in the context of the Palestine problem, I found it necessary to digress into certain aspects of this problem in so far as they were relevant to my subject. The comparative lack of historical perspective and the highly controversial nature of any issue related to the Palestine problem render objectivity most difficult, but in an endeavour to remedy these adverse influences I have used as wide a range of sources as possible.

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PART I The Rise to Power of Haj Amin al Hussein

Chapter 1.

The Mufti, Haj Amin al Hussein, Background and Youth

All students of Palestine Affairs agree that the most important figure in Palestine Arab politics during the inter-war years was Haj Amin al Hussein, Mufti of Jerusalem and president of the Supreme Moslem Council.

Some of them even claim that during these years he was the dominant figure in Palestine as a whole<sup>1</sup>. In January 1930, the start of the period covered by this study, he was described thus by Arab notables from Gaza<sup>2</sup> "The symbol of our hopes and the bearer of the aspirations of the Arab people in Palestine, our supreme national leader" ...

In July 1939, some two years after he was removed from his offices, and escaping as a refugee to Syria, he was still considered by Arabs as<sup>3</sup> "the esteemed chairman of the Arab Higher Committee" .. the faithful trustee of our rights and the only person whom we recognise as our representative" and described by Musa al Alami<sup>4</sup> as "the leader of Palestinian Arabs whose word alone counted".

Haj Amin was born into one of the chief families or clans in Palestine. The Husseinis consider themselves to be direct descendents of Hussein son of the Khalif Ali, and his wife Fatma the daughter of Muhammad, and describe themselves as "the oldest and most honourable family in Palestine"<sup>5</sup>. The family name is already mentioned in a Jerusalem chronology of the 13th century as leasers of the lands of Sharafat village, north of Jerusalem.

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1. See J. Marlow The Seat of Pilate London 1959 pp. 3-4
  2. In a letter to the Arab Executive Office 2.1.30 following the discovery of a "plot" to murder him. Arab Executive file 01563.1SA
  3. In a petition from the "youth of Mohammad" to the H.C. for Palestine. No date, received on 20.7.39 C.S. file K/102/37.1SA. My italics.
  4. Speaking to the Colonial Secretary Malcolm Macdonald 25.11.38 AE File 00570 1SA. My italics.
  5. See letter to the Colonial Office requesting pension for the family of the Mufti Taher al Hussein 25.10.21. C.S's file 2287/Pal present No. 245 I.S.A.

Their opponents contested strongly this tradition and claimed that the family came to Palestine from Yemon in the 16th century and settled in the village Deir-Sudan (the dwelling of the black) near Ramallah from which they got their name al-Aswad. Later they moved to Jerusalem increasing their prestige and importance by marrying into the Sheikh Abu-Ghosh family which was among the important families around Jerusalem. Some 200 years ago, one of the family married a daughter of a real Hussein, and contrary to Moslem custom, he added his wife's family name to his own thus changing it to Aswad-Hussein.

Mustafa Aswad al Hussein (the grandfather of Haj Amin) married into the Jarallah family, the traditional holders of the office of Mufti of Jerusalem<sup>6</sup>. When the last Mufti from the Jarallahs died and having no suitable candidate from their own family they backed Mustafa Aswad al Hussein who became the Mufti in the late 1890's. He, in the meantime, dropped<sup>7</sup> the Aswad and henceforth the family was known as Al Hussein<sup>7</sup>.

Whichever of these two versions is correct, the fact is that the fourth quarter of the 19th century saw the Husseinis well established and strongly entrenched in the Ottoman officialdom in Palestine, thanks perhaps to an ability to adjust themselves to the prevailing conditions of the Ottoman regime.

In 1886 Musa al Hussein, the leader of the family, was head of the Criminal Court in Jerusalem. His brother Salim was the Naqib (the head of the ashraf) and his son Shukri married the niece of Kamal Pasha the Grand Vizir. Another son, Ismail, was later made Director of Education.

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6. However, Abd al Karim al Hussein was the Mufti of Jerusalem in the beginning of the 17th century. In the 18th century the office was held by the Al Alami family from which it moved to the Jarallahs.
  7. The story goes that the Nashashibis and other opponents of the Husseinis intervened with Rashid Bey the Mutassarif of Jerusalem to forbid them the use of the name. Only through the intervention of Shukri Bey al Hussein, who was married to the niece of Kamel Pasha, the Grand Vizir, were they saved from disgrace and allowed to remain with the name Hussein. M. Pearlman Mufti of Jerusalem London 1947 p.10. E. Elath Haj Amin al Hussein Jerusalem 1968 p.17.

in Jerusalem and transferred to Adana. Another, Salim Hussein, was Qaimaqam of Jaffa<sup>8</sup>, Musa Hazim Pasha al Hussein was Governor of Jaffa, Bitlis Yemen and other stations, and later Mayor of Jerusalem, to which office he was appointed by the British a few months after its occupation, when the previous mayor, who had handed them the keys of the city on 9th December 1917, his brother Hussein al Hussein, died. At the elections, to the Ottoman Parliament in 1908, Said al Hussein, (the Mufti's uncle) was elected as a member representing Jerusalem.

We have already seen how Mustafa al Hussein became Mufti of Jerusalem in the late 1890's. He was followed by his son, Taher, who in turn was followed in 1908 by his son Kamel, who held the office until his death in 1921 after the British occupation.

Mohammad Amin, the son of Sheikh Taher al Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem, was born in Jerusalem in the year 1896.<sup>9</sup> He studied first in a local Moslem school (Kutab) and then in "Al-l'dadi" a government school in Jerusalem.

His family, grooming him perhaps as a future Mufti of Jerusalem<sup>10</sup>, sent him in 1912 to Cairo. He studied there at Sheikh Rashid Rida's school

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8. The commercial business of the Husseinis in Jaffa were directed for 30 years by the Jew Y. Rockah who was very much liked by Salim Hussein. Though it was said that as a rule the Husseinis did not like Christians and Jews as they were non believers. However, this did not hinder them from entering into business transactions with the Jews. It was further said that after the first Arab attack on the Jewish colony Petah-Tiqva in 1886 the Husseinis supported the Jews during the trial which followed. Assaf. Arab Awakening in Palestine and their flight. Tel Aviv. 1969 p.16.
  9. Different books mentioned different years as the year of his birth, he himself in an application for a passport which he filled in 8.1.21 wrote 1896. see file O1820 original number H/582 I.S.A.
  10. N. Barbour Nisi Dominus London 1946 p. 129.

"Dar al Da'wa walirshad" learning the latter's Pan Islamic views, and in "Al Azhar". His opponents maintained that the period of his studies in "al Azhar" was very short and that he never achieved high academic knowledge of the Islamic religion and law. They point to the fact that had he been recognised as an "Alem" (expert on Islamic religion and law) he would have been called "Sheikh"<sup>11</sup>. Instead, Amin, after leading a life of privation in Cairo<sup>12</sup>, left Egypt towards the end of 1915 and returned to Jerusalem, visiting on his way the holy places of Islam, thus winning for himself the title "Haj".

After the outbreak of the war in 1914, Haj Amin entered the military training College at Istanbul, joining on his graduation the Ottoman forces in Izmir. He returned to Jerusalem in the beginning of 1917 where he was released from the army on medical reasons.

After the British occupation Haj Amin together with other young members of his family, established towards the end of 1918 in Jerusalem, El Nadi al Arabi (The Arab Club). The aims of the Nadi<sup>13</sup> - "Arab independence, union of Palestine with Syria, and prevention of any and every sort of Zionism and Jewish immigration, were about the same of those of the al Muntada al Adabi<sup>14</sup> (the Literary Club)"but the members of the "Nadi" who were just

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11. "Olama" (pl. of Alem) do not generally use the title "Haj" even after going on pilgrimage..
  12. It seems that he was assisted by his brother Kamel from his own poor salary.
  13. For full particulars of the Club as well as other Arab Clubs of the time - see the report of Major J. Camp, Assistant Political Officer, Jerusalem, 12.8.1919. Documents of British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. Vol. 18 pp. 360-365.
  14. Consisting mainly of the al Nashashibi family. Ibid.

as much opposed to Zionism and Jewish immigration, were not so radical and so strong on Arab independence and were more pro-British. Several members of the club were connected with the Intelligence Corps and Haj Amin himself is known to cooperate with them in recruiting Palestinian Arab volunteers to join Feisal's army.

He was employed for a short time in O.E.T.A. as a junior clerk in the office of Gabriel Pasha Haddad, the Arab adviser to the British Military Governor of Jerusalem. He then held a series of small clerical jobs, in the Department of Public Security, as a Customs Officer in Qaliqilyah, and then again in the security department at Damascus. While there, he established contacts with nationalist circles around King Feisal's court<sup>15</sup> and served as an official liaison man between the preparatory Committee of "the Syrian Congress" which met in Damascus in 1919 and the Palestinian leaders invited to the Congress by King Feisal<sup>16</sup>. Soon after he was discharged and returned to Jerusalem where he obtained an appointment, as a tutor at the Rashidiyah School. He also entered into a partnership with the owners of "Rawdat al Maaref" school which became later the centre of Arab Nationalist education in Palestine. He continued his activities in the Nadi al Arabi, writing and speaking about national matters, preaching his Pan Arab and Pan Moslem ideas, and calling for the

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15. For the contacts between the Nadi al Arabi in Damascus, which became then the important national organisation in Syria, and the Hussein's Nadi al Arabi in Jerusalem see Y. Porat Op-Cit pp. 89-90.
16. He was later blamed by his opponents for receiving from King Feisal L.E. 150 to cover the expenses of the Palestinian representative participating in the Congress which he kept for himself. E. Elath Op-Cit p. 20-21.

unification of Palestine with Syria under the crown of King Feisal<sup>17</sup>.

And then, on the 4th April, 1920, being the day of Nabi Musa, as well as Easter, Anti-Jewish riots broke out in Jerusalem. The Palin Commission<sup>18</sup> find that the causes of the trouble had been (1) the Arabs' disappointment at the non fulfilment of the promises of independence which they believed to have been given them in the war, (2) The Arabs' belief that the Balfour Declaration implied a denial of the right of self-determination, and their fear that the establishment of the National Home would mean a great increase of Jewish immigration and would lead to their economic and political subjection to the Jews and (3) the aggravation of those sentiments on the one hand by propoganda from outside Palestine associated with the proclamation of the Emir Feisal as King of a re-united Syria, and with the growth of Pan-Arab and Pan-Moslem ideas, and on the other hand by the activities of the Zionist Commission, supported by the resources and influence of Jews in the world at large.

The Commission further concluded that "there is no proof for the existence of an organised plan .... the affair starting spontaneously." However, the report went on to say that political agitators decided "to exploit whichever opportunity they would find in order to provoke riots and that such provocateurs participated in the Nabi-Musa procession for this aim"<sup>19</sup>.

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17. Zionist sources of the time say that Haj Amin who returned from Damascus towards the end of March 1920 reported to a meeting in Jerusalem that "Britian does not object to hand over Palestine to King Feisal". See Jewish Intelligence report No. 32 1.4 20 File 2800 II 2/4 Zionist archives, Jerusalem.
  18. A military judicial commission of enquiry into the causes of the riots, formed under the chairmanship of Gen. Palin. See Palin Report F.O. 371/5121.
  19. Ibid p.58.

The Jews claimed<sup>20</sup> that the riots had been carefully planned and directed by the Husseini's Nadi al Arabi, The Nashashibi's Muntade al Adabi and other Arab organisations. Col. R. Meinertzhagen the Chief Political Officer of O.E.T.A.(s) was more specific when he wrote "I also had ample evidence that Haj Al Amin (who later became Mufti of Jerusalem) was stirring up the Arab element in Jerusalem"<sup>21</sup> and if the Pro-Zionist view of Meinertzhagen were well known, the same certainly could not be said about the views of R. Storrs, the Military Governor of Jerusalem, who wrote "The immediate fomenter of the Arab excesses had been one Haj Amin al Husseini .... like most agitators, having incited the man in the street to violence and probable punishment he fled"<sup>22</sup>. Much later, an Arab source - expressing perhaps what became later an accepted Arab view - stated simply<sup>23</sup> "Haj Amin commanded the April 1920 demonstrations". It seems that Haj Amin was given bail and had forfeited it<sup>24</sup> and escaped to Kerak in Trans-Jordan where he found refuge with Sheikh Rafeifan Pasha al Majali. During his absence from Palestine he went again for a while to

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20. See the testimony of Dr. Eder, the head of the political department of the Zionist Commission before the Palin Commission Ibid. See also file 333 Z/3 and file 276 Z/4 Zionist Archives Jerusalem.
  21. Entry for 9.4.20 in Middle East Diary 1917-1956 London 1959 p.79 Meinertzhagen blames the military administration and specially Lt. Col. Waters-Taylor, the Chief of Staff to Gen. Bols, and also R. Storrs, the military Governor of Jerusalem as encouraging Haj Amin and other Arab notables in Jerusalem to start the riots in order to prove to H.M.G. the "futility of trying to impose Zionism on Palestine. Ibid pp. 56, 79.
  22. R. Storrs. Orientalisms London 1937 p. 388
  23. A. Sayegh "The Hashamis and the Problem of Palestine" (al Hashamiyun wa qadiyat Falastin) Beirut 1966 p.98.
  24. N. Bentwich. England in Palestine London 1932 p.49 I did not come across any other source who mentions that Haj Amin was given and had forfeited bail.

Damascus where he established on the 31st May 1920 the Arab Palestine Society<sup>25</sup> (al Jamiyya al Arabiyya al Falistiniyya). He was tried in absentia and sentenced to ten years imprisonment<sup>26</sup>. A few months later, in September 1920, on the occasion of the first visit of Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner for Palestine, to Trans-Jordan, and on the general intercession of the local Chieftains who met him in Salt he extended clemency to Haj Amin and allowed him to return to Jerusalem<sup>27</sup>. It is generally agreed that being a Jew and new in the country, Sir H. Samuel intended the amnesty to serve as a token of good will towards the Arabs. (The Jews, however, believed that Haj Amin was pardoned because of his previous connections with British Intelligence and because the British believed he would be useful to them in their future policy of Palestine<sup>28</sup>).

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25. See H. Sadaga "The Palestine Problem" (qadiyyat Falstin) Beirut 1946 p.83 Other members were Aref al Aref, Rafiq Tamimi and Izzat Darwaza. During the short period of its existence it sent a protest against the decisions of San-Remo conference it published a long manifesto to the India Moslems and sent a petition to the Pope on "zionist danger to Christianity in Palestine".
26. E. Elath notes that no official report of the trial was ever published. Only the paper Suriyah al Janubiyah (of which the editor Aref el Aref escaped, was sentenced and was pardoned together with the Mufti) of the 27th April 1920 reported that a military court judged Haj Amin and Aref el Aref according to paras. 32, 57, 63 of the Ottoman Criminal Code. According to the biography of Aref el Aref published at the end of his book (page not numbered) Taarikh Al Quds Op-Cit the two of them were sentenced to death and only later the judgement was changed to 10 years of prison. No other source confirms this. Ch. Sykes, mistakenly states that Haj Amin was condemned to fifteen years imprisonment. See Sykes Op-Cit p.60.
27. It should be noted that one of the first acts of Sir H. Samuel after arriving in Palestine, was to amnesty all prisoners sentenced by the military court with the exception of Haj Amin and Aref el Aref. It was therefore suggested that this points to the grave view taken by the authorities of the activities of these men. See M. Pearlman Op-Cit p. 12. See also E. Elath Op-Cit p.26 for comparison see N. Bentwich, who as the Attorney General at the time knew perhaps more, but mentioned nothing of the kind, saying only that these two were not included in the general amnesty because they had forfeited bail. Op-Cit p.49.
28. See file on the Mufti No. 01949 I.S.A.

Chapter 2

Haj Amin - His Appointment to the Office of Mufti of Jerusalem

When Haj Amin returned to Jerusalem he was not any more a young leader of the second line. His role in the riots, his escape, his trial and the special amnesty by the H.C. made him a man in the public eye, a man with a record of action, ready for future roles and actions.

On the 21st March 1921 Kamel al Hussein died and the office of Mufti of Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> became vacant.

The Muftis<sup>2</sup> are Moslem jurisconsults, whose duty it is to quote relevant precedents and opinions on points of Moslem Religious Law. The Muftis depend for their authority, principally, on their reputation for learning.

The ruling of a Mufti is called a Fatwa, but it has no executive sanction, which is in the hands of the Qadi. As an indication of the relative status of Qadi and Mufti during the Ottoman rule, it may be noted, that before the first World War, the salary of the Qadi of Jerusalem was £45 gold per month, that of the Mufti £5 per month<sup>3</sup>. However, because of the frequent changes of Qadis as against the comparatively long periods of service of the Muftis, who in addition were local men of influential families, the importance of the Office of Mufti was growing. He was also

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1. Or "Grand Mufti" as he became known. Contrary to the accepted belief it was not Haj Amin who first attached the adjective "Grand" to his title. The British military authorities and later the civil ones, willing to show their appreciation of the assistance and cooperation they got from Kamel al Hussein after the occupation, described him as the "Grand Mufti the representative of Islam in Palestine". He received also the C.M.G. and was appointed as the President of the Sharia Court of Appeal and chairman of the General Waqf Committee. See C.S. file 245, I.S.A.
  2. Mufti - giver of legal opinions of the non Hanafite rites in the Ottoman Empire. D.B. Macdonald - Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory. New York, 1930 p. 115.
  3. See paper "Administration of Palestine before the British Occupation" written by L. Perowne in 1932. C.O. 733/227/97462.

ex-officio chairman of the local Waqf Committee and sat ex-officio on the Majlis Idara or the District Administrative Council<sup>4</sup>.

The British occupation, further increased the importance of the office of Mufti of Jerusalem. He ceased to be sub-ordinate to "Sheikh al Islam" in Istanbul and as Jerusalem became the capital of Palestine, and the seat of the Supreme Moslem Council which was to be established<sup>5</sup> his comparative importance vis a vis the other Muftis of Palestine increased. This was also accentuated by the personal high standing of Kamel al Husseini with the British Authorities.

The Husseinis did not intend to relinquish this important position and did everything they could to ensure that the office - for which they put up Haj Amin - would remain in their hands. Their opponents the Nashashibis<sup>7</sup> tried as best as they could to prevent it and bring about the election<sup>6</sup> of Sheikh Husam al Din Jarallah.

According to international law, regarding the administration of occupied territories, the authorities had to follow in the election, the relevant Ottoman law which stated, that the Ulema, religious notables of the Moslem community and the elected Moslem members of the District Administrative Council and Municipalities were to hold elections, and submit the names of the three men receiving the highest number of votes. From these three eligible candidates the H.C., taking the place of "Sheikh al Islam" of Ottoman days, was to appoint the Mufti. In the elections, Sheikh Jarrallah, received the highest number of votes, while Haj Amin came fourth and so failed to reach the short list of three eligible

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4. See Ibid

5. See infra p. 27

6. See note 1.

7. The rivalry and bitterness between these two families was sharpened when R. Storrs, the Governor of Jerusalem, removed Musa Kazim al Husseini, the Mayor of Jerusalem, from his office for his participation in the 1920 riots, and appointed in his place Ragheb al Nashashibi. See Storrs, Op-Cit 390-391.

candidates. However, Sheikh Jaffallah retired<sup>8</sup> from the list, giving an opening to Haj Amin who was elevated to third place and became eligible for appointment.

He was then informed, orally it seems, of his appointment over the heads of the other two, but no letter informing him of his nomination as Mufti of Jerusalem was despatched to him nor was his appointment ever gazetted<sup>9</sup>. These facts point perhaps to the hesitations of the Government regarding his appointment.

These hesitations were based - partly at least - on his insufficient qualifications for this religious post.

The Peel Commission stated<sup>10</sup> that Haj Amin "had been trained for the post of Mufti" ... and had received a Moslem theological training with a view to representing the Husseini family in the post. We were informed by a competent witness that Haj Amin was the only man in Palestine at that time having the necessary qualifications for the post." This however was not the generally accepted view and his opponents used always to minimise his Islamic academic studies and knowledge. Even a source friendly to the Mufti wrote thus:<sup>11</sup> "Haj Amin did not belong to the (group of) religious men but to (the group of) those wearing the Tarbush - symbolising the Ottoman officialdom - as he studied in Istanbul in "al Hulkiye", the

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8. With a little bit of convincing by the Government for whom he was working as an Inspector of the Sharia Courts who were at the time a part of the Government's legal department. N. Bentwich Op-Cit p.56. E. Elath brings the strange story that Ragheb al Nashashibi was part in these discussions. See Elath Op-Cit p.27.
  9. The Peel Report p.177.
  10. Ibid
  11. Izzat Darwaza was close to the Mufti for many years and was appointed by him as the Director General of the Awqaf in the early thirties. He later served as the liaison man between the Mufti and the Istiqlal party. Darwaza. Concerning the New Arab Movement (Bawla al Haraka al Arabiyya al Haditha) Saïda 1950 - III pp. 46 - 7.

Government School for Civil Servants and in the Military College. However, once his brother the Mufti Sheikh Kamel died, Haj Amin covered his head with the Amama (special head cover for religious functionaries) and started to grow a beard<sup>12</sup>. These were preparatory steps in order to keep this important traditional post in his family. " In addition to that there was the problem of procedural irregularity and the political consideration of his trial and past record. Both Sir W. Deeds the Chief Secretary and N. Bentwich the Legal Secretary, opposed it<sup>13</sup>, but he was strongly supported by R. Storrs and especially by E.T. Richmond, the Assistant Chief Secretary, who was the adviser of the High Commissioner for Arab Affairs<sup>14</sup>.

These were assisted by the wide public support inside the Islamic community for the election of Haj Amin "the religious and national candidate". His opponent was described<sup>15</sup> as a man "who would assist the Jews by selling to them Waqf property and particularly the Waqf of Abu-Hidian which included the Western Wall .. he would hand over to the Jews the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque so that they might pull them down and rebuild the Temple".

It should be noted that in the campaign supporting the election of Haj Amin participated also elements who were known for their comparative

12. A glance at his personal file is really interesting. In an application form for a passport which he filled in 8.1.21, he wrote "proprietor" opposite the entry "Present Occupation". The picture shows a young man with moustache but no beard. In a similar form which he filled in 5.2.23 his "occupation" changed to "President of the Supreme Sharia Moslem Council" and the picture is of a man with a well-groomed beard. See file 01820 (original number K/582) I.S.A.

13. See C.S. file 243 I.S.A.

14. Ibid. For the appointment of the Mufti, and Richmond's role in it. See E. Kedourie "Sir Herbert Samuel and the Government of Palestine in the Chettem House version and other Middle Eastern Studies London 1970 p. 63 - 67.

15. In a notice posted on 19.4.21 in the Old City of Jerusalem C.S. file 245 I.S.A.

moderation vis a vis the Government and the Jews<sup>16</sup>. Their motive, it seems, was their belief that the office of Mufti of Jerusalem should stay with the Husseinis. One theme which was repeated in the petitions and cables<sup>17</sup> asking for his appointment was that Haj Amin "is of the prophet's lineage and a descendant of Muftis from a very long period."<sup>18</sup> Christian leaders too, including the Orthodox Patriarch supported his election<sup>18</sup> and so, according to Zionist sources<sup>19</sup> did the Emirs Feisal and Abdallah.

The decision, however, whom to nominate, rested with the H.C. Sir H. Samuel. He, it seems, was inclined to nominate Haj Amin<sup>20</sup> for he discussed with him the possibility of his nomination even before the elections were held. Besides the general clamor for Haj Amin's appointment, the H.C. had other considerations too. He wished perhaps to soothe the Husseinis for the removal of Musa Kazim as Mayor of Jerusalem and his replacement by Ragheb Nashashibi and as Arab political life in Palestine was largely conditioned by the rivalry between the two families, it seemed logical to balance a Nashashibi Mayor by a Husseini Mufti. Another reason could be his hope that a post would curb Haj Amin's extreme activities (a stratagem which succeeded with Araf al Araf). Anyway they met on 11.4.1921 and the conversation between them is very revealing.

In a note to the Chief Secretary, Sir H. Samuel wrote on 11.4. 1921<sup>21</sup> :

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16. Such as Suliman al Nasif from Haifa and Sheikh Saud al Ouri, the Qadi of Jerusalem who was criticised later very strongly by the Mufti's followers for his opposition to subordinate the Sharia Courts to the S.M.C. strangely enough, the Qadi of Jerusalem, in his cable of 24.3.21 claimed that the Jews too supported the appointment of Haj Amin. Ibid. Not one Jewish source ever confirmed this.
17. See Ibid.
18. See Memorandum by Richmond 7.6.21 C.S. file 245 I.S.A.
19. See biography of Haj Amin al Husseini file 3008 5/25 Z.A.
20. One source even states that "Haj Amin stood as a candidate for the post on the advice of Sir Herbert". See L. Farago, "Palestine on the Eve" London 1936 p.58. No other source confirms this statement, and I am not inclined to accept it as true.
21. C.S. File 245. I.S.A.

"I saw Haj Amin Husseini on Friday and discussed with him at considerable length the political situation and the question of his appointment to the office of grand Mufti. Mr. Storrs was also present, and in the course of conversation, he declared his earnest desire to cooperate with the Government and his belief in the good intentions of the British Government towards the Arabs. He gave assurances that the influence of his family and himself would be devoted to maintaining tranquility in Jerusalem and he felt sure that no disturbances need be feared this year. He said that the riots of last year were spontaneous and unpremeditated. If the Government took reasonable precautions, he felt sure they would not be repeated".

The Mufti himself gave a different version of this meeting saying<sup>22</sup>, "When I was in mourning over my brother Kamel, Sir Herbert Samuel visited us at our house and we had a frank and open discussion during which I expressed to him my views and my intentions. And I asked him, "whom do you prefer, a candid adversary or a renegade friend?" He answered "a candid adversary" and on the basis of that came my appointment as the Mufti of Jerusalem."

Even if we add the Mufti's version to the more authoritative one of the H.C., there could be only one meaning to that discussion and the H.C. remained in no doubt regarding "the views and intentions of the candid adversary" who "proposed" that in return for his appointment there would be peace and public order in Jerusalem. The fact that this conversation took place a few days before Nebi Musa procession, the anniversary of the Anti-Jewish riots of 1920, was very meaningful.

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22. G. Frumkin A Way of A Judge in Jerusalem (Derech Shofet Biyerushalaim) Tel Aviv 1954 p.285.

Though there was some serious Arab rioting early in May 1921 in Jaffa, and several Jewish colonies were attacked <sup>23</sup> the Nebi Musa festivities in Jerusalem passed off quietly. Haj Amin was informed of his nomination and Lord Samuel could conclude thus in his memories : "with the exception of a small affray in Jerusalem in the following November, for a period of eight years no disturbance occurred anywhere in Palestine<sup>24</sup>." The final step in Haj Amin's installation as the virtual religious leader of the Moslem Community in Palestine was on the 2nd May 1922 when he became the President of the Supreme Moslem Council and Rais al Ulema.

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23. See infra. p.40

24. Lord Samuel Memoirs London 1945 p.169.

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1. Especially, since the British official report on the riots (H.M.S.O. 1921, C. 1000) p. 10.

2. The minutes of the committee were prepared by the S.C. (S.C. 1922/11) 1922.

### Chapter 3

#### Hai Amin. His Election to the Office of President of the Supreme Moslem Council

During the Ottoman regime, the Sultan who was also the Caliph, and was the sole authority who exercised legislative powers promulgated laws affecting the constitution, jurisdiction, procedure and organisation of Sharia courts, and laws affecting the administration of the Awqafs. After the establishment of constitutional government this was done by the legislative body created by the constitution.

The administrative powers with regard to the procedure and internal organisation of the Sharia courts were exercised by the "Sheikh-al-Islam", until the outbreak of the 1st World War when these powers passed into the hands of the Ministry of Justice. The Awqaf, after being registered by the Sharia Courts who enforced its terms, were either administered directly, or supervised by the Ministry of Awqaf.

When Palestine was detached from the Ottoman Empire and came under the rule of non-Moslem Government, it became necessary to create a new administrative machinery for the Awqaf and the Sharia Courts.

During the military occupation, a Director General of Awqaf was appointed and controlled by the Senior Judicial Officer. The Senior Judicial Officer also appointed judges of the Sharia courts when necessary, after consultation with a Moslem Committee.

The majority of Moslems were not happy with this situation<sup>1</sup>.

On the 19th November, 1920, a few months after the civil administration had replaced the military one in July 1920, the H.C. summoned a conference of Muftis, principal Ulema and Moslem Notables, to discuss questions relating to the control of Moslem religious affairs and the administration of Awqaf. It was decided at the conference to form a Committee consisting of principal Government officers and Ulema<sup>2</sup>. The resolutions of the committee

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1. Specially, since the Senior Judicial Officer was Norman Bentwich - a Jew. See C.S. file 163 I.S.A.

2. The sittings of the committee were presided by the H.C. C.O. 733/213/97033.

were embodied in an order of March 1921 providing for the administration of Moslem affairs<sup>3</sup>. The order provided for the creation of an elected Committee of four, for Moslem Religious affairs, whose functions were to supervise the administration of Awqaf, to nominate and dismiss judges of the Sharia courts subject to approval of Government, and to appoint Muftis, subject to approval of Government.

Provision was also made for the creation of a Central Waqf Committee, but the Government retained financial control over Moslem Awqaf, and for this purpose it was provided that the Awqaf budget was to be approved by the Government and that loans to be secured on Awqaf revenues should also require Government approval. The central Awqaf Committee was given no legislative powers and no specific power of control over Sharia courts.

This order met with opposition from the public which found expression during the second conference of Ulema which met in August 1921<sup>4</sup>. The Moslems wanted wider autonomy in managing the Awqaf and the Sharia courts, and demanded that the power of dismissal of Sharia court officials should rest absolutely with the Supreme Moslem Council<sup>5</sup>. Sir H. Samuel regarded with misgiving the proposal that judges should be dismissed by an executive authority and that the dismissal of such officials should not be in the hands of the Palestine Government which paid them.

3. See official Gazette No.43 of 15.5.21.

4. For full account of the discussions of these conferences, see Sir H. Samuel's despatch to Lord Curzon of 14th November 1920, H. Samuel papers I.S.A.

5. The National organisations attached the greatest importance to this proposal; when Sheikh Muhamad Saud Al Ouri, the Qadi of Jerusalem, who had previously supported strongly the election of Haj Amin as Mufti, objected to putting the Sharia courts under the control of the S.M.C. he was described as traitor and the government was asked to dismiss him. "Falastin" 26.11.21 - 10.12.21.

However, since this was the only outstanding point of disagreement between the two sides, and as the Moslem representatives attached particular importance to that demand he advised the British Government "to concede this point to the Moslems for political considerations"<sup>6</sup>. On 20th December 1921 the old order of March 1921 was replaced by new order subsequently validated by article 74 of the Palestine order in Council 1922, by which a body to be known as the Supreme Moslem Sharia Council was constituted for the control and management of Moslem Awqaf and Sharia affairs in Palestine. This new order conferred upon the S.M.C. much wider powers than those conferred by the previous one.

However, the December 1921 regulation was not clear enough on several points<sup>8</sup>, the most important of which turned to be the term of office of the President of the S.M.C.

Article 2<sup>9</sup> of the regulation provided that the Council should be constituted of Rais al Ulema and 4 members, and that Rais al Ulema should be the permanent President of the Council. But article 4 provided expressly that Rais al Ulema should be elected by general election, the method of which was to be prescribed by the council in a special law, Article 6 which said that "Rais al Ulema shall in the present circumstances" (i.e. when the council was constituted in 1921 only) "be elected by the General Committee elected by the secondary electors"..... did not make the problem any clearer.

This ambiguity enabled Haj Amin, who eventually was elected as the President of the S.M.C. to claim that his election was for life and he actually succeeded to prevent further elections to this office.

6. See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 8.10.21 C.O. 733/Vol 6.

7. Published in the official Gazette of 1.1.22, see Bentwich - Laws of Palestine Vol.II.pp. 398-402.

8. It was hinted that this was owing to the fact that the regulation was prepared hurriedly, see C.O. 733/222/97208/2.

9. For the text, see the official Gazette of 1.1.22. My italics.

Further ambiguities enabled him to reach a situation which was described thus<sup>10</sup>: "The Supreme Moslem Council, which for practical purposes means the Mufti, controls both the Sharia Courts and the administration of Waqf funds". And the Peel commission concluded: "the functions status and precedence of the existing President (i.e. of the S.M.C.) have not been defined and there has therefore been no legal limitation of his powers".<sup>11</sup>

The elections were held on the 9th January 1922. The Electoral College consisted of the 56 secondary electors to the Ottoman Parliament, 4 members for each of the 14 Qazas (a sub-division of district) of Palestine during the Ottoman regime, of which 53 attended the elections. A last minute effort by the Mufti's opponents led by Ragheb Nashashibi, to prevent his election, by proposing a delay, failed<sup>12</sup> and he received 40 out of 47 votes with 4 abstentions and only 3 votes given to other candidates.<sup>13</sup>

His election, it seems, was secure from the beginning. All through the discussions leading to the establishment of the S.M.C. he was the main spokesman for the Moslems. He was accepted as such by the government who, as many hints show, encouraged him to play that role and used him as its channel of communication with the Moslem representatives.<sup>14</sup>

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10. In a minute by Mr. Williams from the C.O. on 27.8.30. My Italics, see C.O. 733/193/77364.

11. The Peel Report p.180. My Italics.

12. After this proposal received only 10 votes, Ragheb Nashashibi with 5 of his followers left the meeting. Had they not left, the result of the election of the 2 members representing the Sanjak of Jerusalem could have been different. Said el Shawa from Gaza and Abdallah Dajani from Jaffa, both followers of the Mufti were elected with a very narrow majority. The other 2 members, Mohammed Murad the Mufti of Haifa representing the Sanjak of Acre, and Abd el Latif Salah representing the Sanjak of Nablus were elected almost unopposed. See H.C. despatch to the Colonial Secretary 20.1.22, C.O. 733.Vol. 18.

13. Ibid. See also the Mufti's testimony before the Shaw Commission. The Shaw Evidence Vol. I, p. 492.

14. See C.S. file 245 I.S.A. See also C.O. 733/Vol. 8.

The establishment of the Supreme Moslem Council, in general, and the election of the Mufti as its president, in particular, were hailed by the Arabs and described by Jamal al Husseini as "a victory of the national movement".<sup>15</sup>

Approximately 15 years later, the Peel Commission described thus<sup>16</sup> the situation which resulted from his election "the existence of the Supreme Moslem Council need not, in itself, have led to the development of an Arab "imperium in imperio". But the functions which the Mufti has contrived to accumulate in his person and his use of them have had that effect. He is now such a power in the land, that supported by the National Committees in the different towns of Palestine he may truthfully be described as the head of yet a third parallel Government."

The Commission, very generously, obscures here the part played by the Government in the creation of that situation described above, and one gets the impression that it was brought about only by the clever Mufti who "contrived".....

Much nearer to the truth was the Chief Secretary H. Luke who wrote<sup>17</sup> "this constitution and these regulations involved a delegation to the Supreme Moslem Council of Jurisdiction so extensive and of powers so wide as to be, to some extent, almost an abdication by the Administration of Palestine, of responsibilities incumbent upon a Government."

Mr. Luke goes on to justify this "abdication by the Administration"..... by the success of this policy saying<sup>18</sup>, "It must be recognized that the bringing into existence of this powerful Moslem body has in some directions had distinctly beneficial result. The grant of responsibility and extensive

15. See his "25th letter", to the Arab Delegation in London of January 1922. A.E. file 1722 I.S.A.

16. The Peel Report p. 181.

17. In a memorandum enclosed in Sir J. Chancellor's Confidential despatch of 18th June 1929. C.O. 733/172/67296.

18. Ibid.

powers to this body has given the Moslems of Palestine a new sense of confidence and of pride and interest in their past, one of the results of which has been the impressive work of restoration in the Haram el Sharif".

British spokesmen could find indeed several reasons to justify this policy of extending to the Moslem community the widest possible autonomy in religious matters, notably in connection with the administration of the Sharia Courts and the management of Waqf funds.<sup>19</sup>

(1) It conformed with British policy in other parts of the British Empire.

(2) It conformed with British policy towards other religious communities in Palestine.

(3) It complied with the provisions of the Mandate which required the Mandatory to ensure religious freedom and the preservation of existing religious rights.<sup>20</sup>

But the most important reason was that of political expediency. We have seen already<sup>21</sup> how Sir H. Samuel "bargained" with Haj Amin. The authorities believed that the policy of granting the S.M.C. the widest possible autonomy, and putting at its head a nationalist leader would afford some prospect of peaceable government with Arab co-operation in a country where the standing grievance of the Arab population was that their advance to the state of political independence enjoyed by neighbouring Arab states, (and, as they believed, promised to them), had been indefinitely frustrated by the commitments of H.M.G. in connection with the Jewish National home.

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19. See paper by Mr. H.F. Downie of the Colonial Office 18.5.32. C.O. 733/222/97208

20. Though the Ottoman Government maintained closer official control over the Sharia Courts and the Awqaf funds, than did the Government of Palestine, the former was a Moslem Government with Islam as the established religion.

21. See supra p. 24

Success being the best criterion, the 7 peaceful years which followed convinced the government of the soundness of its policy.

In 1926 Sir J. Shuckburgh the head of the Middle East Department, in the Colonial Office stated<sup>22</sup> that "the institution of a Supreme Moslem Council in 1921 has on the whole been one of our most successful moves in Palestine. It practically gives the Mohammedans self-government in regard to Moslem affairs. The arrangement has worked smoothly and has no doubt done much to reconcile the Mohammedans to the Mandatory regime, with its unpopular Zionist flavour".

For this co-operation with the Government, the S.M.C. was rewarded financially and politically. The question of the administration of Moslem Awqaf was already discussed at the first conference with the Ulema which met on 19.11.20 and it was agreed<sup>23</sup> that the Government should allot to the Awqaf Administration (which was going to be established) the funds of certain Awqafs confiscated or resumed by the Ottoman Government. It was also agreed that the Government should continue the collection of Waqf tithes, and transfer them to the Awqaf administration, less the expenses of collection. The Awqaf administration, in consideration of the revenues which the Government agreed to place at their disposal, undertook several obligations such as maintenance of Moslem orphanages, reparation of Moslem religious buildings and property, education etc.

Later, under the order constituting the S.M.C., the council was charged with the administration and control of Moslem Awqaf, and in order to increase the revenue of the Awqaf Administration, section 8 (i) (g) of the order imposed a duty on the council "to enquire into all Moslem Awqaf and to

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22. In a minute 11.3.26 C.O. 733/113/5627 My Italics.

23. See the official Gazette No.43 of 15.5.21.

produce proof and evidence establishing the claim to these Awqaf with a view to having such, returned to them".

During a conference<sup>24</sup> held at Government House on the 19th October 1922, the Mufti requested that the accumulated Awqaf revenue held by the Government should be handed over. The H.C. gave an assurance that all proved Awqaf would be handed over, and issued an order on the 20th October 1922, directing that the revenues of several known Awqafs (the Khasqi Sultan, the Nebi Musa Waqf and others) be handed over to the supreme Moslem Council as from the 1st April 1921.

The yearly budget of the Awqaf Administration following these arrangements was around £50,000 increasing to £65,600 approximately in 1937<sup>25</sup> when the Mufti was removed from his offices. The control of such big sums of money placed in the hands of the Mufti was a mighty instrument for the advancement of his personal and political ends.

At that stage, these political ends were modest, with the Mufti aiming mainly to augment his position within the Islamic community, serving as its representative before the Government on all religious aspects.

However, little by little, with some encouragement by the government, he started to branch out into purely civilian matters. In May 1923, the Government consulted both the Office of the Arab Executive, and the President of the S.M.C. on the question of appointing local members for a Governmental Committee on taxation.<sup>26</sup>

24. G.O. 733/213/213/97033/1.

25. See C.S. files 192 and K/35/37 Waqf Estimates, I.S.A.

26. Letter by Mr. Richmond 2.5.23 C.S. file 158 I.S.A.

Lacking a recognized constitutional channel of communication with the Arab community<sup>27</sup>, it may seem only natural for the Government to try and get the view of the community through whatever means it could. One cannot, however, escape the conclusion that the Government and specially Mr. Richmond<sup>28</sup> who initiated the above letter, were not averse to the idea that the Mufti might establish himself as the Arabs' spokesman on all matters, religious as well as civilian ones. This, however, was in accordance with the custom prevailing during the Ottoman regime, when the heads of the religious communities, were always, to some extent, the political representative of their community in its dealings with the Government. This attitude of the Government, confirmed further the Mufti's leadership in the eyes of the public. Even when the Government knew that the Mufti was working against its policy, as for instance in the case of the Legislative Council, it took no steps to weaken his position. He, on his side, acted cautiously. The drive for boycotting the elections to the council was led by the Arab Executive assisted by the S.M.C., but the Mufti personally was not openly involved.

This process of the increase in his power and influence, was accompanied by a similar process of the increase of the opposition to him, but about that later.

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27. It should be noted that on 1st March 1922, the Colonial Secretary Mr. Churchill informed the Arab Delegation that "since no official machinery for representation has as yet been constituted; he cannot recognize them as representing the Arabs of Palestine. Cmd1700 June 1922 p.5. Only in 1929 did the Government recognize the Arab Executive Committee as representing the Arabs of Palestine as the body representing the Arab case before the Shaw Commission. See the Peel Report p.176.
28. It should be noted that Richmond could initiate these steps only after the Chief Secretary Sir W. Deeds was replaced in April 1923 by Sir G. Clayton who was more responsive to Arab claims. As for Richmond's motive, it can be safely assumed that with his strongly anti-Zionist views, and recognizing the "Anti-Zionist potentialities" of the Mufti he decided to help him become the most important Arab leader in Palestine. For Richmond's assistance to the Arabs see Jamal al Husseini's letter to Musa Kazim al Husseini 17.8.23 A.E. File 02480 Correspondence with the Arab delegation in London I.S.A.

Before finishing the chapter, mention should be made of two important activities of the S.M.C. We have seen already<sup>29</sup> that according to the order of March 1921 the Awqaf administration (i.e. the S.M.C.), in consideration of the revenues which the Government agreed to place at their disposal, undertook several obligations two of which were (I) the reparation of Moslem religious buildings and property. (II) The education of Moslem children.

The Mufti paid special attention to these obligations and in their fulfilment contrived to advance his cause as well.

At the end of the First World War, the 2 famous mosques of Jerusalem Al Aqsa, and the Dome of the Rock, were in a very poor condition with some parts of them in danger of collapse<sup>30</sup>. The Mufti as the moving spirit, very enthusiastically started and directed a most impressive work of reconstruction and restoration. Delegations went to Hejaz and India in 1923 and Hejaz, Kuwait Bahrein and Iraq in 1924<sup>31</sup> collecting and bringing with them donations of around £85,000.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of these works, the importance of the 2 Jerusalem Mosques was re-emphasized and re-introduced to the memory of Moslems in Palestine and elsewhere. The Fund-raising campaign which covered all Islamic countries concentrated attention in these countries towards the 2 mosques, towards Jerusalem and Palestine and towards the Mufti Haj Amin. To the Mufti himself, this restoration work became one of his proud achievements spreading his fame all over the Moslem World as the restorer of the "Haram al Sharif" and the defender of the Holy places against the designs of the Zionist usurpers. Many peaks in his future career, such as his success

29. See supra p. 31

30. For description of their condition see R. Storrs OP-CIT pp.366-7.

31. For information about these delegations see A.E. file No.3589 I.S.A. See also C.S. file 184.I.S.A.

32. With King Fuad of Egypt donating £10,000 Elath OP-CIT-52 and the Nizam of Hyderabad Abad appr. £7,000 C.S. file 184 I.S.A.

(if success it was) in arousing the Palestinian Arabs in August 1929 to defend the "Buraq"<sup>33</sup>, his call and the response of the Moslem World in supporting the Palestinian Moslems before the Wailing Wall Commission,<sup>34</sup> and his success in the Islamic Conference of December 1931,<sup>35</sup> could be better understood in the light of his personal involvement and attachment to the "Haram al Sharif".<sup>36</sup>

He established also within the "Haram al Sharif" area a Museum of Islamic art and a big religious library<sup>37</sup> and in 1935 he established a "Committee on Moslem Monuments".<sup>38</sup>

In the field of education, the Supreme Moslem Council financed several private schools in the big cities. These schools, most famous of which were "Rawdat al Maaref" in Jerusalem - managed by a relation of the Mufti - and "Al Najah" in Nablus, instructed their students in an extreme nationalist spirit. The marching slogan of the students of Rawdat al Maaref when they kept order in all the big national and religious celebrations was "We are your soldiers Oh, Haj Amin" (Nahanu junudak ya Haj Amin).

One of these, was the Nabi Musa procession initiated - it is said - by Salah al Din, to counterbalance the concentration of Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Easter celebration, by a similar concentration of Moslem ones. The Nabi Musa Waqf was managed by the Husseinis, and by tradition, the Mufti of Jerusalem was the central figure of the celebrations. With Haj Amin's encouragement, Nabi Musa became a big national festival.

33. See Chapter 7, The Report of the Shaw Commission.

34. See Chapter 10, The Wailing Wall Commission and its report.

35. See Chapter 11, The Islamic conference.

36. In his testimony before the Shaw Commission he said that his house was in the area of the "Haram" and that he used to look every day to the pavement before the Wailing Wall. The Shaw Evidence Vol. 2 p. 530. My Italics.

37. See Memorandum by H. Luke. 14.1.29 C.O. 733/172.

38. On 14.7.35 he asked G. Antonius, a Christian, to serve on that committee. See G. Antonius file 00860 I.S.A.

Consolidating his position inside Arab Palestine, the Mufti spread his activities to inter-Arab and inter-Moslems affairs as well. He attempted to mediate between Ibn Saud and King Hussein, before the latter's defeat. He participated in the Caliphate Congress in Egypt and immediately after that in the Islamic Congress of Mecca in 1926. He endeavoured to reconcile the two rival camps of the Syrian political refugees in Egypt in 1926-7, and he assembled the Islamic Conference of Jerusalem in December 1931 and was elected as its president.<sup>39</sup>

The Mufti should have been satisfied with what he achieved with the Supreme Moslem Council.<sup>40</sup> Some 15 years after it was established it was described thus by one of the Mufti's closest supporters<sup>41</sup> "For almost 14 years from its establishment until today, the Council, as is generally known, has been the only national religious organization in Palestine which works for the public interest (Al Maslahah al Ama). It places the interests of the nation (Maslahat al Umma) above all other considerations, and it raises the dignity of Moslems and Arabs in Palestine. It guards for them their social existence ensures them their religious law, and it keeps their Awqaf from deteriorating (becoming useless)".

Other sources admitted too that<sup>42</sup> "notwithstanding his limited official authority as the head of the Awqaf Committee, Haj Amin, with his strong personality his excellent social standing and his continuing exertion for the national cause, succeeded in giving the Supreme Moslem Council a predominant national political tone (colour) and in making it the core of war against Zionism and defence of Arab rights".

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39. For the Islamic Conference see Chapter 11.

40. For a full summary of its activities since its establishment until 1936 see Palestine Report. Col.No.129 p.202.

41. Munif al Hussein. Manifesto to the Nation concerning the attacks against the Mufti. (Bayan Lilumma bishan al Hamalat al Atima alati)

42. N. Sadaqa Op-Cit p.108. ( tushan ala samahat al Mufti alkbar).  
"al Jamiah al Arabiyaa. 20.4.1935.

## Chapter 4

Political Activity until 1929<sup>1</sup>.

In order to better fight Zionism and the policy of the Balfour Declaration, the political elite of the Palestinians decided towards the end of 1918 to throw their lot with the Hashemite rule in Damascus.

In January 1919, the first Palestinian Congress met in Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>.

The two important items on the agenda were :-

- 1) The political future of Palestine
- 2) The Arabs' position with regard to Zionism.

The participants of the Congress were mainly of two kinds. Members of the 'Moslem Christian Associations'<sup>3</sup> which were composed, usually, of the traditional leaders and local notables of the Moslem and Christian communities, and members of the 'Literary Club' and 'Arab Club' which were composed of younger educated Moslems who were more extreme in their Pan-Arab views. Under their pressure, and with support from French Agents who were agitating the Palestinian Arabs against the British, the Congress decided - against the views of the Pro-British who were in favour of 'Palestine for the Palestinians' - to call for a government which would be tied politically to sovereign Arab Syria<sup>4</sup>.

As for the second item, there were no differences of opinion, and the Congress decided (with 25 out of 27 delegates voting for the decision) to compose a memorandum to the Peace Conference in Paris explaining their absolute opposition to Zionism<sup>5</sup>.

1. For a detailed study of the subject see Chapter 2 "Political Developments until 1929" in my wider work OP-CIT.
2. For a full list of the delegates and the discussions see M.I. Darwaza 'The Palestine Problem through its different stages'. (Al Qadiyya al Falastiniyya fi Muhtalef Marahiliha) Beirut 1959 pp 35-36.
3. For their constitutions see A.E. file 1787 I.S.A. see also CS file 156 I.S.A. The Jews claim, with sufficient proofs, that these associations were initiated and assisted by the military authorities. See E.Elath OP-CIT p.22.
4. For full particulars of the Congress, delegates, discussions, resolutions etc. see C.S. file 156 I.S.A.
5. See Memorandum to the Peace Conference 3.12.1919 Ibid.

However, on 25.4.1920, the Mandate over Palestine was assigned by the Principal Allied Powers to Britain, and with the end of the Sharifian rule in Damascus on 24.7.1920 the idea of Southern Syria and its unity with Greater Syria died completely.

With the decline of the Pan-Arab Literary and Arab Clubs, the political hegemony reverted once again to the traditional leadership of the notables centered around the Moslem Christian Associations with Musa Kazim al Hussein who proved his proud national stand during the 1920 demonstrations - for which he was removed from the mayoralty of Jerusalem - emerging as the first among the national leaders.

He headed the third<sup>6</sup> Arab Congress which started at Haifa on 13.12.1920 and lasted for six days. We do not know much about the discussions of the Congress<sup>7</sup>. It resolved, however, to re-affirm the National Covenant of Palestine passed by the first Congress with a change forced by the different political circumstances. The text<sup>8</sup> contained the following passage :-

The Palestine Arab Congress - "Demands of the British Government to embark on the establishment of a National Government in Palestine responsible to an elected Parliament (Majlis Niabi) to be elected by the Arabic speaking people who were living in Palestine at the outbreak of the Great War, on the same lines and principles which are being applied in Iraq and Transjordan, in furtherance of the friendly relations which long existed between Great Britain and the Arab Nation." -

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6. The first one was in Jan/Feb. 1917 see supra p.37 The second one which was supposed to meet in May 1920 was prohibited by the authorities for security reasons. See Darwaza Op-Cit note p.38

7. See Ibid. See also "Manifesto to the Palestinian Arab people" enclosed to the Police despatch of 4.1.1921 C.S. file 244 I.S.A.

8. For the full text see Al.Carmel 25.12.1920.

We should note that the reference to Iraq and Transjordan and to the friendly relations with Britain made it clear that the kind of 'National Government' which the authors of this Covenant envisaged was self-government under British Hegemony.

We should also note that the idea of unity with Syria was abandoned and the term 'Southern Syria' was not even mentioned once.

To sum up, the two bands of the National Covenant which became the basis of Arab policy in Palestine and from which they had not deviated during the mandatory regime were demands for :-

- 1) The revocation of the policy which embodies the establishment of a national home for the Jews, based upon the Balfour Declaration, and the cessation of Jewish Immigration and
- 2) The establishment of a National representative Government tied to Britain.

The Congress also elected a central body to supervise and direct the national activities. This body became known as the Arab Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress of which Musa Kazim was elected the president.<sup>9</sup>

Following the conclusion of the Cairo Conference in March 1921, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Churchill, visited Palestine for a week. On the advice of the H.C. he granted an interview to a delegation of the Arab Executive headed by Musa Kazim<sup>10</sup>, who presented him a memorandum stating the Arab demands as resolved by the third Congress.<sup>11</sup>

9. For list of other members see Darwaza Op-Cit p. 38

10. Earlier, a delegation of the Executive went to Cairo to meet Churchill there, but he refused to see them. See correspondence March 1921 C.S. file 244 I.S.A.

11. Palestine Arab Congress. Report on the State of Palestine, presented to the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, P.C., M.P., by Executive Committee of Third Arab Palestine Congress, Jerusalem, March 23.1921. Jerusalem 1921. Ibid.

In his firm answer, Churchill affirmed the British Government's and his own personal adherence to the policy of the Balfour Declaration. "You ask me to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and to stop immigration. This is not in my power, and it is not my wish". He affirmed, however, that Arab interests would be safeguarded - "The establishment of a national home did not mean a Jewish Government to dominate the Arabs". As for self-government, he said - "The present form of government would continue for many years, representative institutions leading to full self-government would only be accomplished after 'our children's children will have passed away'.<sup>12</sup>

As the attempt of the Executive to achieve a change in the Zionist policy of the Government using political means failed, resort was made to more desperate and violent means.

On the 1st May, 1921, excited by disturbances arising from an internal Jewish quarrel between the Bolshevik group and the orthodox Labour Party, the Arabs of Jaffa made a murderous attack on the Jewish inhabitants of the town, and on subsequent days destructive Arab raids were made on five of the Jewish rural colonies. In the course of the trouble 47 Jews were killed and 146 wounded, mostly by Arabs. Of the Arabs, 48 were killed and 73 wounded, mostly by the police and military in suppressing the disorders.<sup>13</sup>

The H.C. appointed a commission of enquiry with Sir T. Haycraft, Chief Justice of Palestine, as Chairman.<sup>14</sup> In their report the Commissioners wrote<sup>15</sup> - "The fundamental cause of the Jaffa riots and the subsequent acts of violence, was a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with and hostility to the Jews due to political and economic

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12. For the full text of Churchill's answer see C.S. file 244 I.S.A.

13. The Peel Commission p. 51.

14. And Mr. H.C. Luke and Mr. Stubbs as members.

15. Palestine. Disturbances in May 1921. Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence relating thereto. Cmd. 1540 p.59.

causes, and connected with Jewish immigration and with their conception of Zionist policy as derived from Jewish exponents." The report went on to say - "the outbreak was not premeditated or expected, nor was either side prepared for it; but the state of popular feeling made a conflict likely to occur on any provocation by any Jews".

This conclusion is in line with the continuing claims of the Arab Executive that it was using - 'only legal and peaceful means' - for its political struggle.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Arab Executive hurriedly expressed its reservations over the riots,<sup>17</sup> and the fourth Congress resolved to achieve the national aims through legal and peaceful means.<sup>18</sup> However, there were some indications that there was an organising hand behind the riots.<sup>19</sup> Meinertzhagen even wrote : "The High Commissioner, however, considered the recent disturbances to have been organised and premeditated."<sup>20</sup> Remembering the conflict between the traditional leadership and the notables of the Moslem Christian Associations, and the young radical Pan-Arab elements and the fact that the latter lost their influence and ceased to be important, it can well be assumed that these riots were the

16. To the H.C. of Palestine "manifesto published by the Moslem Christian Association" 13.10.21. A.E. file 1026 I.S.A. See for instance, letter from Jamal al Hussein, the Secretary of the Arab Executive to the H.C. 27.8.23 A.E. file No. 2700 I.S.A. see also speech by Musa Kazim in the Sixth Arab Congress 16.20 5. 1923. A.E. File 171 I.S.A.
17. Musa Kazim to the H.C. 10.5.21 C.S. file 244 I.S.A. at the same time it used the riots to prove the danger of "the Bolshevik immigration" and to demand its cessation. See letters and protests of the Arab Executive 10.5.1921 C.O. 733/16.
18. See report on the Fourth Arab Congress opened in Jerusalem on 29.5.1921. C.O. 733/13.
19. A rather impressive case, to prove that, based on circumstantial evidence is to be found in Y. Porath, Op Cit 149-52.
20. Meinertzhagen Op Cit p.109.

last effort of this group - or at least parts of it - to re-assert their supremacy among the Arab public.

Towards the autumn they tried again, and the protest demonstration of the 2nd November in Jerusalem turned into an anti-Jewish affray. But the police reacted strongly, and the organisers of the demonstration belonging mostly to the "Arab Club" were arrested and sentenced, with the Arab Executive congratulating the police for maintaining order.<sup>21</sup>

And then "for a period of eight years no disturbance occurred anywhere in Palestine."<sup>22</sup>

There could be several reasons for the lack of violence during these years. The immediate one was perhaps the firm and strong reaction by the police and the military in suppressing the disorders, the proclamation of Martial Law, the search for arms, the collective punishments, the trials etc. Also at the time the Government took some steps aimed at appeasing the Arabs, of which I shall write later.

There was also the appearance of the Pro-Arab British lobby<sup>23</sup>, who persuaded the Arab leadership that use of violence and illegal means would only damage the chances of the political endeavour which the intended Arab Delegation was going to launch in London, as it would present the Arabs as not ready yet for self-rule.

But the most important reason was the policy of the H.C. Sir H. Samuel

21. See Despatch from H.C. to the Colonial Secretary 11.11.1921. CO. 733/17.

22. Viscount Samuel. Memoirs. London 1945. p. 169.

23. For its composition and its activities at the time see A.E. files 853 and 1541 I.S.A. See also C.O. 733/57.

as stated by the Peel Commission<sup>24</sup>, "Sir Herbert Samuel addressed himself energetically to the task of conciliation".

The most important proof of which the Peel Commission considered was the establishment of the Supreme Moslem Council in 1921 and the election as its President 'the whole hearted Arab nationalist Haj Amin al Husseini who shortly before that was appointed Mufti of Jerusalem".

Haj Amin the extreme head of the "Arab Club" with its extreme radical following of young Pan-Arabs needed now the goodwill of the Government in order to consolidate his position as the President of the S.M.C. He therefore ceased to support the use of violence, and since then had tried to prevent outbreaks of riots and disorders.<sup>25</sup>

On 25th May the Fourth Palestine Arab Congress met in Jerusalem. It reaffirmed its objection to the Zionist policy of Britain, emphasized the political character and the legal means of the Arab struggle, and after long and difficult discussions succeeded in electing a delegation to go to London and Europe under the Chairmanship of Musa Kazem<sup>26</sup>.

24. The Peel report pp.52-53. Among the "other proofs of the Government's desire to conciliate Arab opinion", the Commission enumerated the ill-fated proposal made in 1922 to establish a Legislative Council which was meant primarily to please the Arab politicians. "The reduction of the tithe, which was the main tax which the Arab agriculturist paid, from 12½% to 10%." "The settlement of the disputed land ownership of the Mudawara Lands of Beisan, in which Arab public opinion was deeply interested, on terms very favourable to the Arab cultivators", "the rapid development of social services", "the new regime of equal law and justice etc."
25. See "Political report for November 1921". 6.12.1921. C.O. 733 Vol. 8. The O.A.G. to Colonial Secretary Political report for December 1921 30.12.1921. Ibid. Keith-Roch for the H.C. to Colonial Secretary Political report for January 1922 2.2.1922 Ibid Vol. 18.
26. With Haj Tawfic Hammad, Amin al Tamimi, Muin al Maadi, Ibrahim Shamma as members and Shibli al Jamal as Secretary. Incidentally, Ruhi Abd al Hadi was also elected as Secretary but he preferred to join the Palestine Government becoming one of the highest ranking Arab officials.

They stayed in London for almost a year (August 1921 - July 1922) and had lengthy negotiations with the Colonial Office in an effort to deflect British policy from its Zionist orientation, but they failed.<sup>27</sup>

After the return of the Arab Delegation from London, a fifth Congress was held in Nablus on 22.8.1922. Following the recent disappointments of the Arabs, the fifth Congress was characterised by a more extreme character than the fourth one<sup>28</sup>. And the fact that it was held in Nablus, the most extreme nationalist town, assisted this tendency even further.

The Congress resolved<sup>29</sup> to boycott the elections to the Legislative Council on the grounds that they were prescribed in the Palestine Order in Council of August 1922, which was based on the Zionist character of the Mandate.

The Congress took also certain steps to insure the success of the boycott.<sup>30</sup> The Imams and the preachers at the Mosques all over Palestine were directed to insure that the Friday sermons would be used to explain the boycott. This last step was possible because the Mufti put all

27. For report of their meetings and discussions see A.E. Files 1026 and 267 I.S.A. See also C.O. 733/13, 733/14, 733/16 and CP 70(21). For full text of the correspondence see "Palestine Correspondence. Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization. Cmd. 1700 London June 1922.
28. See report of the District Commissioner Samaria 25.8.22 C.S. file 163. I.S.A.
29. See Declaration of the Arab Executive to the Fifth Arab Congress concerning the boycott of the elections to the Legislative Council, and the condemnation of the implementation of the British Policy of the Jewish National Home. 1.9.1922 "Al Sabah" - 2.9.22 as reported by Documents of Arab Resistance in Palestine against the British Occupation and Zionism 1918-1939. (Wataak al Mukawama al Falastiniya Al Arabiyya dad al Ihtilal al Britani wal Shiyoniyya 1818-1939). Edited by Abd al Wahab al Kayali Beirut 1968 pp.57-59.
30. Report of The District Commissioner Samaria 25.8.22. C.S. file 168 I.S.A.

his weight and that of the S.M.C. of which he was the President, behind the boycott campaign. In addition to the same national considerations which motivated the activist elements of the Arab Executive, he also had a more personal one. Emergence of any elected representative Arab body such as would have been the Arab block of the Legislative Council, with the Government's authority and prestige to back it, and with a possibility of influencing direction of funds to a certain area or to a certain scheme, would have reduced the importance of the S.M.C. as the only Arab public body with an assured income of its own. The elected Moslem representatives on the Legislative Council could have also interfered in what was going on in the S.M.C. thus reducing the Mufti's total mastery of it.<sup>31</sup>

As against these steps of the Arab Executive supported by the S.M.C. which proved very effective, as almost in every Mosque in the country a proclamation was posted advocating the boycott, and exposing the dangers of voting in favour of the constitution,<sup>32</sup> the Government followed a neutral policy, namely, not to exert any pressure on the population to take part in the elections and to allow propaganda against such a participation.<sup>33</sup> The population, accustomed to Ottoman methods, assumed therefore that the Government were not opposed to the boycott and were not sincere in their alleged desire to carry through the elections.

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31. Those were the reasons mentioned by the Anti-Mufti elements during the big inter party conflict towards the end of 1931. See Miraa't al Sharq 30.10.31.
32. See Kisch Palestine Diary London 1938. p.35.
33. See discussion between the H.C. and delegation of the A.E.6.2.23 S.C's file 158 I.S.A. See also letter from Symes Governor of the Northern District, to C.S. informing him that he acted accordingly. 10.3.22 C.S's file 242/2 I.S.A.

The result was that the boycott was a complete<sup>34</sup> success, with very few participating in the primary elections. The H.C. was obliged to abandon the proposed constitution, and even his attempt to return to the system of nominated advisory Council, composed in the same proportions as the intended elected Council, failed.<sup>35</sup>

Another Arab delegation left in November 1922 to Turkey and the peace conference of Lausanne. They continued to London and had several meetings with Parliamentarian and journalists supporters.<sup>36</sup> The delegation returned to Palestine empty-handed, but in a report to the Sixth Arab Congress which met in Jaffa (16-20th June) they reported on their work and they stated their belief<sup>37</sup> that continued firmness in their policy of non-cooperation and insistence on their maximum demands might yet result in greater concessions than those previously proposed.

When it became known that a Cabinet Committee had been appointed to review the British policy in Palestine a third Arab delegation<sup>38</sup> left for London at mid-July.

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34. For particulars see Palestine, Papers relating to the Elections for the Palestine Legislative Council 1923 London June 1923 and 1889.
35. Though all the members who were going to be nominated had given their agreement at a certain stage of the negotiations. See despatch of H.C. to C.O. 15.6.23. C.O. 733 46. However, under pressure of the extremists they refused to serve.
36. Comprising Musa Kazim, Amin al Tamimi and Sheikh Muzaffar. For full particulars of their activities there see Y. Porath Op-Cit. Third Chapter 4th Sub-Chapter. The Second delegation - the approach to the Turks pp. 183-192.
37. Report of the Second Arab Delegation on its workings to the Sixth Arab Congress "Palastin" 29.6.23. For full list of the "Resolutions of the Sixth Arab Congress" see A. Tarbin Lectures on the History of the Palestine Problem (Muhadarat fi Taarikh Qadiyyat Falastin) Cairo 1958 pp. 220-222.
38. Composed of Musa Kazim, Amin al Tamimi and Wadi al Boustani.

The Cabinet Committee accepted the recommendation of the Colonial Office to continue the policy as laid down in the 1922 White Paper, but in a further attempt to meet Arab complaints of being discriminated against, the Committee recommended the establishment of an Arab Agency with a position exactly analgous to that accorded to the Jewish Agency. Furthermore, this Arab Agency was also to be consulted with regard to immigration.

On 11.11.1923 the H.C. announced the new plan to a body of Arab leaders.<sup>39</sup> But the Arabs were in no mood for compromise, believing that through their policy of non-cooperation they induced the Government to accelerate its plans for the establishment of representative institutions. They had secured in the Churchill White Paper an official disavowal of efforts to create a Jewish state, and now they had obtained an offer of an Arab Agency. They decided to adhere to this extreme line and rejected unanimously the Government's proposal, as "falling short of the demands of the Arab population.

In a letter to the H.C., Musa Kazim wrote, "the object of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine is not an Arab agency analogous to the Zionist Agency. Their sole object is independence. The Arab owners of the country cannot see their way to accept a proposal which tends to place them on an equal footing with the alien Jews".

In a cable<sup>40</sup> to the H.C. dated 9.11.23 the Colonial Secretary referred to the various proposals made to the Arabs and stated, "towards all these proposals Arabs have adopted the same attitude vis, refusal to cooperate. His Majesty's Government have been reluctantly driven to conclusion that further efforts on similar lines would be useless and they have accordingly

39. Colonial Secretary to the H.C. 3.8.23. C.O. 733/Vol. 48.

39. For full list as well as full particulars of correspondence see Palestine Proposed Formation of an Arab Agency. November 1923. Cmd. 1989.

40. Ibid.

decided not to repeat the attempt. You are accordingly authorized to carry on administration of Palestine with the aid of an Advisory Council ....."

Samuel appointed such a committee composed entirely of British officials in December 1923.<sup>41</sup>

After remarking that "this was the last occasion on which a coherent, pro-Arab Parliamentary pressure group was to make itself felt", J. Marlow sums up<sup>42</sup> the British-Arab negotiations through 1922-23, and I agree with him, thus :

"The non possumus attitude adopted by successive Arab Delegations tended to defeat their policy of persuasion and tended probably to weary their British supporters. In their rejection of the Arab Agency, which had been suggested by Arab sympathizers in the Cabinet Committee, the Arabs overplayed their hand.... The only possible way of negotiation was to proceed through a series of agreed modifications of the Balfour Declaration

41. C.O. Palestine Report 123. Colonial No. 5. (London 1924) p.3.

42. J. Marlow "The Seat of Pilote" London 1959 pp.95196. Because of its interest I shall also cite the rest of the quotation : "..... the Arabs overplayed their hand. But in truth the intransigent attitude adopted by Arab Delegations in this as in other matters owed little to any expectation that intransigence was the attitude best calculated to achieve the political ends in view. It was adopted as a result of the atmosphere of personal rivalry enveloping Palestine Arab politics which exposed to accusations of treason any Arab representative in favour of compromise. Thus Arab leaders, whether in London or in Jerusalem, always negotiated with their eyes fixed, not on the political object in view, but on the necessity for preserving an unsullied reputation for patriotism among their fellow countrymen. This was incompatible with the retention of any British support based on a belief in the justice of their cause and led inexorably towards the violence to which they eventually found themselves committed."

policy. It was unrealistic to suppose that the British Government could be persuaded, either by the Arab themselves, or by their British supporters, unequivocally to repudiate that policy".

We have seen above how after November 1921 the Arabs stopped and therefore failed to make a full use of their "policy by violent means". Now, on the other hand, they failed to make a full use of their "policy by negotiations". There were perhaps good sensible reasons why these policies were followed by the Arabs in each case, but there is no doubt that in both cases personal considerations played a very important role.

The stoppage of violence was motivated - to a very great degree - by the desire of the traditional leadership of the notables to keep their supremacy against the young radical Pan-Arabs together with the desire of the ex-radical Pan-Arab Haj Amin al Husseini to consolidate his control over the S.M.C. While the refusal to participate in any representative Government organ or official one - such as the Arab Agency, was motivated by - among other things - the desire of Haj Amin, the President of the S.M.C. and his followers, to prevent the emergence of any body or any organ which might - directly or indirectly - diminish the influence of the S.M.C. in Arab society.

Towards the end of 1923, when it became evident that the Arab political effort to change the Pro-Zionist policy of the British Government failed, it was already too difficult and too late to re-start using violence. Arab reaction, therefore, following this failure was either the barren non-cooperative attitude of the Arab Executive accompanied by disillusionment and despair which led to the weakening of the Arab National movement, or the attempts of some opposition elements to make the best out of the policy of cooperation with the Government. But these again came too late, and were too little for having a real influence on developments in the country.

In January 1922 the Mufti, Haj Amin, was elected as Rais al Ulema and President of the Supreme Moslem Council.

Thereafter, the old family differences and regional differences were channelled into the basic conflict around which centered all the Arab political life in Mandaroty Palestine, between the supporters of the Council, called the Council (Mejlis) party<sup>43</sup>, and those who opposed it, known as the Opposition (Muarada) Party<sup>44</sup>.

The first opposition body to appear was the Moslem National Club (al Jamiyya al Islamiyya al Wataniyya) which was established in the summer of 1921 and opened branches in many towns (Haifa, Acre, Nazareth, Tiberias, Jenin, Nablus and Jerusalem). Its policy was to oppose the policies of first Arab Delegation, Moslem Christian Associations and the Arab Executive and to support the British Mandate including certain Jewish immigration and settlement.<sup>45</sup>

The Jews on their side supported the club morally and financially<sup>46</sup>. The Nashashibis themselves did not join, but the Dajanis, the Fahoums from Nazareth, Assad Shoukeir from Acre and others jointed it, and it was supported by the paper "Miraa't al Sharq."

The club supported Arab participation in the elections to the Legislative Council, and the elections' failure marked the end of the club, which towards the summer of 1923 was dissolved and ceased to exist.<sup>47</sup>

43. Known also as "Mejlisium" or "the Mufti's party" or the Husseini party.

44. Known also as "Muaridum", or the "Nashashibi party" or the Mayor's Party, as their leader Ragheb Nashashibi was for many years the Mayor of Jerusalem.

45. See Cable of the Haifa Branch to Churchill 10.7.22 C.S's file 158 I.S.A. and cable of the Jerusalem branch to the Colonial Secretary 24.6.23 Ibid.

46. See files 517, 518 5/25 the Z.A.

47. See H.C. to Colonial Secretary Political report for May 1923. 15.6.23 C.O. 733 Vol. 41 see also C.I.D. report 16.8.23 C.S's file 158 I.S.A.

The National Arab Palestinian Party (Al Hizb al Watani al Arabi al Falstini) or the National Party as it was known, was officially formed on 10.11.23 when Sheikh Suliman al Taji al Farouki from Ramle was elected as its President. Unlike the Moslem National Club, the National Party emphasized its opposition to Zionism<sup>48</sup>, but it was well-known that its policies both with regard to the Government and with regard to the Zionists were moderate in comparison with those of the Moslem Christian Associations and the Arab Executive.<sup>49</sup>

Early in 1924, several "Peasants Parties" were established in the rural parts of the country, in the areas of Nazareth, Nablus and Hebron.

They were organized by the rural elite of the Shikhs of the villages, whose position vis a vis the urban elite was reduced towards the last years of the Ottoman rule, and especially after the British conquest, such as the families of Sheikh Abu-Chose, the Hdeibs in the Hebron area, the Abu-Hantash from Qaqun in the Tul-Karm area etc. Their policy was to cooperate with the Government, while trying to improve the lot of the peasants by presenting certain demands such as the establishment of Agricultural Bank, the reduction and even abrogation of the tithe, Agricultural education and, in general, attention to economic needs etc. They cooperated with opposition elements in the towns (the Toukans in Nablus, the Fahoums in Nazareth) and also with the Jews who financed their activities.<sup>50</sup>

Darwaza states<sup>51</sup> that the National Party and the Peasants Party were

48. Though its leaders took care to inform Zionist leaders that this was "lip service" only. See letter of Kisch to the Political Secretary of the Zionist Organization in London, 15.11.23 File 442 Z/4 the Z.A.
49. See Darwaza Op-Cit pp.46-47.
50. See files 517 and 518 S/25 the Z.A.
51. Darwaza Op-Cit pp. 45-49.

encouraged to follow the policy of "take and demand" (Khod wa Utlub), namely a gradual policy of step after step, by the Chief Secretary Clayton, "whose fingers directed these parties and made them dance". Darwaza goes on to state that these parties were established by the British Imperialism in order to fight and weaken the Arab National Movement, which they did with comparative success. He attributes part of the success to the fact that several well-meaning and sincere elements joined the National Party because of their opposition to the Husseinis and the Mufti, the President of the S.M.C., who exploited the Council - according to their claims - to advance his and his family's interests.

Following the establishment of its parties, the "National Party" and the "Peasants Party", the opposition started its offensive against the Council towards the end of 1923.

In a series of petitions<sup>52</sup> the opposition tried to prove that the Mufti, not being an Alem, or filling any previous religious position, was not suitable to hold his high ranking religious post. They charged that by displaying favouritism and nepotism, he had packed by his appointments the Moslem Institutions with his supporters.

The opposition also criticized the method in which the elections to the Council took place, complaining that the old electoral college, which was retained in the 1921 Order and Regulations, was an effete and unrepresentative body, and challenged the legality of several paragraphs of the 1921 Regulations.

The Government could not ignore all these petitions and protests, and on 4.12.1923 the Chief Secretary asked for the comments of the Districts Commissioners.<sup>53</sup> R. Storrs, the Senior District Commissioner

52. See C.S. files no. 172, 189, 190, I.S.A.

53. See Chief Secretary's circular 4.12.1923. C.S. file no. 172 I.S.A.

of Jerusalem Jaffa District answered that the opposition's complaints should be examined seriously necessitating perhaps some Government action and wrote<sup>54</sup>, "It is generally believed in Jaffa district that the Council is at least as active in political as in religious affairs, and surprise is from time to time expressed that the Government should tolerate this almost overt intervention in politics on the part of persons in receipt of official emoluments .... It is generally believed that strong political influence is being brought to bear by the representatives of the Supreme Moslem Council in favour of the political propaganda of the Moslem-Christian Association".

The other District commissioners answered in a likewise manner.

The Government, however, decided not to take any action, presumably out of political expediency<sup>55</sup>,

The S.M.C., on its side, organized a counter-drive of support for itself<sup>56</sup>. Towards 1925, in preparation for the forthcoming elections, the conflict became more bitter. The opposition sent more petitions<sup>57</sup>, alleging that the Supreme Moslem Council had wasted Waqf funds and that

54. See letters from Storrs to Chief Secretary 4.1. 1924, 28.2.1924 C.S. files 172, 189 I.S.A.
55. See remarks of Clayton and H. Samuel on Storrs' letter C.S. file 172 I.S.A.
56. See C.S.'s file no. 190. I.S.A. The substance of the Council's supporters is summarized in a Statement of the S.M.C. .... Jerusalem 1924.
57. The substance of the opposition's case is summarized in a booklet by a "certain virtuous Moslem", called "A statement objecting to the statement of the Supreme Moslem Council, directed to all Moslems in the Moslem World in general, and in Palestine in particular." (And Fudala al Muslimin. Bayan warad ala Bayan al Majless al Islami al aala, muwajah likul Muslem fi al alam al Islami sama wa fi Falestin khasa) Jerusalem 1924.

partisan decisions were given in the Sharia courts. They also called for a meeting of the old electoral College to "enquire into the misbehaviour of some of the S.M.C.'s members."<sup>58</sup> The Council's supporters retaliated by proposing in that meeting a change in para. 3 of the 1921 regulation, which would transfer control over the new elections from the Municipal representatives, amongst whom the opposition supporters were the majority, to the hands of the old electoral College, in which the former were in the majority. The opposition withdrew from the meeting and the proposal was accepted.<sup>59</sup>

However, after an ugly, bitter and acrimonious struggle<sup>60</sup>, the opposition won the elections in many parts of the country, with the Husseinis getting the majority of the votes in the Districts of Jerusalem and the South, with the only exception of Beersheba.

The election was declared void by the High Court<sup>61</sup> and the H.C. thereupon passed on the 1st April 1926 an Ordinance<sup>62</sup> declaring that, pending the holding of fresh elections, he would nominate certain persons, who, together with the President would constitute the Council.

58. Statement of the S.M.C. Op Cit.

59. The new election law was published in Palestine Gazette no. 148 1.10.1925.

60. For the description of these elections and the demoralising effects they had on the Arab National Movement in Palestine in years to come see Darwaza Op Cit. pp.53-59. See also N. Alush. Op Cit. pp.50-51.

61. The opposition challenged the results at Jerusalem, and Abd el Latif Salah the ex-member representing the Nablus district, where the opposition won, challenged the results there. However, the High Court's decision that the election would be declared void was based on the legal point that the majority of the old electoral College which voted on the change of the election law, was less than 2/3 of the members.

62. The Supreme Moslem Sharia Council Ordinance 1926.

After a secret understanding had been reached between the two sides with the assistance of the Government,<sup>63</sup> the H.C. appointed the 4 members, from 2/each side.<sup>64</sup> The understanding had to remain secret, as the Husseinis did not want to admit publicly that they agreed to Governmental nominations to the S.M.C. claiming to endeavour to keep the independence of the Council.<sup>65</sup> However, the fact became later known, and "Al-Carmel", the opposition paper of the north, used to chide the Mufti about it.<sup>66</sup>

The 1926 Ordinance also authorised the H.C. :-

- (1) to constitute a Committee of Moslems to revise the 1921 Regulation; and
- (2) to make new Regulations concerning the holding of a fresh election of members of the Council.

The Committee was duly appointed on 14 May 1926 under the Chairmanship<sup>67</sup> of the Mufti Haj Amin, and sat for almost three years. In April 1928 39 Moslem opposition notables presented a petition<sup>68</sup>, asking that it should be forwarded to the Colonial Secretary, in which they criticized the personnel of the Committee and asked for its abolition. Their petition also deprecated the appointment of the President of the Supreme Moslem Council for life, demanding that his appointment should be for 3 years only, and they pressed for the removal of the Sharia Courts from the influence of the S.M.C., and asked the Government to appoint a special committee to audit the

63. See the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 12.2.1926. C.O.733 Vol. 112

64. Sheikh Mohammad Murad and Said al Shawa from the Husseinis and Abd el Rahman Taji and Amin al Hadi for the opposition.

65. Another reason for keeping the understanding secret was that not all branches of the opposition and especially the important northern one, were a party to it.

66. See issues of Al Carmel, April 1926.

67. Palestine Official Gazette No. 163, 16 May. 1926.

68. C.O. 733/168/57560.

accounts of the S.M.C. and to supervise the Council's expenditure of the Awqaf funds.

The Colonial Secretary answered the petitioners through the H.C., saying that their representations would receive due consideration. They were also assured that no proposals for the revision of the 1921 Regulation for the constitution and powers of the S.M.C. would be adopted by the Government until they had been considered by a representative Moslem Assembly.

But even before that the H.C. informed the Mufti<sup>69</sup> "that legislative sanction would not be given to the proposed revision of the Regulation of 1921 except in so far as is necessary for the holding of elections, until it has been submitted to the Elected Assembly. In that way the Government would ensure that the reform of the administration of Moslem affairs would be effected not only on the advice of an authoritative Moslem Committee, but also with the concurrence of an assembly duly elected by and representative of the Moslem community".

On 24th December 1928 the Committee headed by the Mufti submitted its report, which included a draft amending order and a draft Electoral Law<sup>70</sup>. On several main points the proposed order differed from the 1921 Order.

In place of the Electoral College it called for the creation of an elected general Moslem Assembly with wider powers, including the power of imposing a levy on the community and the assumptions by its Sharia Courts of the power of imposing fines for certain offences. It also proposed the abolition of the General Waqf Committee. An important provision was that the President of the S.M.C. need not be elected for life but for a period of nine years. The Committee, however, recommended that the existing President, the Mufti Haj Amin, should remain in office for a period

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69. In his letter dated 30.4.1928 Ibid.

70. The draft law was already submitted in April 1927. On 28.6.1927 the Government returned it to the Committee with its observations and on 28.10.1927 the Committee forwarded a revised draft of the proposed election Ordinance.

of nine years, and thereafter for a further period of nine years unless a 2/3rd majority of the general assembly decided otherwise<sup>71</sup>. On 14.1.1929 a Committee of Government officials was appointed to analyse and summarize the proposals submitted by the 1926 Committee. It presented its report to the H.C. on 4.4.1929.

The report submitted by the 1926 Committee headed by the Mufti was not published, but the opposition was worried by rumours and in order to re-assure it, the Government published a communique<sup>72</sup> stating, "Before a decision is taken on this important matter" (i.e. the report of the Committee) "the proposals will be published in order that Government may be able to ascertain the general sense of Moslem opinion towards these proposals".

On 12 June, 1929 the report and proposals of the 1926 Committee were published, but in view of the tension preceding the riots of August 1929, they did not raise many comments, though the opposition papers supported the dissenting report and continued their campaign against the Mufti.<sup>73</sup>

Consideration of this question was interrupted by the disturbances in August 1929, but it should be mentioned that the H.C.<sup>74</sup> sent the 1926 Committee's proposed draft ordinances to the Colonial Secretary, promising to send his recommendations on them after studying the comments and criticism of Moslem opinion, and that the Colonial Secretary<sup>75</sup> answered that he was waiting for them.

71. Aref Dajana dissented, however, and presented a minority report, recommending that the question of the election of the President of the S.M.C. should be left for determination by the General Moslem Assembly. C.S. file 240. I.S.A.
72. Official Communique No. 696/29 of 11.2.1929.
73. Al Yarmuk 5.7.1929. 12.7.1929. Falestin 29.7.1929 11.9.1929. Al Carmel 24.9.1929.
74. In his despatch no. 696/12 of 18.6.1929 C.O. 733/170/67296.
75. In his letter dated 17.7.1929. Ibid.

This in short was the position with regard to the problem of elections to the Supreme Moslem Council, on the eve of the outbreak of the 1929 disturbances.

During March-June 1927 municipal elections were held all over the country. The inter Arab struggle became so bitter that the Husseinis were even ready to bargain with the Jews<sup>76</sup>, their most hated enemies, in order to remove Ragheb Nashashibi from the mayoralty of Jerusalem, the office which was the basis of his power. The elections were generally won by the Nashashibis, whose supporters were elected as Mayors of all the important and most of the unimportant towns. Only Gaze and Majdal were won by the Mufti's supporters. These results marked the strength of the opposition, and the Arab Executive and the S.M.C. could not ignore it. Any arrangements for the convening of the 7th Arab Congress had to be pre-agreed with them. And so it actually was.

The Congress met on 20.6.28 in Jerusalem, attended by 300 delegates. The main subject of discussion was the demand for the establishment of Parliamentary institutions on the basis of democratic majorities, in the same manner as in other Mandate territories.

The Congress was indirectly initiated by - among other reasons - a series of 4 meetings held during July 1926 between Mr. E. Mills, the Assistant Chief Secretary and a group of Arab leaders representing different political shades<sup>77</sup>, in an effort to re-examine the possibility

76. See G. Frumkin. A judge's way in Jerusalem. (Derekh Shofet bi Yerushalaim) Tel-Aviv 1954. p 76.

77. Bolous Sehade - the editor of Miraa't al Sharq - through whom the first contacts were made, and Omar Salah al Barguthi, moderates, supporters of the Nashashibis, Muin al Maadi a member of the first delegation, moderate as well, and Rashid Haj Ibrahim, Izzat Darwaza and Rafiq al Tamimi, supporters of the Arab Executive.

of Arab participation in any form of representative Government. The Arabs agreed to participate in these discussions for 2 main reasons. (1) They were both encouraged by "the sharp decline in the fortunes of the National Home" <sup>78</sup> during the years 1925-28, considering that "it had proved a failure in a course of dissolution" which did not pose any longer a danger to the future of the Arabs in Palestine and (2) they were discouraged by the low ebb of the organized Arab national movement in Palestine which appeared to be disintegrating as a result of personal and factional dissensions. <sup>79</sup>

These contacts brought no fruits, mainly because the H.C. Lord Plumer considered <sup>80</sup> that it was desirable to defer the introduction of any form of representative government until local representatives had, through participation in the management of municipal affairs, obtained "practical experience of administrative methods and the business of government" and until the people of Palestine themselves "had learnt to apply discrimination in the selection of their representatives".

The contacts <sup>81</sup> terminated when Mills informed the Arab leaders that their proposals deserved further study but that before bringing them before the Colonial Secretary the H.C. would like to be sure that the proposals express the view of a representative body (Hayah Tamthiliyya) of the population.

78. See Peel Report p.64.

79. For the position of the Arab National Movement in Palestine at the time. See I. Darwaza Op-Cit pp.53-57 see also N. Alush Op-Cit pp.51, 52.

80. See Minute 7.5.28 C.O. 733/155/57316. For Plumer's view about self-governing institutions in Palestine, see Shaw Report p.18.

81. Darwaza Op-Cit pp.58-59.

According to Darwaza,<sup>82</sup> when these contacts became known and the letters exchanged were published, the Arab people tried to forget their differences and re-create a united front through the summoning of the 7th Arab Congress.

The Congress also elected an enlarged executive of forty-eight members - double the previous number, each Kaza (sub-district) represented by two Moslems, one from the Majlesium and the other from the Muaridum, to which were added 12 Christians.

The Executive elected a bureau, to manage its day to day activities.<sup>83</sup>

Nationalist Arab writers<sup>84</sup> stated that due to the influence of the more moderate elements of the opposition, the seventh Arab Congress represented a departure from the established policy of maximum demands and focused it on the demand for the establishment of a representative assembly which, after the 7th Congress, became the central major theme of Arab politics. On its first day the Congress cabled the League of Nations and the Colonial Office<sup>85</sup> stating that Palestine was as advanced as the neighbouring countries, which already enjoyed Parliamentary rule and

82. For the full story of these contacts see Ibid. pp.57-59. For the letters exchanged see Ibid. Enclosure 3. pp. 271-281. See also N. Alush Op-Cit pp.52-60. According to Alush the British aimed at these talks to examine how far and how much were Arab leaders ready to concede in order to cooperate with the Government.

83. composed of Musa Kazim, who again was elected as President with Y. Faraj (Greek Catholic) and Taufik Haqqi al Abdallah (the Mayor of Acre) as Vice Presidents (both from the opposition) and three joint secretaries, Auni Abd al Hadi (who later headed the Istiklal party) Jamal Husseini (a Majlesi leader) and Mugannam Mugannam (Protestant, from the opposition).

84. Ibid pp. 58-59 see also Hamdi al Husseini Manifesto to the Palestinian Arab People about the Seventh Arab Palestinian Congress. (Kalima ila al Shaab al Arabi al Falstini Khawal al Muutamar al Arabi al Falastini al Sab'a)

85. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 21.6.1928.

demanded the establishment of a representative assembly in Palestine.

The new Executive Bureau met the H.C. Lord Plumer and presented him with a memorandum<sup>86</sup> asking for the establishment of a Parliament and expressing the willingness of Arab leaders to meet Government officials to discuss and study the problem. Lord Plumer, however, was at the end of his term. Upon the arrival of the new H.C. Sir John Chancellor in December 1928 the Executive Bureau repeated its request during an interview on January 3rd 1929<sup>87</sup> in which they emphasized the fact that the Palestinians enjoyed under the Turks wide political rights -including elections to the Parliament, and demanded the restitution of these rights. Chancellor, though not committing himself, promised to consider their request. However, in his despatch to the Colonial Secretary he suggested that as a representative Government was established in February 1928 in Transjordan which was less advanced and developed than Palestine under a provisional constitution, it would become more and more difficult to delay the advance towards such Government in Palestine. The Colonial Secretary, Mr. Amery, in his answer advised caution in further attempts to introduce any form of representative Government<sup>88</sup>

However, in May 1929, the Labour Party won the election, and in the new Government of R. Macdonald, the Fabian Socialist, Sidney Webb (made Lord Passfield) was appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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86. For the full text see Ibid 26.7.1928.

87. For the full text of the memorandum see Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 10.1.29. See also Lord Chancellor to the Colonial Secretary 15.1.29 C.O. 733/167/67015.

88. Amery to Chancellor 4.3.29. Ibid.

In a secret despatch <sup>89</sup> the H.C. informed the Colonial Secretary that he had consulted representatives of all the various local interests and after a careful examination in which he considered all the difficulties, such as Jewish opposition, administrative inconveniences etc., he recommended to set up a Legislative Council composed of 14 official members (including the H.C.) and 15 nominated unofficials, of whom 10 would be Moslems, including one representative of the Bedouin, three Jews and two Christians.

When the H.C. wrote this despatch to the Colonial Secretary, he already had the previous agreement of Musa Kazim, the President of the Arab Executive, and Ragheb Nashashibi, the Mayor of Jerusalem, not only to the establishment of the Legislative Council, but even to serve on it when it would be formed. These two previous enemies had long discussions with the C.S. H. Luke, <sup>90</sup> which, according to Musa Kazim's wish were kept secret, in which this agreement was reached. Musa Kazim asked for the secrecy of the discussions as he was not sure what would be the Executive's reaction to this agreement and whether he would be able to bring it over to his views. Indeed, on the eve of the H.C.'s departure, the Arab Executive presented him with a memorandum <sup>91</sup>, signed by Musa Kazim himself, not referring at all to the above discussions and agreement, and repeating their demand for a representative government. Before departing to England in the end of June 1929, the H.C. publicly announced his intention to consult the British Government on the question of the suspended Legislative Council. <sup>92</sup>

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89. Chancellor to Passfield 12.6.29 Ibid.

90. See Luke reports on these discussions, enclosed to Chancellor's letter to Shuckburgh 14.6.29. Ibid.

91. 17.6.29. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya. 24.6.1929.

92. Report on the Palestine Administration, 1929. Col. No. 47 pp.9-10.

Appearing before the P.M.C. in Geneva in July 1929, he repeated this statement, adding the remark, which no doubt he remembered many times in the future - "I think I can say that the relations between the two communities (Jews and Arabs) continue to improve." <sup>93</sup>

On September 1, 1929, a few days after his return to Palestine, following the outbreak of the disturbances, the H.C. issued the following announcement : "In accordance with an undertaking which I gave to the Committee of the Arab Executive before I left the country in June, I initiated discussions with the Secretary of State when in England on the subject of constitutional changes in Palestine. In view of recent events, I shall suspend these discussions with His Majesty's Government." <sup>94</sup>

Though nothing came out of the Legislative Council plan, the previous agreement reached with the Arabs pointed to a new re-alignment in internal Arab politics, with Musa Kazim and a considerable part of the Arab Executive, together with the Nashashibis and their followers in and out of the Executive, on one side, against the Mufti and the Supreme Moslem Council, together with his supporters from among the young radical elements of the Executive, on the other.

The inter-communal conflict about the Wailing Wall was then in full swing, <sup>95</sup> and the Mufti exploited it to advance his own cause. On August 23rd the 1929 disturbances - called by the Arabs the Wailing Wall revolt (Tawarat al Buraq) broke out. The disturbances spread

93. P.M.C. Minutes of the Fifteenth Session 1929. p.79.

94. The Shaw Report p. 18. See also al Jamiah al Arabiyya 2.9.29.

95. See Chapter II. The Wailing Wall Commission.

to other parts of the country, with Arabs throwing themselves on Jewish towns and settlements. Violent attacks were made on the orthodox old established mainly non-Zionist Jewish Communities at Hebron and at Safad. When on August 30th it was over, 133 Jews were counted dead and 339 wounded and much of their property burnt, looted and destroyed. There were also 116 Arabs killed and 232 wounded, most of them by troops rushed from Egypt and the police. <sup>96</sup>

This study tries to show that ever since his appointment as Mufti of Jerusalem in May 1921 and his election to the Presidency of the S.M.C. in January 1922, Haj Amin al Husseini tried not to come to an open clash with the Government. <sup>97</sup> It could be claimed that the 1929 disturbances of which he was the main instigator, disprove this theme. However, I do not think so.

The 1929 disturbances were the direct result of the dispute over Jewish rights at the Wailing Wall.

The story of how "the removal of the screen from the pavement in front on the Wailing Wall on the Jewish Day of Atonement in September 1928, was the beginning of a series of incidents which led to the outbreak of the disturbances on 23.8.1929 is told in the report of the "Shaw Commission". <sup>98</sup>

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96. Shaw Report p. 65.
97. With the notable exception of his negative attitude to the Legislative Council which I already explained above.
98. Shaw Report pp. 153-5.

On 19.11.28, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Amery, presented to Parliament a White Paper on "The Western or Wailing Wall in Jerusalem",<sup>99</sup> in which the British Government set out the main facts of the dispute and defined the Status Quo as it understood it. This document declared that the Wailing Wall was legally a Moslem property, though holy to the Jews whose custom of praying there extended back to the Middle Ages and possibly further. The Paper went on to say, "The Jewish community have a right of access to the pavement for the purposes of their devotions, but may bring to the Wall only those appurtenances of worship which were permitted under the Turkish regime."<sup>100</sup> The Government regarded it as their duty to maintain this Status Quo, but had no wish to go beyond that as "it would be inconsistent with their duty under the Mandate were they to endeavour to compel the Moslem owners of the pavement to accord any further privileges or rights to the Jewish community."<sup>101</sup>

The Moslems were very satisfied and considered that by this White Paper the British accepted their interpretation of the Status Quo. On 27.12.1928 the Mufti addressed the Deputy District Commissioner in the following terms,<sup>102</sup> ... "The Supreme Moslem Council hopes that the Government will actually, and as early as possible, apply the terms of the White Paper that the Status Quo in force during the Turkish rule should be observed". This demand to apply the terms of the White Paper was repeated several times by Arab spokesmen<sup>103</sup>. But as the White Paper defined the status quo in general terms only, a question was raised about the meaning of the term "permitted" used in it.

99. Cmd. 3229. His Majesty's Stationery Office London 1928. Published in Palestine in the Palestine Gazette 11/12/1928.

100. Ibid pp.3-4.

101. Ibid p.6.

102. The Shaw Report p.34.

103. See letter from Chancellor to Colonial Secretary about his talk with the Mufti held on 6.5.29, 10.5.29. C.O. 733/163/67013.I. See also letter from Chancellor to Colonial Secretary about his meeting with the delegates of Arab Executive on 14.10.29, 19.10.29. Ibid. See also Chancellor's despatch 17.1.30 C.O./733/180/77050 A.

Did it mean only those practices at the Wailing Wall which were officially permitted by the Ottoman authorities as wanted by the Arabs, or those practices tolerated by them as demanded by the Jews.

Chancellor immediately<sup>104</sup> adopted the Arab stand that "permitted" should be interpreted as referring only to those practices of the Jews which were admitted officially by the Ottoman regime.

This attitude of the H.C. encouraged the Mufti to continue his agitation. At the same time he showed the H.C. his appreciation. His address to the Jerusalem Deputy District Commissioner mentioned above, contained also the following passage "... . It (the S.M.C.) also thanks you and the Government of Palestine as you were the direct cause in explaining the facts which have elicited this just decision."<sup>105</sup> In an interview with the Mufti on 6.5.29 the H.C. mentioned the "contribution" of the Palestine Government to the White Paper. Referring to the written documents which he asked the Jews and Moslems three months earlier to produce in order to prove their claims, and which the Moslems produced, he went on to say : "I can tell Your Eminence that as yet I have received no reply from the Jews as to the right to bring appurtenances to the Wailing Wall. Your Eminence will no doubt say the reason for this is that they have no evidence to bring. Perhaps Your Eminence is right.

..... Accordingly it seems also likely to me that the contention of the Moslems as regards the bringing of benches and appurtenances to the Wall will be established."<sup>106</sup>

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104. He arrived in Palestine on 6.12.1928 to assume office as High Commissioner. In a letter dated 15.12.28 to the Colonial Secretary he already maintained that "It will be of greater importance for the Jews to be able to prove Turkish authorization in this respect than to prove practice. C.O. 733/160/51540. III. See also his letter to Amer 28.12.1928. C.O. 733/163/67013.
105. The Shaw Report p. 34.
106. See Chancellor's letter to Colonial Secretary 10.5.29 C.O. 733/163/67013 I.

Commenting on this, Williams, the Head of the Palestine Desk at the Colonial Office wrote, "The High Commissioner goes dangerously near admitting that, in his view, the absence of such documentary authority will be conclusive against the Jews". Williams went on to write that by maintaining this narrow interpretation, Chancellor accepted the Moslem position - "that all the Jews have official authority for, under the Status Quo, is to use the road leading to the Wall and to station themselves in front of it. Their right to worship is challenged."<sup>107</sup>

No wonder, therefore, that at the end of the interview the Mufti told the H.C. "that he depends on the Government."<sup>108</sup>

The Mufti was further encouraged when certain constructions,<sup>109</sup> which provoked bitter Jewish opposition and protests, were permitted by the Government on the grounds that they had no right to interfere, since the Wall was the property of the Moslems.

The question about the legal position of the matter had been referred to the Law Officers of the Crown.

They maintained<sup>110</sup> that the establishment of a Moslem hospice (Zawiah) near the Wailing Wall was "a question of degree" and that if it resulted in genuine annoyance or disturbance they "would regard this as an interference with existing rights". The final decision, however, was left in the hands of the High Commissioner, who granted the permission, although there was no doubt that the construction works as well as the other innovations at the Wall were designed by the Moslems to annoy the Jews.

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107. Minute by Williams. 29.5.29 Italics by Williams. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

109. Opening of a doorway which would have turned the pavement before the Wall into a passage and building of a Moslem Hospice (Zawiah) adjacent to the Wall.

110. See Amery's despatch to Chancellor 8.5.29 C.O. 733/164/67015.

Officially, the permission was granted by Keith Roach, the Deputy District Commissioner of Jerusalem, who precipitated at the time the "screen incident" and was thanked by the Mufti<sup>111</sup>. Previous approval, however, had to be received from T.T. Richmond, the Director of the Antiquities Department.<sup>1</sup>

Chancellor also urged the Colonial Office to endorse his views .... In a letter to Amery the Colonial Secretary<sup>113</sup> written a few days after his interview with the Mufti of 6.5.29 he stated his interpretation of the Status Quo. "The term status quo as used in the White Paper with reference to the Wailing Wall, is intended to refer to such practices of the Jews as were officially admitted by the Ottoman Government and not to those which were tolerated in virtue of private arrangements with the Mutawali".

In a similar manner he wrote to the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield<sup>114</sup>.

111. See above the Mufti's address to the Jerusalem Deputy District Commissioner. Keith Roach himself, however, who signed the licence, claimed that he had done so by inadvertence, and was "very agitated when he discovered that he had dropped something which might have been a lighted match into a powder magazine". See letter from Mr. H. Sacher of the Palestine Zionist Executive to the Zionist Executive in London 1.3.29 as reported in C. Adler, Memorandum on the Western Wall, Philadelphia, 1930. pp.81-82.
112. Any building permit within the old city area had to be authorized by the Antiquities Department. See evidence of L.G.A. Cust the Private Secretary to the H.C. before the Shaw Commission. Shaw Evidence. Vol. I. p. 169. About Richmond, the most Anti-Zionist British Official through the Mandate, see E. Kedourie The Chatham House Version pp. 64-67.
113. See Confidential Despatch 10.5.29 J.C. Box 11/5 my italics.
114. See Confidential Despatch 14.6.29 C.O. 733/163/67013. I.

The Colonial Office, however, was reluctant to accept this interpretation. After studying the subject, and for other reasons<sup>115</sup>, it was decided that the Government should rather get away from the phrase "status quo" and use the phrase "existing rights" of article 13 of the Mandate, to which they favoured a wider interpretation than that proposed by Chancellor, namely, that "existing rights" mean "not only rights based on statutory authority, but also prescriptive rights acquired by long usage or unchallenged practice."<sup>116</sup>

The H.C. was informed of this decision only three months later, probably because Lord Passfield, the new Colonial Secretary, wanted to study the subject before giving his decision.<sup>117</sup>

Whatever were the reasons of the delay, Haj Amin's reading of the situation was most probably the following : In Palestine the H.C. told him specifically that he accepted the Arabs' view and that their position in the dispute was just. The publication, however, of the instructions regulating the use of, and conduct at the Wall, based on the 1928 White Paper, was delayed in London, no doubt as a result of Jewish pressure there<sup>118</sup>. The best way, therefore, to neutralize this Jewish pressure in London was by counterbalancing it with a stronger Arab pressure in Palestine. This was the background to the organized agitation campaign in defence of the "Buraq" and against the Jews which preceded the 1929 disturbances.

In the Wailing Wall dispute the Mufti found an issue which, by stirring up Moslem religious feeling might have enabled him to beat the opposition and assume control over the Arab public, while, at the same time, would not have endangered his relations with the H.C., whose views with regard to the dispute were similar to his own.

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116. See Minute by Shuckburgh 31.5.29. Ibid. It should be noted that Dr. Weizmann was consulted before this decision was reached.

117. The draft of a letter to the O.A.G. was ready on 15.6.29. The letter however was sent only on 14.8.29. Ibid.

118. See the H.C.'s cable to Colonial Secretary, enclosing a cable by the Mufti. 8.8.29 Ibid.

Indeed, following the 1929 disturbances the Mufti emerged as the foremost political leader of the Arabs in Palestine, and the attitude of Chancellor towards the Arabs remained friendly and positive.

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115. Mainly because the Colonial Office feared complications which might arise with the Christian Communities in Palestine if the narrowed interpretation would have been given to the term "Status Quo". Writing about the maintenance of the Status Quo at the Christian Holy Places, Williams remarked that the rights, practices and usages as covered by the Status Quo were also "not specifically safeguarded by written official authority except in vague and general terms". See Minute by Williams. 29.5.29. Ibid.

Chapter 5Haj Amin, Character and personality.

It is rather difficult to analyse the character and personality of a person about whom opinions differ so much, specially so, if this person is approached and judged emotionally. Jews, as many non-Jews including many Arabs, considered the Mufti as the devil, the root of all evil and the main source of most of the troubles in Palestine. The majority of Arabs considered him as a saint<sup>1</sup>, and most foreigners he met were impressed by his sincere patriotism.

His private life in his family circle was quiet and happy<sup>2</sup>. During 1921/22<sup>3</sup> he married his cousin Aishah born in 1902 who has been described as a charming wife. They had two daughters, Zeinab, born in 1924 and Suad, born in 1925, and a boy, Salah, born in 1930. The Mufti did not smoke<sup>4</sup>, neither did he drink<sup>5</sup>. He had a lot of charm and suavity of manner as well as natural dignity<sup>6</sup>. He was pleasant to talk to, but rather slow in speech.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Including G. Antonius, described as "one of the most cultivated of men". Ch. Sykes Op-Cit p.159-160.
  2. Mrs. Brooks, who knew him well, in a letter to the "Manchester Guardian". 27.10.37.
  3. In his application form for Passport which he filled on 8.1.21 he declared himself to be not married. On a similar form filled on 5.2.23. he was already married. C.S. File O1820. I.S.A.
  4. See his evidence before the Shaw-Commission. Shaw Evidence Vol.II p. 529.
  5. CH. Sykes Op-Cit p. 169 Assaf Op-Cit p. 265.
  6. Musa Alami in his sketch of the Mufti, in the file "Who is who" in Arab Palestine. C.O./733/248/17693.

This could be attributed to the fact that he was very careful in expressing his views. Reporters who approached him with questions were told to present them in writing and wait 2 - 3 days for his written answers. In the few cases where he was pressed to give an immediate answer, he either repeated some outworn nationalist declarations which he probably knew by heart or expressed himself in such general terms so as not to commit himself. Records of his interviews with the H.C. and other high officials show that he prepared his "homework" and was well briefed.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, though skilled in argument,<sup>9</sup> when faced with unexpected questions as when he was cross examined by the Shaw Commission and by the Peel Commission, either his memory became selective and he chose "not to remember" several facts or he produced weak and unconvincing arguments.<sup>10</sup>

It was generally agreed, and by the majority of Jews as well, that he was not motivated by financial self-interest, and he was even described as incorruptible,<sup>11</sup> (though his opponents used to add that there was no need for him to be corruptible, as his dominance over the finances of the Awqaf and later his "unlimited" supply of money from Germany and Italy were more than enough to fill all his earthly needs).

7. See Falastin 1.1.31. The Paper's reporter in Jerusalem posed 7 questions both to the Mufti, and Raghib Mashshabi, intending to publish their answers in his special issue of the New Year. Mashshabi answered on the spot. The Mufti behaved as described above. The same was experienced by H.Z. Goldberg, the editor of the Jewish New York paper "Tag", who succeeded somehow to interview the Mufti. See Harets 12.9.32.

8. For example, his interview with the H.C. on the 1st October 1932, C.O. 733/217/97072 and his interview with Mr. Bowrie of the Colonial Office C.O/733/225/17223.

9. Ch. Sykes Op-Cit p. 155 Marlow Op-Cit p.163.

10. Shaw Evidence Vol. I. and II pp. 513-549. Peel Evidence pp.292.

11. Marlow Op-Cit p. 74. Farago Op-Cit p.61. A. Cohen Israel and the Arab World. London 1970. p.275.

He was described<sup>12</sup> as "one of the ablest politicians that the Middle East produced in recent years", a description which is agreed to by many writers. He was a very calculating politician.

Reading Palestine Arab papers of these years one is struck by his "public relations" efforts. Almost every Arab or Moslem leader who visited Palestine, be he a sympathizer or an opponent, was entertained by him, and the same is true about most foreigners visiting Palestine, unless they were thoroughly Pro-Zionist. He himself admits that he made it his policy to try and establish good relations and cultivate the good will of everyone who could help him in the Palestine problem.<sup>13</sup> The fact that he was affable, courteous, charming and dignified certainly helped him in this. His dignity was further emphasized by the lack of it so prevalent among some other Arab leaders.<sup>14</sup> Even when he was a refugee in Germany during the second world war, totally dependent on the good will of his hosts, he tried to keep his self-respect, as proven by his talk with the German Deputy Foreign Secretary when he said, "we are not here knocking on your doors to ask for work and employment. We have our principles and ideals, and we are responsible for organisations in many parts of the Moslem World, even if our friends would prefer to ignore it".<sup>15</sup>

12. J. Marlow. Rebellion in Palestine. London 1946. p.74 see also Ch. Sykes Op-Cit p. 155. His description in the File "Who is Who" Op-Cit.
13. Amin al Husseini. Haqq'iq Op-Cit 72.
14. I remember my father, who was working in the "Banco-de Roma" in the old city of Jerusalem and who knew many leaders personally as they did their business with this bank telling me when I was young, "boy it will be terrible if the Mufti will have his way with us (i.e. the Jews), and therefore we should arm ourselves, but I must admit he is dignified, the others are mostly jackals."
15. Berlin 29.7.1944 see the Mufti's Diary the H.A. After the war was over the private papers and correspondence of the Mufti fell into the hands of the American army and taken to the U.S.A. Through the assistance of a well-wisher they were microfilmed and sent to Israel. A small part was re-typed and is open for examination in the Israel Defence Army Museum.

Unlike most of the British who met him and were impressed, Sir J. Hope-Simpson got this negative impression. "He (the Mufti), is a man of small attainments, and had he not been appointed Grand Mufti by Sir H. Samuel, nothing would ever have been heard of him .... The impression which he made on me was that of a man who had no conception of the method in which such a subject (the Wailing Wall) should be handled. He has a petty mind and his whole attention is directed to manoeuvres which will fortify his personal position."<sup>16</sup>.

This brings us to one of the important questions of this study. What were his motives? A Pro Arab author writes of the "personal disinterestedness with which he had worked for the cause of the Palestine Arabs."<sup>17</sup> While another author, a more objective one, writes, "He was not primarily interested in national independence, he was interested in his own personal ascendancy."<sup>18</sup> Now which of these 2 evaluations is the correct one? His opponents believed the latter<sup>19</sup>, while his supporters claimed the absolute correctness of the former.<sup>20</sup> I think that the best answer to this question was given by the Mufti himself writing very revealingly in his own personal diary<sup>21</sup>. "My plan is clear, personally I have no interests. But I have a share in a company, and each time the shares of the company rise, my profits in the plan are increasing as well".

A similar view is held by the doyen among Jewish students of Palestine Arab affairs who wrote<sup>22</sup>, "the Mufti combined his personal,

16. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield 18.8.1930 C.O. 733/290/75072/Pt.II My Italics.

17. N. Barbour Op-Cit p. 129. My Italics.

18. J. Marlowe Rebellion Op-Cit 74 My Italics.

19. For their views see *infra* pp. 172

20. For his supporter's views see Bayan Lilumna ... Op-Cit.

21. The Mufti's Diary, entry in early 1942. The H.A.

22. M. Assaf. Op-Cit. p.265.

family and national aims together".

This philosophy is summarised in a saying which the Mufti used to repeat "He who makes good, (makes it) for himself and for his country. (Faman ahsana, falinafsihi walibiladihi). This, I think sums up the issue. And if our present day understanding of civilized democratic rule accepts the distinction between public interests and private ones, it must be remembered that the Mufti belonged to a society in which combining one's interests to those of the public was not only legitimate but an accepted tradition. Needless to say that in many cases the latter were subordinated to the former.

Many comparisons were made between the two main leaders of Arab Palestine. It will be adequate for this discussion if I cite the opinion of the H.C. Sir A. Wauchoe who had no special reason to prefer the generally more extreme one to the moderate one. Writing about Ragheb Nashashibi after he had lost the mayoralty of Jerusalem he said that he is simply out for his private advantage and that "his policy is dictated by self-interest and his desire to return to power"<sup>23</sup>. Speaking about the Mufti he said<sup>24</sup> that he was "genuinely sincere and patriotic". His enthusiasm for the cause of Arab nationalism after first world war was such that he even played comic parts in a dramatic society production, the aim of which was to raise funds for the movement,<sup>25</sup> ~~but of course he had no idea then of his future exalted position!~~ Even as a youth, he as a scion of an honoured religious family was not supposed to "act".

23. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary received on 30.4.1935 C.O. /733/278/75156. See also his denigrating letter about the Nashashibis 14.7.37. C.O. 733/332/75156.

24. To Mrs. A. Brooks, at his own dinner table. See her letter to the Manchester Guardian 27.10.1937. See also C.O. 733/409/75372/53.

25. H.J. Simson. British Rule and Rebellion. London 1937. p. 166.

Once we start from the premise that his motives were genuinely patriotic - though mixed with private ones- some of the adjectives used by his detractors such as crafty, sinister figure, an arch-plotter and master of intrigue lose some of their negative aroma. Actually, his supporters could describe these same qualities as smartness and the Mufti as diplomatic and deep, fighting as any honourable man would - to save his country and his people from what they believed to be extinction.

Identifying the national interests with his own, more perhaps than is generally accepted in the west,<sup>26</sup> the Mufti did not admit of any real political (as opposed to personal) opposition. To him, those who did not agree to his views were not political opponents but traitors<sup>27</sup>, "the followers of Imperialists and Jews", who put themselves outside the national orbit. At the same time he tried his best, and has been able on several occasions to unite the Arab front on issues of major importance for the Moslems and the Arabs at large.

The need for keeping a united front and emphasizing what was common to all "parts" of the national movement was stated by the Mufti on all important occasions.<sup>28</sup> R. Nashashibi, on the other hand, was out

26. Though there is not much difference between the sentence what is good for "General Motors" is good for the U.S.A." and "What is good for the Supreme Moslem Council and its president is good for the Arab national movement in Palestine".
27. This definition does not refer to the Istiqlalists whom he viewed less harshly.
28. At the Arab Executive Committee's meeting on 25.7.1930 following the return of the Arab Delegation to London. File 3797 65 I.S.A. His opening address at the Islamic Conference, Jerusalem 6.12.1931. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 7.12.1931. His speech at the popular meeting held in Jaffa on 26.3.1933 al Jamiah al Arabiyya 26.3.1933.

to emphasize the existence of different views and opposing parties among the Arabs. The following exchange of words<sup>29</sup> between the two is illuminating.

Ragheb Nashashibi:- "Opposing views in Parliaments may even reach the stage of exchange of blows and punches. We have got two proposals, let us vote on them even if they clash with each other".

The Mufti (who was sure to win the voting as he had a big majority in that meeting) "I would like to answer Ragheb Beg. To us it is very important that there would not be differences of view between each other in a meeting like that. We would like that a mutual understanding should prevail in this meeting from start to end. This is our intention and this our goal in the first place. And this is more important than the legal point (i.e. the voting)."

His desire for unity caused his hesitations in letting his supporters form a political party during 1933/34<sup>30</sup>, and when in July/August 1935 there were efforts and discussions in order to effect peace between the Husseinis and Nashashibis it was the Mufti who on the whole favoured the proposed peace, while Jamal al Husseini opposed it, stating that his party represented the majority and should not give its opponents an opportunity of reinstating themselves through cooperation<sup>31</sup>.

29. During a meeting of the General elective committee to the S.M.C. on 24th August 1925. See Statement of the Supreme Moslem Council regarding the proceeding of the General assembly held by the General Elective Committee on 24 and 25 August 1925. (Bayan min almajles .... I Jerusalem 1925.

30. See C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation Summary No. 8/33 of 10.3.1933 F.O./371/16926.

31. C.I.D. summary No. 12/35 of 5.8.1935 F.O. 371/18957.

At the same time, it was made clear that this desired unity was conditioned on his being the leader. One of the adjectives in which his supporters used to describe him was "The master of Arab leaders with no competitor"<sup>32</sup> (rival) (Sayyid Zuama alarab bila munaze) and people who observed<sup>33</sup> some of the great demonstrations in the old city, of thousands of Arabs, surrounding and carrying the Mufti shoulder-high round the sacred grounds of the Haram esh Sharif, proclaiming him "the master leader" was convinced that the Mufti, and his followers, would do anything in their power to prevent any such potential "competitor" from trying to replace him.

In that connection we should note that it was said at the time that the idea of "leader" (Duce, Furher) was perhaps one of the things which attracted the Mufti to Fascism and later Nazism<sup>34</sup>. We therefore can assume that he would have liked the following description "He (the Mufti) was one of the authentic stuff of which dictators are made".<sup>35</sup>

The Mufti, able and determined<sup>36</sup> was more of a "doer", a man of action than a man of principles. But he stuck to those he had. In discussing the Wailing Wall controversy, we shall see<sup>37</sup> that at a certain stage, the Arabs through an agreement with the Jews, could have got a better and more favourable settlement than that which was decided by the Wailing Wall commission.

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32. Muhammad Tawfic Jana. The Political evidence before the Royal Commission. (Alshehadat alsiasiyah aman illugna almalakiyya fi Falastin) Damascus 1937 p.6.

33. My father, a communication.

34. Assaf. Op-Cit note 1493 p.280.

35. Marlowe The Seat of Pilote Op-Cit p.5.

36. Ch. Sykes Op-Cit p.155

37. See infra p. 156

When the H.C. pointed this out to the Mufti<sup>38</sup> during their meeting on 5th October, 1930, the latter answered that "he himself would prefer that a less favourable decision should be imposed on him from without rather than that he should acquiesce in a settlement however favourable which was in any way contrary to his convictions".

This is a very important answer and a very revealing one, and could serve as a key for understanding many of the Mufti's policies, especially what was described as his negativism. (One could speculate how things would have developed had the British imposed all their policies and not retreated in face of Arab opposition). It also throws a better light on the Mufti as a person faithful to his principles.

Later, during the meeting, when the H.C. counselled the Mufti to show statesmanship, he answered that he was not a statesman but a man of religion (Alem)<sup>39</sup>. This certainly sounds unctuous, but at the same time it served an end. Whenever he felt that his political arguments were not strong enough, he took refuge in using religious ones. However, his "modesty" is not shared by the generally accepted view,<sup>40</sup> which is that "the Mufti's talents were as definitely political as religious". Musa Alami in his sketch of the Mufti<sup>41</sup> notes that he combined the attributes of an Alem, politician and a soldier.

Ch. Eastwood, Sir A. Wauchope's private secretary, continuing the Mufti's sketch wrote "the Mufti" is in the difficult position of trying to ride three horses at once. He is a sincere Arab Nationalist.

38. Chancellor to Passfield C.O. 733/179/77013 V. My italics.

39. Ibid. My italics.

40. N. Barbour Op-Cit p. 192. See also Assaf Op-Cit 119, Sykes Op-Cit 155 Marlow Op-Cit 103 Darwaza Op-Cit 50 N. Sadaqa Op-Cit 108.

41. See File who is who in Arab Palestine C.O. 733/248/17693.

He is an equally sincere Moslem and a leader in the Pan-Islamic movement. At the same time he derives his chief source of influence from his quasi-official position as President of the Supreme Moslem Council. It needs all his very considerable skill in diplomacy and intrigue to stay in all three saddles". Of these he had perhaps enough, but from circumstantial evidence it can be inferred that he lacked this physical courage which would have enabled him to live in rough conditions in pursuance of his political belief. Thrice he was cautioned by High Commissioners that they would hold him responsible for seeing that order would be preserved on different occasions. This may seem very ordinary, but the manner in which the cautions were delivered is significant. Sir J. Chancellor wrote "Before he left me, I took the opportunity of asking the Mufti if he liked a hot climate. The significance of the enquiry was not lost upon him."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>43</sup>  
An opposition paper accused the Mufti of being a coward and hiding in his house during the 1929 riots.

In a chapter of his memoirs published in 1957<sup>44</sup> he tells that after the dissolution of the Arab Higher Committee and his removal from his offices, he planned to join one of the armed bands in the mountains and participate personally in the fighting. Only after the field commanders pleaded with him and explained to him that the British were certain to concentrate a strong force of planes, tanks and artillery against the band which he was to join, and that therefore this band would suffer

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42. During their meeting on 8.10.29, when the Mufti threatened that disturbance would occur if the Wailing Wall instructions would be enforced. See Chancellor's typescript for memoirs, section on the Wailing Wall. J.C. Box 18/2. See *Infra* p. 147. The other case was with Lord Plumer. See Faragu *Op-Cit* p. 60. The third one with Sir A. Wauchope. See his letter 23.11.1933 C.O.733/236/17313.
43. *Miraat al Sharq* 2.3.22 8.3.32. The same accusation however was directed to the opposition leaders by the Husseini's paper *al-Jamiah al Arabiyya* 3.3.32 6.3.32.
44. In the Cairo daily *Akhbar al Yom* 5.10.57.

heavy casualties if not totally annihilated, only then was he convinced and agreed to escape to Syria. Again, in his book Haqaiq,<sup>45</sup> the Mufti tried very hard to explain why he was not in Palestine during the fighting in 1947-8, and maintained that British pressure on Arab Governments prevented him from fulfilling his "life's ambition" to fight the Jewish invaders. In both cases the explanations sound implausible, apologetic and unconvincing and the reader of these two pieces gets the impression that the Mufti did not really try hard enough to be in Palestine during the fighting.

That did not prevent him from using violence. From his early career in 1920 he used violence as a political means for the attainment of his political ends. Needless to say that as is customary in such cases, the terror and violence initiated against the external enemies turned later against his own people.

Using violence against Jews came easy, because he hated them. And this was another political tool which he used. Under the Mufti's leadership "Arab nationalism adopted anti-semitism".<sup>46</sup> In 1925 he came across the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion",<sup>47</sup> and he must have learned it by heart. It could be said that the Mufti was just using its contents to further his aims, but that he personally never really believed in what was written in the book. I doubt it. Ideas and direct quotations from the book are spread here and there in his sermons and speeches and in his book Haqaiq<sup>48</sup> ..... mixed with Islamic anti-Jewish sayings.

45. Amin al Husseini Haqaiq Op-Cit pp.80-85.

46. Ch. Sykes Op-Cit p. 155.

47. See his evidence before the Shaw-Commission, The Shaw-Evidence Vol. II p.527. Extracts of the book were published in the Jamiah al Arabiyya. The S.M.C. reprinted them and distributed them freely.

48. Specially in the second chapter about the designs of International Jewry of the Middle East pp.25-32.

How deep was his hatred to the Jews we can discern from the following verses which he wrote in his diary early in 1942<sup>49</sup>.

"How is it that Jews are respected for their wealth at the time that they bring into the world poverty and wickedness. They tortured their blameless (pure) prophets, they killed John (the Baptist) and refused Jesus, they murder the morale of each country, they destroy all religions and they sympathize with Russia. They are robbers and steal money by usury, they are the bearers of anarchy, and bring suffering to the world, they are like the mouth who eats (gnaws at) all our good qualities. They destroyed our country with axes, they are monsters and the root of all evil in the world".

His hatred of the Jews did not prevent him from working with them<sup>50</sup> when he thought that it would serve his needs.

At the municipal elections in 1923, he approached the Jews<sup>51</sup>, proposing that in return for Jewish support to his candidate opposing his main rival Ragheb Nashashibi for the mayoralty of Jerusalem, he would be ready to compromise on several points and give his agreement to a legislative Council debarred from discussing the problems of

49. The Mufti's Diary. The H.A.

50. The same is true of his relations with the communists.

51. The approach was done via Judge Frumkin of the Appellate High Court. See Frumkin Op-Cit p. 287. It must be stressed, however, that at the time of the approach, the Zionist movement was at its lowest ebb - the number of emigrants in 1927 being higher than the number of immigrants - and the Mufti was considering perhaps that Zionism no longer constituted a threat to Arab Palestine.

immigration and land sales. On another occasion the Mufti employed a Jewish Architect to build for the S.M.C. the Palace Hotel<sup>52</sup>, but following the Arab decision of boycott<sup>53</sup> the Mufti told the conference of Ulema which met in Jerusalem on the 25th January 1935 that "he used only Arab manufactured goods".<sup>54</sup>

The Mufti tried hard to fight the pessimism and fatalism of the Arabs. On many occasions<sup>55</sup> he spoke of the need to re-arm with hope and faith and urged his listeners to have confidence in God, in themselves and in their ability to do things. Speaking to a German in 1944 he said "We Arabs we do not know the meaning (taste) of despair. We fought the Jews and the British before you, and we shall go on fighting them under all conditions."<sup>56</sup>

He himself, however, was given at times to pessimistic doubts<sup>57</sup>. In his testimony before the Royal Commission he said this important sentence, "What I can see, and my experience up till now shows, that the Jews can do anything as far as Palestine is concerned".<sup>58</sup>

The Mufti dominated every Arab gathering in Palestine which he attended. Reading the reports of the Arab Executive Committee's

52. And connived with him to keep some information secret from the Mayor of Jerusalem R. Nashashibi, who might have caused them some difficulties. See B. Katinka since then (Meaz Ve'ad Hena) Jerusalem 1961 pp. 258 - 61.
53. See *Infra*. 212
54. See *Al Jamiah al Arabiyya* 26.1.1935.
55. See for example his words at the Arab Executive Committee's meeting of 2.3.1931. File 379765. I.S.A. and his speech at the popular meeting held in Jaffa on 26.3.1933. *Jamiah al Arabiyya* 26.3.1933.
56. Entry in his diary 29.7.44. *The Mufti's Diary*. The H.A.
57. Erskine Op-Cit p. 164.
58. The Peel evidence p.297. *My Italics*.

meetings attended by him<sup>59</sup> one is struck by the fact that even his known opponents (with the exception perhaps of Ragheb Nashashibi) much older to him were cowed by his personality.<sup>60</sup> When in public he was held in respect and reverence, and most visitors to his office used to kiss his hand<sup>61</sup>, and even in the streets people, old and young, unless stopped by his body guards, did the same.<sup>62</sup> He employed body guards as he was always in fear of his life.<sup>63</sup> In April 1935 he again asked for police protection from hired assassins and was given a bullet-proof jacket<sup>64</sup>. His sketch in the file "Who is Who" in Arab Palestine ends with the following sentence "A dangerous enemy and not a very trusty friend".<sup>65</sup>

59. See record of meetings on 25/7/30 and 2/3/31 File 3797-65 I.S.A.
60. Farago writes "The real wire-puller who influences the Mufti ... and has an almost hypnotic power over him ... is Jamal al Hussein Op-Cit p.60. I do not agree with this view. The wire-puller was the Mufti. Jamal al Hussein was his Chief Captain.
61. Farago Op-Cit p. 61.
62. Communication by my father.
63. His followers claimed that in January 1930 the family of Musa H'deb (the leader of the Peasants' Party in Hebron, who himself was murdered in 1929 as a result of his friendship with the Jews. See Kisch Op-Cit p. 125) received money from the Jews in order to kill the Mufti see Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 1.1.30 Sawt al Sha'ab. 2.1.30 The police denied this story totally. See also Wauchope's cable to the Col. Sec. 31.5.37. C.O. 733/311/75528.
64. Drawing the following remark from the H.C. "I was amused to learn that the Mufti asked for Police protection"... see his letter to the Colonial Secretary April 1935. C.O. 733/277/75156.
65. C.O. 733/248/17693.

## Chapter 6

The Arab Delegation 1930

The Arabs entered 1930 with certain expectations. The disturbances of August 1929, besides drawing out the Movement from the sporadic state in which it was since 1923, drew attention towards Palestine in Britain and the Arab and Muslim worlds (some European countries were perhaps only too happy to try and create difficulties for Great Britain). The Arabs felt that the disturbances had a positive impact in forwarding their claims. There was more readiness to listen to their complaints and grievances not only in Jerusalem but also in London. The H.C. was their friend and sympathised with many of their demands<sup>1</sup>. They knew it well enough though they used to complain that the Palestine Government was out of sympathy with them. They also must have felt (what has been established since) that he succeeded in convincing the members of the "Shaw Commission" (with the exception of H. Snell) to accept his views and recommendations<sup>2</sup>. The Labour Government was less committed to Zionism and the Balfour Declaration than were the previous Conservative and Liberal Administrations, and as for the Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield, he was willing - so at least they were informed by St. John Philby - to solve the Palestine problem in a "manner satisfactory to the Arabs"<sup>3</sup>.

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1. During an interview with the Arab Executive on 14.10.29 he told them "I am a friend of the Arabs. I like the Arabs, I sympathize with you and I desire to help you in any way that is in my power". Box 14/2 Chancellor Papers. Rhodes House, Oxford. For Chancellor's attitude to the Arabs see, Chapter 9 in P. Ofer "The Role of the High Commissioner in British Policy in Palestine: Sir John Chancellor, 1928-1931". (unpublished Ph.D thesis, London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1971).
  2. As early as the beginning of 1930 the Arab press prophesied that the "Shaw Commission's" conclusions would be in their favour. See "Falastin" 1.1.30 "Miraat al Sharq" 4.1.30.
  3. In December 1929 J. Philby, while passing through Palestine, contacted Arab leaders informing them that he was asked by some Labourite leaders - hinting that among them was Lord Passfield himself - to discuss with them what came to be known the "Philby Plan" to solve the Palestine problem by establishing a free Government representing the Arabs and the Jews in their then proportional numbers. Muhammad Izzat Darwaza "Alqadiyya al Falastinia" p.64 Passfield informed later, Jewish leaders that he never gave Philby any authority to negotiate on his behalf with Arab leaders in Palestine "Haaretz" 10.2.30.

The time was ripe, they felt, for a new Arab Delegation to London. The H.C. who on several occasions used to express his opinion that it was very unfortunate that the Arabs had not a "body of Arab propagandists in Downing Street to counter the Jewish propaganda", and so the "Arab side of the case does not receive equal attention"<sup>4</sup> encouraged them. There were also insistent demands in Pro-Arab circles in Britain<sup>5</sup> for the despatch of a delegation, and a similar advice was given by the British advocates who defended the Arab cause before the Shaw Commission.

But the Arab leaders could not agree about the composition and leadership of the delegation and started a long ugly and acrimonious series of arguments in meetings, the press etc. During a meeting of the Executive on the 28th September 1929, a proposal to send Musa Kazim and Shibly Jamal only, was discussed and rejected. The discussions dragged on, and owing to the inability of the Executive to adopt a definite decision, the Mufti decided to send Jamal al Hussein on behalf of the S.M.C. The Executive who objected to his going, changed later its mind and empowered him to represent it as well. (Still the followers of Sheikh Ass'ad Shukairi, the leader of the opposition elements in the north, circulated in Acre a petition (mazbata) to the effect that Jamal al Hussein did not represent the people of Palestine and that his visit to England should be considered a private one).

He left Palestine on the 2nd November 1929, after being carried and accompanied to the ship by more than 300 people. Though his interview with the Colonial Secretary (which took rather a long time to arrange) on the 19.12.29 seems to have been lukewarm<sup>6</sup>, it appears that on the whole,

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4. In a private letter to Sir J. Shuckburgh, 16.11.30 F.O.800/232.

5. For the Arab lobby in Britain, see J.M.N. Jeffries "Palestine, The Reality". (London 1939) pp.XVIII-XX.

6. C.O. 733/178/67500.

his visit was successful. He got a good coverage in the Press who published many of his letters, and his lectures and appearances in debates - presenting the Arabs' case to the public - were good.

As he met some reservations in the C.O. regarding his "right" to represent the Palestinian Arabs, he sent a wire to the Executive, asking for a power of Attorney to enable him to open negotiations with the British Government. But perhaps there was more in that wire than simply ascertaining his credentials. There was no progress in the election of the members of the delegation, and the opposition elements, were even ready to try and prevent the delegation from going to London at all, unless its composition would reflect the opposition's success in the seventh congress. The wire of J. Hussein forced the issue. As some of the Arabic papers urged the Executive to send him a power of Attorney by cable, the opposition papers (with the exception of Al Carmel which opposed the delegation all along) urged that other delegates should be selected and proceed immediately to join him in London, and carry out the negotiations together. But the hesitation about the delegation's composition continued. The followers of the Mufti wanted the delegation to be composed of the Mufti, Jamal Hussein, Auni Abd el Hadi and from the opposition, Mughannam Mughannam, while the "Falastin" and "Mira" at el Sharq came out for R. Nashashibi. On 9th January 1930 the Executive met and elected, in secret ballot, the Mufti as the leader and R. Nashashibi, Auni Abd Al Hadi, J. Hussein and Alfred Rock as members. Only 26 members out of 48 attended the meeting. The fact that the election would take place in this meeting was not mentioned in the agenda and 2 members abstained, so that only half the Executive's members voted. A storm followed, Musa Kazim the President of the Executive, Y. Farraj the Deputy-President, and Mughannam Mughannam one of the secretaries, all resigned and there were rumours that R. Nashashibi and Auni Abd Al Hadi would resign from the delegation.

After much "give and take", an arrangement was reached, and the Executive met on 21st January 1930 for the formal elections. This time, 37 out of the 48 members attended the meeting, and elected Musa Kazim as the leader and the Mufti, Ragheb Nashashibi<sup>7</sup>, Jamal Husseini, Auni Abd El Hadi and Alfred Rook as members of the delegation. This was a clear victory for the non-moderates, and as a compensation to the opposition it was agreed that Yacoub Farraj, the Deputy President would act as head of the Executive, during the absence of Musa Kazim.

But the meeting took another important decision which bound the delegation's hands and precluded it from reaching a settlement on its own. It decided, on a proposal by Rashid Haj Ibrahim, that "the Delegation is free to use any means which it deems appropriate in order to achieve for the Arabs their national, political and economical rights, but the last decision is in the hands of the nation" and it instructed the delegation to report continually to the Executive and the nation<sup>8</sup>.

All signs indicate that the Arabs approached the talks in London with certain hopes. The Arab press sounded a note of reserved optimism. Jamal al Husseini during his interview with the Colonial Secretary in London on the 19.12.29 "expressed the hope that some settlement of the Palestine Question might be reached"<sup>9</sup>.

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7. Ragheb Nashashibi's election angered the Jews in particular, as they were the majority in Jerusalem, of which he was the Mayor, and furthermore, they actually helped him during the elections in 1928. That, and specially the fact, that Yacoub Farraj the Arab Vice-President was appointed as acting Mayor during the absence of Nashashibi and not the Jewish Vice-President, caused the resignation of the Jewish members of the Municipality on 26.3.30. The Arab members of the Jerusalem Municipality accepted the resignation at a meeting held on 10.4.30 and continued to act alone. In an interview with Al-Mukatam on 15.12.31, Jamal al Husseini said that Ragheb Nashashibi was in the delegation only because the Government wanted it.

8. Al Jami'ah al Arabiyya 22.1.30.

9. C.O. 733/178/67500.

The Mufti himself, during an interview which the H.C. gave to the Delegation on the 28.1.30<sup>10</sup> said they hoped to be able to come to some agreement in London and that after their return the atmosphere would then be better and the population quieter<sup>11</sup>.

Now if these hopes of the Arab leaders were within the sphere of reality and not dreams, their demands had to be within the scope of the Mandate. Asking for the abrogation of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration would have led them nowhere. The Mandate was the basis (at least the legal one) for the British presence in Palestine, they intended to stay there, and they would have opposed - as much as they could - any such abrogation.

That this was the intention of the Arab leaders was confirmed by Musa Kazim the leader of the delegation when he reported on the talks to the Executive saying: "You will note, that this time the Delegation tried to hold the discussions within the terms of the Mandate<sup>12</sup>, by which the Government always justifies itself in refusing our demands. Still, the delegation had to declare on this occasion also, that the Arabs did not and will not recognize the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, and will always strive for their abrogation"<sup>13</sup>.

Auni Abdal Hadi said openly "the Delegation did not go to ask for complete independence because the Arabs knew quite well that the Government were not in a position to meet such a demand"<sup>14</sup>.

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10. J. Chancellor in a letter to a friend on 16.3.30, wrote about this meeting, "they (the Delegation) were very anxious for me to advise them as to what they should do when they got to England" J.C. Box 20/MF/11. At the same time he was unhappy that the Delegation included too many extremists. See letters to his son 26.11.29 and 13.1.30.
  11. C.O. 733/179/77013.
  12. My Italics.
  13. Al Jamiah Al Arabiyah 27.7.30. The "Falastin" paper admitted too that the delegation did not ask for the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration. Falastin 16.5.30.
  14. In an interview of the H.C. with a deputation of Arab notables on 24th February 1933. C.O. 733/234/17272.

An advice for moderation was given to them by the H.C. who told them, "the last time I saw you I counselled you to be moderate in your statement of your case. I repeat that advice. It is most important"<sup>15</sup>.

The delegation reached London on 30.3.30 and already on 31.3.30 - the same day on which the report of the "Shaw Commission" was published - it met the Prime-Minister and the Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield.

We do not know, fully and exactly the real picture of the discussions between the Government and the Delegation<sup>16</sup>.

Some Arab descriptions<sup>17</sup> of the talks say that during the first meeting on 31.3.30, the Delegation handed to the Government a memorandum including its demands. The Government did not even answer them directly, but the speech of the Prime-Minister in the House of Commons on 3.4.30 was an indirect answer in which he refused all their demands, and because of that the talks failed.

Now, the main points in the Prime-Minister's declaration are: that H.M. Government will "continue to administer Palestine in accordance with the Mandate".....that is an international obligation from which there can be no question of receding..... A double undertaking is involved to the Jewish people on the one hand, and to the non-Jewish population of Palestine on the other, and it is the firm resolve of His Majesty's Government to give effect in equal measure, to both parts of the Declaration and to do equal justice to all sections of the populations of Palestine"<sup>18</sup>.

15. During an interview on 14.10.29 J.C. Box 14/2.

16. For some strange reason, Filesno. C.O. 733/183/77053 Pt. I & II "Arab Delegation to London" were transferred to the Safe-Room of the P.R.O. for 100 years. And as far as I know, none of the Arab or Pro-Arab writers who wrote about the subject did really give the facts in full, and neither did the press.

17. Muhammed Izzat Darwaza "Alqadiyya al Falastinia" p.70  
Naji Alush Al mukawama al Arabiyya fi Falastin 1917-1948 p.65

18. Hansard Vol.237 Cols. 1466-7.

These general statements were in an answer to a question by Baldwin as pre-agreed in a meeting on the 2.4.30 between the Prime-Minister and the opposition leaders. Jewish Leaders were informed and agreed to the formula<sup>19</sup>.

Though the Arabs saw the statement in the Commons as a wrong step, because the Prime Minister mentioned the Mandate, surely there was nothing in it new to them. Furthermore, it was all done in a way that was intended not to offend, but to reassure and encourage them. There are clear signs that some progress and understanding was achieved between the two sides after 3.4.30.

In an unofficial meeting<sup>20</sup> some of the Arab delegates seemed inclined to accept the concessions on immigration and land questions which the Government was ready to give, and to be ready in return to defer their demands for constitutional changes. On 28th April 1930 the Colonial Secretary telegraphed to the High Commissioner asking for his view on the question, whether the suspension of all immigration would be desirable, if practical, pending the determination of future policy on the receipt of Sir J. Hope-Simpson's report. On May 2nd the Arab Delegation was informed that this telegram had been sent and that a reply was awaited, and though they were told that the Government could not give them a pledge of an immediate stoppage of immigration there and then, they were promised that the Government would see what could be done in the matter<sup>21</sup>. (On 14.5.30 the H.C. informed Y. Farraj, the Acting President of the Arab Executive in Jerusalem that H.M.G. had approved of suspension of immigration pending submission of report of Sir. J. Hope-Simpson). It is very difficult to assume that the Government would have taken these steps unless there was a certain progress in the discussions.

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19. See CAB 23/63. 18(30) 2.4.30.

20. Held on 23rd April 1930 and attended by J. Husseini, Auni Abd al Hadi and A. Rock P.C. (30) 2. 30th April 1930 CAB. 27.423.

21. C.O. 733/188/77113 Pt.1.

On this formal meeting of 2nd May, the discussions mentioned previously (at the informal meeting of 28.4.30) were further pursued. Though little progress was made the Prime-Minister informed the delegation about the appointment of Hope-Simpson which in his view was a token of concession (at first it was proposed that Smuts the staunch Pro-Zionist should be appointed). When the Mufti remarked "What is the use of sending such an expert to Palestine so long as experience has shown that no effect is given to the reports of previous commissions, which were in favour of the Arabs owing to Jewish pressure?". MacDonald replied "I assure you on my honour as the Prime-Minister of Great Britain that this report will be sincerely enforced"<sup>22</sup>. And then, on the question of the right to initiate legislation in the proposed Legislative Council, the negotiations struck an obstacle and later broke down. It should be stressed that until then the delegation's statements were quite hopeful and their optimism was reflected by the Palestinian Arab press.

On the next meeting held on 6th May, Passfield informed the delegation that the Government was ready to make further concessions concerning the limitation of immigration and land sales. But the Arabs were not satisfied and stuck to their essential demand for self-government<sup>23</sup>. The more extreme line of the delegation was also expressed by a letter which they wrote to Yacoub Farraj, the acting president of the Executive in Jerusalem - which reached him around the 9th May - instructing him "that as much as possible should be made of 16th May" (which has been declared as Day of

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22. Evidence of Haj Amin Al Husseini before the Royal Commission 12.1.37 Palestine Royal Commission. Minutes of Evidence P.296. See also Haj Amin Al Husseini (Haqaiq An Qadayat Falastin) the Truths of the Palestine Problem. Cairo 1954 p.49.

23. C.P. (30 6 12th May 1930 Cab. 27423.

Remembrance for Palestine by the Indian Moslems) "and that demonstrations should be organised"<sup>24</sup>.

On the 12th May 1930 the delegation telegraphed the Executive in Jerusalem ".....Government rejected our just demands....In view of this deadlock discussions closed. Delegation leaves homeward with impression that Arab case will not justly be solved by British Government influenced by Zionists"<sup>25</sup>.

Ever since, Arab spokesmen - or their mouth-pieces - blamed the British Government for the failure of the talks. "The Arabs", they say, "had certain demands. They put them forward. The British Government refused them, so the Arabs broke off the negotiations and returned home". This presentation ignores the fact that the Delegation came to London ready to talk, that is, ready to bargain and compromise. What made them become less compromising is not completely clear.

24. C.O. 733/137/77105. It is interesting to note that when the H.C. informed Farraj that demonstrations would not be permitted he answered that he would hold back the Delegation's letter until after 16th May when it would be too late to act upon it. Accordingly, the Executive issued on the 9.5.30, a proclamation calling on the people to observe this day by a peaceful strike and prayer, but not to demonstrate. Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya 13.5.30. On the whole, the day in Palestine passed quietly. For those in India see J.M.N. Jeffries Palestine the Reality London 1939 p.620.

25. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 14.5.30. In a communique issued on the following day, the Colonial office declared that the conversations were at an end and that the sweeping constitutional changes demanded by the delegation were wholly unacceptable since they would have rendered it impossible for His Majesty's Government to carry out its obligations under the Mandate. C.O. 733/183/77053 II.

They certainly got some bad advice from their local friends in the "National League" this marginal unimportant organisation which used to give them foolish and even damaging advice<sup>26</sup>.

Perhaps they were encouraged by developments in India, where an all-India Moslem conference for Palestine, started to be active on behalf of the "Palestine Cause", and declared the 16th May to be "Palestine Day" to be observed all over India, Burma and Ceylon.

Perhaps they thought that the Government would not let them break off the negotiations so shortly after the publication of the Report of the Shaw Commission which proved the "justice" of their case. Maybe they misread the support they got from the Mess Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook and they over-estimated the impact of the 1929 disturbances on public opinion in Britain and on how far, the British Government would be ready to accommodate them. Maybe the delegation broke the talks as part of its bargaining. Was it a part of a political manoeuvre? Because the delegation did not leave London. It stayed there until the 23rd May, and actually it met the Prime-Minister on the 19th May<sup>27</sup>. The Parliament was then in session and their friends could raise the issue. Was it that they demanded much more than they really were ready to settle for?<sup>28</sup> But having once put forward their demands they could not go back on them for fear they would be accused of treason. This terrible accusation which was the lot of every Arab leader who seemed to compromise. This accusation which

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26. The Colonial Office was unhappy about the negative influence of the British pro-Arab lobby had on the delegation, encouraging it to be intransigent, especially on the important issue of a Legislative council as a first step towards Arab independence. See Passfield to Henderson 26th December 1930 C.O. 733/183/77050 D. See also Williams' memorandum 23rd April Cab 27.4.23 on the contacts between the Palestinian Arab leaders - specially Jamal al Hussein - and the "National League" see A.E. file 1730 I.S.A. See also Furlough G. Palestine is My Country. The Story of Musa Alami, London 1969 p.68.

27. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 23.5.30.

28. Y. Farraj, the acting President of the Arab Executive admitted to the H.C. in Jlm. on 10th May, "that demands of Delegation were extravagant but explained that they would accept something less. C.O. 733/187/77105.

in the atmosphere of personal jealousies, and family rivalries dominating Arab Politics could lead only towards extreme, negative and at times violent policy, and never towards compromise, settlements or solutions. Or was it once again a repetition of the same motto "all or nothing" which plagued Palestine Arab Politics since 1918. And as they could not get "all" they preferred the "nothing" to anything else they could get. The true answer as to what made the Delegation become less compromising would be a mixture of all these possibilities mentioned above, with the last two points the more important.

On 23rd May, the delegation left London. Auni Abd El Hadi went to Geneva for the meeting of the Permanent Mandate Commission where he delivered - on behalf of the Delegation - a memorandum to the P.M.C. and had a long interview with Mr. Rappard, a member of the Commission. The Mufti too, went to Geneva for 3 days where he met Sir E. Drummond, the Secretary General of the League of Nations<sup>29</sup>. After returning to Palestine, the Delegation ceased to exist as a formal body, but for sometime it was known unofficially as the "Delegation" and continued to appear as such in the eyes of the Government.

Before finishing the subject, it is interesting to examine the Mufti's position with regard to the Delegation.

He was in favour of sending the Delegation to London. His mouth-piece, the Daily, Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya demanded it consistently. The Mufti, and specially his paper, ceased at the time to criticise and attack the Arab Executive, knowing that he would have to co-operate with them in that matter. When there was no agreement about the Delegation's formation, he sent Jamal al Husseini alone, in an effort to force the issue. When financial

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29. Al Jamia al Arabiyya 6.6.30. According to the Mufti, Drummond told him during the meeting - which Emir S. Arslan and Ihasan al Jaabari attended too - that it was the British who drew up the "Mandate" and not the League of Nations. Haqaiq Op-Cit. p.37

difficulties arose, his followers were those active in trying to raise funds to cover the Delegation's expenses<sup>30</sup>. His followers even tried to get him elected as the Chairman<sup>31</sup>. But at the same time there were some signs that "the Mufti was trying to get out of going to London on the Delegation"<sup>32</sup>, using the argument that he had to stay in Palestine to prepare the Arab case before the Wailing Wall Commission. The Palestine Government too was in a kind of a dilemma. They desired that he should go "as he would make trouble if he were left alone". They also appreciated that any agreement reached with a delegation of which he was a member would carry much more weight with the Palestinian Arabs. At the same time they were unhappy that the delegation included extremists<sup>33</sup>. Actually, no agreement was reached in London and the negotiations failed.

When the rift between the Mufti and his opposition widened again, Fakhri Nashashibi declared that the Mufti - for personal ambitions - tried his best to cause the Delegation's failure<sup>34</sup>. Another source, which was close however to the Nashashibis, blames the Mufti's extremism for the Delegation's failure<sup>35</sup>.

As there is no additional clear evidence on that, and as his policy towards the British during the next 3-4 years was less extreme than that of some other Palestinian elements, I am disinclined to accept the view that, were it not for the Mufti, the talks would have succeeded. The reasons for

30. For lists of contributors see files of the "Financial Committee for Collecting the Expenses of the Delegation" (Al lugna al maliya li jame nafakat el wafd). The Arab Executive files no.1/2 T 2 2/2T number of file in the Israeli Government Archives No.01524. There were rumours - later denied - that the Barclays Bank was going to give the S.M.C. a loan guaranteed by the Government, to cover these expenses.
31. Supra p. 87
32. This was the impression of Ruhi Abd El Hadi from the Chief Secretary's Office, who served as "contact" man between the H.C. and the Arab leaders. C.O. 733/179/77013. See also Doar Hayom 2.1.30.
33. See note No.10 in p. 89
34. Miraat el Sharq 21.3.32 as reported in the Jewish Daily Doar-Hayom of 23.3.32. I could not locate the original paper.
35. See Mrs. S. Erskine, Palestine of the Arabs London 1935, p.162.

the failure are stated previously and he was affected by them in the same manner - more or less - as other members of the Delegation.

The Mufti himself stated<sup>36</sup> that the talks were brought to a standstill by the Delegation's insistence on their demand for the establishment of a National Democratic Government. He emphasized, however, that the atmosphere during the talks was cordial and friendly.

In conclusion, however, the Delegation's visit was not a complete failure. Though the delegation left unsatisfied, it achieved some positive results.

The first immediate result was the suspension of Jewish immigration to Palestine<sup>37</sup>. This suspension proved beyond doubt that the British Government - at that time - were guided in immigration matters by political considerations - which suited the Arabs much better - rather than by the economic absorptive capacity of the country, as was laid down in the White Paper of 1922<sup>38</sup>.

Another positive result of the Delegation's visit to Britain was its success in bringing the Arabs' case to the knowledge and perhaps sympathy of a much bigger public in Britain than ever before.

And thirdly, its indirect contribution to Passfield's White Paper. Both MacDonald and Passfield knew better and understood better the Arab's points of view and demands, and this knowledge and understanding certainly made the confirmation of the White Paper by the Cabinet, much easier.

36. To Al Ahram correspondent in Jerusalem as reported by "Falastin" 3.6.36.

37. Supra p. 91

38. This actually was admitted by Dr. Shiels, the Under-Secretary of State for Colonies in a talk with the journalist H.N. Brailsford, a prominent Pro-Zionist.....labourist. See Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, Tel Aviv 1971 p.15.

## Chapter 7

### The Report of the Shaw Commission

The Shaw Commission<sup>1</sup> was appointed on the 13th of September 1929, to "enquire into the immediate causes which led to the recent outbreak in Palestine and to make recommendations as to the steps necessary to avoid a recurrence"<sup>2</sup>.

The Commission arrived in Palestine on the 24th of October 1929, and remained there until the 29th of December. While in Palestine it held 47 sittings - 3 of which were held at the offices of the S.M.C. - in open session and 11 in camera.

It heard evidence of 130 witnesses, 47 of whom were called by or at the request of the Arab Executive. It examined documents - mainly memoranda furnished by the Palestine Government and it visited many parts of the country and Trans-Jordan.

The Commission reached England on the 4th of January 1930. Its report was presented on the 12th of March<sup>3</sup> and published at the end of the month<sup>4</sup>.

The report has been widely analysed, and I will not try to do so here again<sup>5</sup>. My intention is to examine the relevance of the report on the Arab national movement in Palestine but before that to try and see how much the report affected the position and future career of the Mufti.

I am doing that, because in a certain way, the enquiry of the Shaw Commission was a "semi-trial" of the Mufti.

1. The personnel of the Commission was: - Sir Walter Shaw, an ex-chief-Justice of the Straits Settlements as Chairman, and Sir Henry Battersby a Conservative M.P., Mr. R. Hopkin Morris a Liberal M.P., and Mr. Harry Snell a Labour M.P., members.
2. Shaw Report p.3
3. Ibid pp. 4-6
4. Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929. Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. March 1930. Cmd. 3530.
5. For pro-Arab view of the Report See Jeffries, op-cit pp.606-17. For Zionist view - Memorandum on the Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929, by Leonard Stein London, May 1939. For a British view see Peel Report, pp.50-53

The Jews, all along, in their press, interviews, and evidence before the Commission, stated and re-stated that it was the Mufti and his followers in the S.M.C. who had organised and incited the disturbances of August 1929, mainly by propagating propaganda among the Fellahin that the Jews had designs on the "Haram-el-Sharif", thus using the religious issue - for political ends - against the Jews and against the Mandate.

The Commission exonerated him from these charges. They concluded that the outbreak was not premeditated, and that the Mufti had no intention of utilizing the religious campaign over the Wailing Wall as the means of inciting disorder. Their criticism of him went only so far as to say that the Mufti, and the Arab Executive, cannot be acquitted of blame for not trying to control their followers, during the week preceding the disturbances, by declaring publicly and emphatically that they were on the side of law and order<sup>6</sup>.

The only Commissioner who dissented from this "not guilty" verdict was Mr. H. Snell. He thought that "the Mufti must bear the blame for his failure to make any effort to control the character of an agitation conducted in the name of a religion of which in Palestine he was the head"<sup>7</sup>.

The Commission, no doubt, was led, to reach its conclusion, by the Palestine Administration. Mr. Preedy, the counsel for the Administration, declared that they had no evidence that the Mufti and his followers "had organised or incited or brought about these disturbances"<sup>8</sup>.

The H.C. wrote to Shuckburgh "until evidence is produced, the Mufti and other Arab leaders cannot be prosecuted. I dare say that the report of the Commission may throw some light on this matter"<sup>9</sup>.

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6. Shaw Report pp. 153-59.

7. Ibid pp. 172.

8. Shaw Evidence ii. p. 944

9. 3.1.1930 C.O. 733/178/67524.

But it seems that both Chancellor and the Colonial Office - because of political considerations - did not really wish the "light to be thrown on the matter". Chancellor himself admitted that he considered that "Snell in his reservation had more correctly assessed the part played by the Mufti in the disturbances than the rest of the Commission"<sup>10</sup>

And Williams, the head of the "Palestine Section" in the Colonial Office wrote "I think I may say that it is our private opinion in the Office that the Mufti, and some of his supporters, were probably very much more responsible for some of the deplorable incidents which have occurred in Palestine than the majority of the Shaw Commission appear to think, and such intelligence information as we have had since the outbreak has tended to confirm this impression. It will be seen that Mr. Mayle proposes in effect that his Majesty's Government should concur in the findings of the Shaw Report on this head. I do not see that we can do otherwise, since we have no definite facts supported by unimpeachable evidence which we can bring forward in a contrary sense, and even if we had, I do not see what use we could make of it unless it was sufficient to enable us to take definite action against the Grand Mufti, which is obviously impossible. He is much too wily a bird to give us the chance. On the whole, I do not think there is much to be lost, and there is perhaps something to be gained, in accepting the findings of the Report without qualification. To suggest any doubt as to the soundness of their conclusions on this point in a public statement would, of course, have unfavourable reactions in our negotiations with the Arabs"<sup>11</sup>.

10. In an interview with Mr. P. Rutenberg on 20.10.1930 J.C. 20/MF 11.

11. In a minute to the draft statement prepared by N. Mayle of the Colonial Office for the British accredited representative at the Permanent Mandates Commission. 26.4.1930. C.O.733/183/77050 B.

The negotiations to which Williams referred, were those held at the time with the Arab Delegation in London, of which the Mufti was a leading member. These negotiations failed owing - so it was said - to the extreme stand taken by the Mufti<sup>12</sup>.

It would be shown later<sup>13</sup> that all through the thirties, the British authorities, or at least part of them, sometimes vigorously, sometimes less so, were always looking for various ways and means, which could be justified, and which would have made it possible for the Government, to curtail the power and influence of the Mufti or even to remove him from his offices, as was actually done in October 1937. The Shaw Commission could have supplied them with such justification. Not perhaps the "definite facts supported by unimpeachable evidence" which a legal court would have demanded, but justification which could be defended in any other forum, and which would have been more than enough for the Government had it really wished to act at that time. But for reasons of expediency, explained above by Williams, the argument of "no evidence" was used to clear the Mufti. He was not removed from his offices, his power and influence was not curtailed, his prestige was higher than ever, enhanced by expressions of respect, such as the Shaw Commission coming to his office at the S.M.C. to listen to his evidence<sup>14</sup> and following and as result of the Wailing Wall dispute and its aftermath he emerged as the most important and influential leader in Arab Palestine.

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12. See p. 96

13. Supra p. 277

14. No other local witnesses, including Jewish religious dignitaries were accorded a similar respect.

Returning to the general conclusions of the Commission, we find that it asserted that "the outbreak neither was, nor was intended to be a revolt against British authority in Palestine"<sup>15</sup>. It cleared the Administration of all accusations made against its conduct before and during the disturbances, and stated that "the Government did discharge to the best of their ability the difficult task of maintaining a neutral and impartial attitude between two peoples whose leaders have shown little capacity for compromise"<sup>16</sup>.

As in the case of the Mufti, the Arab Executive and the rest of the Arab leaders were cleared likewise.

The Commission enumerated 6 immediate causes for the outbreak<sup>17</sup>. But they emphasized the fundamental cause, without which, the disturbances would not have occurred. This was "the Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future".

The feeling as it existed then, continued the Commission, was "based on the twofold fear of the Arabs that by Jewish immigration and land purchase they may be deprived of their livelihood, and in time pass under the political domination of the Jews"<sup>18</sup>.

By this statement, as in all<sup>19</sup> other conclusions and recommendations the Commission tended to accept the Arab contentions which in most cases were almost identical to those of the Administration.

15. Shaw Report p. 158

16. Ibid p. 161

17. Ibid p. 164

18. Ibid p. 163

19. The one big exception was the Commission's conclusion "that the outbreak in Jerusalem on the 23rd of August was from the beginning an attack by Arabs on Jews for which no excuse in the form of earlier murders by Jews has been established" and that the disturbances took the form, for the most part, of a vicious attack by Arabs on Jews accompanied by wanton destruction of Jewish property". The Shaw Report p. 158. Arab papers which welcomed the report objected to this conclusion. See Falastin 1.4.1930.

The first basic recommendation, to which the Commission attached "the highest importance" was that His Majesty's Government should issue a clear statement of the policy which it intended to be pursued in Palestine, that it should be done with the least possible delay and that it should be made clear that the Government intended to give full effect to that policy with all the resources at its command. The Commission continued that the value of this statement "would be greatly enhanced (I) if it contained a definition in clear and positive terms of the meaning which His Majesty's Government attach to the passages in the Mandate providing for the safeguarding of the rights of the non-Jewish communities in that country, and (II) if it laid down for the guidance of the Government of Palestine, directions more explicit than any that have yet been given as to the conduct of policy on such vital issues as land and immigration".<sup>20</sup>

This reference to the passages in the Mandate which provided for safeguarding of rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine, was certainly an indirect criticism of those paragraphs in the Mandate which emphasized the obligation to promote the Jewish National Home.

It was also a refusal of that interpretation of the Mandate which gave the first part of the Balfour Declaration, regarding the establishment of the Jewish National Home, a priority over the second part, that of the safeguarding of civil and religious rights of the other inhabitants of Palestine.

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20. Shaw Report p.164-5

By this refusal, the Commission assisted in confirming and establishing the idea of the "Dual Obligation" or "double undertaking of equal weight inherent in the Mandate" which was stated clearly by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on the 3rd April 1930<sup>21</sup>, 3 days after the publication of the Commission's report.

This idea, which in practice meant departure from the Mandate - in spirit if not in letter - found its strong expression in Passfield's White Paper of October 1930.

As to the conduct of policy on such vital issues as land and immigration, the Commission recommended that:

- (a) "A scientific enquiry should be undertaken by experts into the prospects of introducing improved methods of cultivation in Palestine", and that "Land policy could then be regulated in the light of its findings".<sup>22</sup> In the meantime, the Commission recommended steps should be taken to insure "further protection of the position of the present cultivators and some restriction on the alienation of land".<sup>23</sup>
- and (b) Immigration should be controlled with "the object of preventing a repetition of the excessive immigration of 1925 and 1926" which as a result of the economic crisis in 1927 - 1928 turned to be a heavy burden on the shoulders of the population in Palestine.

It also recommended that "non-Jewish" interests in Palestine should be consulted upon matters of immigration.<sup>24</sup>

21. See Hansard Vol.237 Cols.1466-7

22. The Shaw Report p.166

23. Ibid p.124

24. Ibid p.166

On constitutional development, the third Arab grievance, the Commission "did not make any formal recommendation", but it drew the attention to the fact that "the absence of any measure of self-Government is greatly aggravating the difficulties of the local Administration."<sup>25</sup> It asserted that Arab failure to get "some measure of self-Government", was a main cause of the 1929 disturbances, and "will constitute a continuing grievance" until amended.

From among the other recommendations of the Commission, two had already been acted upon at the time of the report's publication. These were (a) The one calling for the appointment of the Wailing Wall Commission.<sup>26</sup>

and (b) The one calling for an enquiry into the organization of the Department of Police in Palestine.<sup>27</sup>

The British Government submitted the Shaw Report to the League of Nations in June 1930 accompanied by a "statement with regard to British Policy".<sup>28</sup> The Times commenting on this statement said that the Government announced in it their "substantial acceptance of all the findings and recommendations of the Shaw-Commission".<sup>29</sup>

The Permanent Mandates Commission met in June 1930 to discuss the Palestine question and the Shaw Report. In the report which they prepared for the Council of the League, they criticized very strongly the actions of the Mandatory and rejected the findings of the Shaw Commission.<sup>30</sup>

25. Ibid p.166

26. See Chapter 10

27. The Government appointed to that task Sir H. Dowbiggin, the Inspector General of Police in Ceylon who visited Palestine during January-March 1930 and reported to the Colonial Secretary his findings and recommendations. C.O.733/180/77015. See also Peel Report pp.140-41.

28. Cmd.3582. His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, May 1930.

29. The Times 7.6.1930

30. See C.355, M.147, VI. Minutes of the Seventeenth (Extraordinary) Session held at Geneva from June 3rd to 21st 1930, including the Report of the Commission to the Council and Comments by the Mandatory Power. This report of the P.M.C. was criticised strongly by Arab Press. See Falastin 30.6.1930.

An amended report, more in harmony with British views was adopted in September 1930 at the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations.<sup>31</sup>

The Arabs were satisfied with the Shaw Report. It should be mentioned here that at the time, the Arabs almost boycotted the Shaw Commission. In a big meeting of the Arab Executive, which met on the 27th - 28th October 1929, under the Chairmanship of Y.Farraji-Musa Kazim being ill - a strange coalition, so common to Palestine Arab politics, of real extremists and moderates-turned-extremists, succeeded almost in passing a resolution calling for Arab boycott of the Shaw Commission. Only a balanced stand by the Executive's secretariat with backing from the Mufti's followers defeated the boycott motion.<sup>32</sup>

As the hearings proceeded, the Arabs felt more and more at ease, and already in the beginning of the year the Arab press was predicting that the Commission's findings would be in their favour.<sup>33</sup>

When the report was published, the Arabs as P.L. Hanna said "received it with jubilation as a vindication of their case against the national home".<sup>34</sup>

The Arab Delegation in a declaration to Leuter's said: "the report of the Shaw Commission, describes the situation as regards the Arabs, fairly and justly. The Arab Delegation in London welcomes the report and hopes that its recommendations would be followed".<sup>35</sup>

31. As for the way in which the British Government achieved this harmonization, see p.0fer op.cit pp. 234-36.

32. Palastin 28th-29th October 1930. Among those favouring the Boycot action were Abdel Kader Kuzalfar, Shikh Iaji El Farouki, Hasan Sidki el Dajani and Bolous Sehada, the editor of "Mira at el Sharq". Against it Awwi Abd El Badi, Izzat Darwaza and Saafiq Assal.

33. See Palastin 1.1.1930. Al Janiah al Arabiyya 3.1.1930.

34. P.L. Hanna, British Policy in Palestine. Washington 1942. p.100

35. Al Janiah al Arabiyya 3.4.1930.

Falastin came up with a big headline "The Shaw Report a big success for the Arabs" and went on to say that "the Commission in its conclusions repeated actually what was said to it by the counsel for the Arabs, not more not less".<sup>36</sup> And Al Jamiah al Arabiyya in its editorial said "the Report is in favour of the Arabs. The Labour Government aims at solving its problems in the Middle East on the basis of recognizing the right of nations to independence. The Shaw Report is in harmony with this aim".<sup>37</sup>

The Mufti, writing about the Shaw Report in his book said "and when it was published, the Arabs welcomed it and showed open acceptance of it".<sup>38</sup>

The Arabs also noted with satisfaction the positive impact which the report had in drawing the attention and the sympathy of the British public to their case.<sup>39</sup>

36. Falastin 1.4.1930

37. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 3.4.1930.

38. Haj Amin al Husseini haqaiq. op. cit p.45

39. See "In the Wake of the Report in The Times 19.5.1930

The Report of Hope-Simpson and the Passfield White Paper.

The Government's Statement of Policy, generally known as the Passfield White Paper<sup>1</sup>, and the Report of Hope-Simpson<sup>2</sup>, were published simultaneously on the 20th October 1930.

Sir John Hope-Simpson<sup>3</sup> was appointed as a result of a Cabinet's decision<sup>4</sup>, following the recommendation of the Shaw Commission that the Colonial Secretary would appoint a representative with the right kind of experience "to visit Palestine, confer with the H.C. and report on the economic questions involved, i.e. Land Settlement Immigration and Development, and to such extent as might be seemed desirable, on the political question in the background". The aim of his enquiry was to assist the Government in formulating their future policy for Palestine. He was preferred to General Smuts who was considered too Pro-Zionist, and the Arab Delegation was informed of his appointment.<sup>5</sup>

He reached Palestine on the 20th May 1930 and stayed there until 24th July. He based his enquiry on information from official sources, and consulted Arab and Jewish authorities and organisations. He was in constant consultation with the High Commissioner, by whom he was influenced very much<sup>6</sup>. After completing his enquiry he left for Athens, from where he sent his report, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 22nd August 1930.

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1. Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, October 1930. H.M.S.O., London 1930 CMD.3692.
  2. Palestine Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development, CID 3536, H.M.S.O. London 1930.
  3. Hope-Simpson - a distinguished ex-civil servant in India, later became the Vice-President of the League of Nations Refugee Commission in Athens.
  4. On 2.4.1930 CAB-23. 18(30). 4.
  5. Supra p. 92
  6. See Ofer op-cit Chap. 4. pp. 237-91.

As its practical influence on future developments was almost nil, I shall not analyse it here<sup>7</sup>. His most important and basic conclusion was that "It has emerged quite definitely that there is, at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation, no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land, as the various Jewish Agencies hold in reserve".<sup>8</sup>

However, he went on to say "that with thorough development of the country there will be room, not only for all the present agricultural population on a higher standard of life than it at present enjoys, but for not less than 20,000 families of settlers from outside".<sup>9</sup>

Two recommendations which followed his basic conclusion were :

- 1) That "in cases in which immigration of Jews results in preventing the Arab population obtaining the work necessary for its maintenance" it should be reduced and even be suspended.<sup>10</sup>
- and 2) "That control of all disposition of land, must rest with a "Development Commission, which he recommended to appoint, and that" all transfers of land, should be permitted by it."<sup>11</sup>

7. For analyses of the report see Marlow, the Seat of Pilote pp. 120-1 Jeffries op-cit pp. 621-6. For Jewish examination of the report see "The Statistical Bases of Sir John Hope Simpson's Report on Immigration Land Settlement and Development in Palestine. The Jewish Agency London May 1931. The Jews succeeded in this work to shake the accuracy of these bases and so to raise doubts as to the "scientific value" of the report.

8. Hope Simpson Report, p. 141.

9. Ibid. p. 153.

10. Ibid. pp. 138-9.

11. Ibid. p. 143.

The first of these recommendations introduced Arab unemployment as a decisive factor in deciding policy over Jewish immigration, while the second confirmed the principle of Control and limitation of land transfers.

These recommendations together with Hope-Simpson's assertion that 29.4 of Arab villagers were landless<sup>12</sup>, (some of them as result of Zionist land policies and settlement), were most gratifying to the Arabs who since then used to point to the Report as justifying and endorsing their claims.

Actually, at the start of the enquiry, the Arabs were suspicious of its intentions, and some Arab papers criticised the Arab Executive for meeting Hope-Simpson on 24/5/30, asking whether this meeting was authorised by the Arab Delegation then in London.<sup>13</sup> But shortly afterwards, the Arab press started to praise his fairness and justice<sup>14</sup>. When the Arab delegation returned from London he had a very cordial meeting with the President of the Arab Executive Husa Kazem and with Jamal al Nusseini.<sup>15</sup>

The latter accompanied him later on most of his visits to Arab villages. He called also on the Mufti at his office in the S.H.C..<sup>16</sup>

The report would have had some effect if his recommendations concerning development policy would have been put into effect. But

12. Ibid p.26 also p.142

13. Al Jamiah-Al Arabbiyya 26.5.30 Mr. Y. Farraj, Amin Tamimi and Salim Farah, attended this meeting.

14. Ibid. 2.6.30 Falastin 6.6.30.

15. Al Jamiah al Arabbiyya 8.6.30.

16. His impressions of the Mufti were rather negative - see supra p. 74

the huge sum involved (£6m - £8m) was "certainly much larger than anything the British Government was ready to put up"<sup>17</sup>. As it was, nothing much came of it and the only real contribution of the report was in supplying the Arabs with good "scientific" arguments in their propaganda efforts.

Much more important was the Passfield White Paper. It was based on and reflected the views and recommendations of 3 earlier documents. These were: The Shaw Report, the report of Sir John Hope-Simpson, and the now famous despatch of the H.C. Lord Chancellor of 17th January 1930.<sup>18</sup>

The paper is roughly divided into 2 parts :

- (a) "an exposition of the general principles which have to be taken into account as governing policy in Palestine, and the limiting conditions under which it must be carried out.
- and (b) Considerations of the "practical problems with which His Majesty's Government are faced in Palestine".

I shall treat the second part first. The problems with which the White Paper dealt fall under the 3 heads :

- 1) Security
- 2) Constitutional development
- 3) Economic and Social Development

17. C.P. 301 (30) 15 Sep. 1930. The sum allocated to the Development Plan was reduced to £2.5m. and later to £250,000 only.

18. Despatch 17.1.1930 C.P. 108 (30) C.O. 733/183/77050/B in this despatch Chancellor submitted to the Colonial Secretary "his views as to the causes which led to the recent outbreaks in Palestine and... recommendations as to the measures necessary to prevent their recurrence." Both the majority members of the Shaw Commission, and Hope-Simpson, were influenced to a very big extent by Chancellor, and the views and recommendations in their respective reports reflect almost totally those expressed in his despatch. See P. Ofer. Op-Cit Chapters 5-8 pp.138-292. I shall not discuss the despatch in my work as it was secret at the time and could not therefore cause reactions among the Arabs. However it is very probable that Arab leaders were acquainted with most of the views which Chancellor expressed in this despatch.

As for security the paper stated<sup>19</sup> that adequate military forces would be retained in Palestine, to ensure peace, order and good government, and that the recommendations of Mr. Dowbiggin<sup>20</sup> were and will be carried out.

On Constitutional Development, the White Paper stated: "that the time has arrived, for a further step in the direction of the grant to the people of Palestine of a measure of self-government compatible with the terms of the Mandate", and that "His Majesty's Government accordingly intend to set up a Legislative Council generally on the lines indicated in the statement of British policy in Palestine issued by Mr. Churchill in June 1922."<sup>21</sup>

Under the head "Economic and Social development" the Paper considered the questions of Land, agricultural development and immigration and adopted almost word for word most of Hope-Simpson's estimates, opinions and recommendations<sup>22</sup>.

But as the British Government was not ready to provide all the necessary funds to carry out Hope-Simpson's comprehensive development plan, it decided to commit itself only to a limited scheme, to be implemented over a long period of time, providing only for the resettlement of the dispossessed Arab families, so actually that part of the plan which would have facilitated settlement - and therefore immigration - of 20,000 Jewish families was left out. And though the White Paper does not state it openly, but only in an implied form, the Cabinet meeting which discussed these matters decided that "His Majesty's Government are ...

19. Passfield White Paper p.12.

20. Sufra, see p.

21. Passfield White Paper p. 14.

22. Sufra, see pp 109 - 110

morally bound to see that provision is made for those Arab tenants who have been dispossessed of their holdings, as a result of the manner in which the Policy of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate has hitherto been applied .... No financial obligation, however, of any kind rests on the Government in regard to the settlement of Jews on the land for the purpose of the Jewish National Home".<sup>23</sup>

Another omission in the White Paper, as compared to the equivalent section in the Hope-Simpson Report was that when it repeated the latter's argument as to the connection between Arab unemployment and the rate of immigration it made no reference to his view that the employment of Jewish Capital, which would not otherwise be available, might justify the continued immigration of Jewish industrial labourers<sup>24</sup>.

The result was that the policy of the White Paper concerning control and limitation of immigration and Land transfers was even more favourable to the Arabs than the Hope-Simpson recommendations.

Much more harmful to the Jews was the first part of the Paper dealing with the general principles governing policy in Palestine.

It started by declaring the determination of the Government to pursue its policy without being moved by any pressures or threats.

It then expressed its full acceptance of the principle of "Dual Obligation" or "double Undertaking", which was presented by Chancellor in his despatch of 17.1.1930, stated in the Report of Shaw Commission and re-stated emphatically by the Prime-Minister in the House of Commons on the 3rd April 1930. Since then this principle became a fundamental basis of Britain's policy in Palestine.

23. Cabinet meeting 24/9/30 CAB 23/65 55(30) 6

24. Hope-Simpson Report, pp. 131-2.

On the character of the Jewish National Home and the position of the Jewish Agency the White Paper based itself on Churchill's White Paper of 1922, and likewise in re-affirming "economic absorptive capacity" as the principle which should govern immigration. However, there were several deviations,<sup>25</sup> from the principles as laid down in 1922, more in agreement with the new line because there was quite a difference between the two.

Churchill's White Paper laid stress on the growth and development of the Jewish National Home, considering this development as a basic factor in British policy towards Palestine. Passfield's White Paper was based on the premise that the Jewish National Home had already reached the size suited to serve British interests in Palestine and that further development was not desirable. It therefore laid stress on the limitations to be imposed on its growth. This policy became later known as the crystallization of the Yishuv.<sup>26</sup>

The British Government actually endorsed - although never publicly disclosed - a recommendation by the 'Experts Committee'<sup>27</sup> "that the time had come to declare that the settlement of Jews on the land for the purpose of the Jewish National Home must be regarded as completed".<sup>28</sup>

25. For the nature of these deviations see The Palestine White Paper of Oct. 1930. Memorandum by L. Stein, Jewish Agency for Palestine London. Nov. 1930. See also Ofer. Op-Cit. pp.296-9.
26. Yishuv - the Jewish population in Palestine.
27. This committee was appointed in Sept. 1930 to examine the financial aspects of Hope-Simpson's recommendations. He himself was a member of this committee.
28. C.P.309 (30) CAB 24/215. C. Sykes writes "on p.5. of the Passfield White Paper (Cmd 3692) it is suggested that the obligation to Zionism had been discharged by 1930, since under the Mandate the Jewish Community "has in fact its own national characteristics". Op-Cit note p.149.

Furthermore, the White Paper ceased in fact to consider World Jewry as a "partner" to the Mandate and busied itself only with the Jewish Community living then in Palestine.

The Chancellor, summing up the Jewish opposition to Passfield's White Paper said : "I believe that the Jewish hostility to the White Paper was due.... mainly to the fact that the White Paper made it clear that the social, political and economic conditions of Palestine were such as to make it impossible for a Jewish National State to be established in Palestine within any period that can now be foreseen". "There is no doubt that when the Balfour Declaration was made, most Jews believed that it meant that Palestine would soon become a Jewish National State".<sup>29</sup>

This different approach towards the Jewish National Home expressed by the principle of "dual and equal obligation", constituted at the same time official recognition of the National rights of the Arabs of Palestine. From being "non-Jewish communities whose civil and religious rights had to be protected they became one section of the population in Palestine towards whom the Government had an obligation equal to that towards the Jews, the other section. And being the numerous section, and discovering that - after all - they did have powerful influential friends in the Mandatory power, they could hope that in future the obligation towards them would not only equal but would supersede the other one.

The Arabs rejoiced, not only because of the contents, but also because of the tone of the White Paper which "suggested a more definite inclination towards their side of the controversy",<sup>30</sup> than had

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29. In a memorandum to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. 16.12.1931. C.O. 733/215/97050/9.

30. See Peel Report p.73.

the Shaw and Hope-Simpson reports.

They received the White Paper with approval. They were less jubilant than when welcoming the Shaw Report, as in the meantime the negotiations which the delegation held in London failed. Still, on the whole, their reaction was favourable. When first news of its contents were published in Palestine, Mogannam Mogannam, one of the 3 joint secretaries, declared on the 22nd October on behalf of the Arab Executive that it would comment on the White Paper only after a "full study" of it, but that they noted that the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration were not abrogated.<sup>31</sup>

Much more enthusiastic - and realistic was the daily "Falastin" in its editorial. "We are happy with the White Paper. We see before our eyes the last breath of the Balfour Declaration. Die, oh declaration, die. We fought against the spirit of the declaration and not against its name, and we won."<sup>32</sup>

We say to those who argue that the Legislative Council is the same one we refused in 1922, that the political atmosphere changed, and now we have new and better spirit. Now that our views and the Government views are identical - as proven by the White Paper, which proclaims our right - let us march forward together. Forward to work and labour, forward towards fulfilling the realisation of our aims".<sup>33</sup>

The Mufti's paper "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" was more reserved and stressed that the Arabs could not accept a legislative council which they had refused 8 years earlier, but he welcomed the spirit of the document and all those parts which proved the justice of the Arab case.<sup>34</sup>

31. Falastin 23.10.1930

32. Ibid. My italics.

33. Ibid.

34. Al Jamiah al Arabbiyya 23.10.1930.

The significance of the interpretation given to the White Paper by the simple man in the street can be gathered from the fact that several dozens of Christians in Haifa protested to the Government on 23.10.1930 against the policy of the White Paper which "means a possibility of Arab dominance".<sup>35</sup>

The Arab Executive in its meeting on 29.10.1930 decided not to hold any demonstrations or strike on Balfour Day the 2nd November, "as the present conditions do not call for strikes".<sup>36</sup> For the first time since the Mandate, Arab Palestine was quiet on that day. The Arab papers omitted their customary broad black borders and instead wrote positive articles about the Government. After the publication of the White Paper, Arab press generally and "Falastin" specially maintained a moderate friendly line towards the British.

As late as the end of the year long after it became known that the British Government had invited members of the Jewish Agency to confer with them about the compatibility of some passages of the White Paper with some articles of the Mandate,<sup>37</sup> the Arab leader, Ragheb Nashashibi, when asked his opinion about the White Paper, answered, "I think that the White Paper - if fulfilled - could serve as a positive basis for the cooperation with the Government.

True, it does not grant us all our demands, but it makes it possible for us to achieve them gradually".<sup>38</sup>

35. It must be stressed, however, that at the time there was much tension between Moslems and Christians in Haifa following the Murder of J. Bahri, A Christian journalist, I could not locate these protests, but "Falastin" criticized them strongly. See Falastin 24.10.1930.

36. Falastin 30.10.1930.

37. The Arab Executive protested about these negotiations. 15.11.30  
Falastin 16.11.30

38. Falastin 31.12.1930.

The Mufti, who was asked the same question, failed to answer, but years later he said this : "When the White Paper was published the Arabs were not negative in their attitude. They welcomed it, accepted it, and their attitude towards it was very positive."<sup>39</sup>

Nashashibi's opinion reflected the thoughts of wide and growing circles of the Arab Elite in Palestine.

A high ranking Government official reporting on Arab reactions to the White Paper wrote, "While the moderate and pro-Government elements among the Arabs considered that the policy announced in the White Paper of 1930 did not fulfil all their aspirations, it satisfied them that the Home Government was alive to their principal grievances and proposed to rectify them. They were convinced that the White Paper contained the unalterable policy of His Majesty's Government and that nothing was to be gained by further agitation or pressure. They therefore felt they could co-operate with the Government and were also able to persuade many who had previously held aloof from politics, or who were not zealous extremists, to join their ranks".<sup>40</sup>

The official Arab answer to the White Paper was a long memorandum written by Auni Abd Al Hadi.<sup>41</sup> It was discussed in a meeting of the Arab Executive and confirmed unanimously.<sup>42</sup> It was forwarded to the H.C., together with an un-dated covering letter, signed by Musa Kazim,

39. Haj Amin al Husseini Hagaig Op-Cit p.46.

40. N. Bailey, the Administrative Officer, Nablus in a letter to the Chief Secretary of the Palestine Government 11.3.31 C.O. 733/197/87050/2.

41. Al Jamiah al Arabbiyya 30.12.1930, 2.1.1931.

42. Falastin 29/12/1930.

the president of the Arab Executive. He summarised in it Arab demands as withdrawal of the Balfour Declaration, and the abolition of the Mandate, the establishment of a government for Palestine responsible to an elected Parliament, and prohibition of further immigration and land transfers. It also requested that copies of the memorandum be transmitted to the Permanent Mandates Commission.<sup>43</sup>

The memorandum was written before Macdonald's letter to Dr. Weizmann<sup>44</sup>, but after the negotiations between the British Government and Zionist leaders had become known and had been protested against by the Arab Executive on 15th Nov. 1930.<sup>45</sup> It can be safely assumed that but for these negotiations the memorandum would have been far less critical of the White Paper.

However, it was more conciliatory in its tone than the covering letter, and perhaps most representations by the Executive. Though the memorandum maintained the Arab's previous objection to the Balfour Declaration, it discussed the interpretation placed on it by the Government, which was rarely done before.

The memorandum tried to prove that both the British Government and the Palestine Government had failed to carry out the provisions of the Mandate relating to the safeguarding of the rights of the Arabs (i.e. non-Jewish communities). It then went on to say that the

43. The fact that the British Government and apparently the Palestine Government learned for the first time the contents of this letter through the press, moved Mr. Beckett from the Colonial Office to remark, "What can one do for such people". It could also be that this note concerns the contents of Musa Kazim's letter and not only the way by which he heard of it, because it was followed by another note of Shackburgh 'It is the old, old story. The Arabs have not budged an inch from their maximum demands'. 16.1.1931. C.O. 733/197/37050/2.

44. See Chapter 9.

45. Al Jamiah al Arabbiyya 16/11/1930.

policy laid down in the White Paper would not ensure the due observation of these provisions in the future.

Still the memorandum is so formulated as to indicate a certain willingness to cooperate with the Government should things develop right. At the same time, fearing the outcome of the negotiations between the Government and the Jews, the memorandum concludes: "The White Paper of October, 1930, does not contain anything new with regard to the political rights of the Arabs. The principles enunciated therein with regard to their economic and social rights do not ensure to the Arabs their national rights and economic interests. The importance is not in enunciating principles, but in the execution of such principles".

The Memorandum reached the Colonial Office in London towards the end of January 1931. On 13th February Mr. Macdonald's letter to Dr. Weizmann made it obsolete.

There is a certain ambiguity - partly intended perhaps - with regard to the Mufti's view of the White Paper.

We saw that following the publication of the White Paper, Palestine Arab politics was marked by the rising influence of moderation. This process was very noticeable. Not only were Arab leaders ready to cooperate with the Government, but it seems most probable that the Arab Executive even considered holding a meeting with Dr. Weizmann, and that this was agreed to by - among others - the moderate Musa Kazim and non moderates Jamal Husseini and Auni Abd El Hadi.<sup>46</sup>

At the time, the Mufti did not express himself clearly on the subject in public. But there are some indications that he too

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46. C.O. 733/197/87050/2.

see also Reporter on Arab Affairs. Doar Hayom 21.3.31.

was for moderation and in favour of cooperation with the British in the execution of the policy of the White Paper.

The Newspaper Al Jamiah Al Arabbiyya, generally considered as his mouth-piece, maintained a line of passive approval with regard to the White Paper.

More indicative perhaps was the fact that two persons with whom he was in close contact at the time preached moderation.

One was the Indian Moslem leader Shawkat Ali, in Palestine for the burial of his brother Mohamed Ali<sup>47</sup>, who in speeches and interviews<sup>48</sup> advocated most strongly that the Arabs should cooperate with the Government in fulfilling the policy announced in the White Paper. He also said that when in London he had discussed the Palestine problem with Lord Passfield who promised him that there would not be any meaningful change in the White Paper.

The second one was the Mufti's closest political ally, Jamal al Hussini, who after returning from London visited several places in Palestine, where he said that the Mandatory power favoured the Arabs, that the White Paper would be fulfilled, and that the Arabs had to cooperate with the British.<sup>49</sup>

This and his moderation towards the British during the next 3-4 years compared with what he said years later in his book *Hagat*,<sup>50</sup> all indicate that he at that time was for moderation.

But if he was for moderation he was against the rise into power

47. Strangely enough, the burial itself gave actually an impetus to the opposite extreme line, as the funeral - unintentionally as it happens so often - turned into a demonstration.

48. Falastin 7.2.1930.

49. In the Club of the Moslem Society in Haifa on 15.1.30. In the Municipality Bldg. Acre 17.1.30. In a school in Nazareth 18.1.30. See Falastin 16.1.30 and 19.1.30.

50. Supra p. 118.

of his opponents the Moderate party, which undoubtedly would have followed the rising influence of moderation. He need not have worried for long, the publication of the Prime-Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann enabled again the extremists and extremism to regain their political prestige and the chance - perhaps the last one - of the moderate party to dominate Palestine Arab politics was over.

Chapter 9The Prime-Minister Letter to Dr. Weizmann.

On 13th Feb. 1931 the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Macdonald, sent a letter to Dr. Weizmann, the President of the Jewish Agency, on the policy of His Majesty's Government in Palestine. Among Arabs this document became commonly known as the "Black letter".

The letter was published to the House of Commons as a written answer to a question<sup>1</sup> and not as a parliamentary paper, but it was communicated as an official document to the League of Nations and was embodied in a dispatch as an instruction to the British High Commissioner in Palestine.

In the first paragraph, the Prime Minister stated that the letter "will fall to be read as an authoritative interpretation of the White Paper on the matters with which this letter deals".

But the interpretation was such that as almost everybody<sup>2</sup> has agreed since, the letter was in effect a complete repudiation of the policy laid down in the White Paper.

1. Hansard. Commons. Fifth Series Vol. CCKLVIII Cols. 751-7.

2. Notable exception was the Prime Minister. When asked by the Pro-Arab, M.P. Howard-Bury whether with the letter, "there has been a complete change of policy with regard to the White Paper"? The Prime Minister, not listening or understanding exactly the question, answered, "Yes, my Hon. and gallant friend may accept that assurance." Only when Col. Howard-Bury repeated and said, "There has been a complete change?" The Prime Minister answered: "I am sorry if I misheard the Hon. and gallant Member. There has been no change of policy." Official report of 12th Feb. 1931, for another exception see A. Toynbee in Survey of International Affairs 1930 Royal Institute of International Affairs London 1931 the Peel Commission in Peel Report p.75, and all pronouncements by Government officials.

The letter (a) "recognises that the undertaking of the Mandate is an undertaking to the Jewish people, and not only to the Jewish population of Palestine". (b) states that the White Paper did not mean "that existing economic conditions in Palestine should be crystallised", and goes on to say, "on the contrary, the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land remains a positive obligation of the Mandate, and it can be fulfilled without prejudice to the rights and position of other sections of the population of Palestine. (c) declares "That the statement of Policy of His Majesty's Government did not imply a prohibition of acquisition of additional land by Jews. It contains no such prohibition, nor is any such intended", (d) "that his Majesty's Government did not prescribe, and do not contemplate, any stoppage or prohibition of Jewish immigration in any of its categories" and that "the practice of sanctioning a labour Schedule of wage-earning immigrants will continue" and (e) that in all the works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency it shall be deemed a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed".

Husa Kazim, summing up the Arab view of the letter wrote :

"In brief, Mr. Macdonald in his letter, overruled all the provisions of the White Paper in favour of the Arabs as regards the immigration and land questions, and added thereto new provisions, which are in favour of the Jews and prejudicial to the Arabs".<sup>3</sup>

The Arabs became uneasy from the moment it was announced on 14 Nov. 1930<sup>4</sup> "that doubts having been expressed as to the compatibility of some

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3. In a memorandum to the Officer Administering the Palestine Government on the 18th Sept. 1931 in which the Arab Executive inform the Government of their rejection of the Development Scheme, because it is based on the principles embodied in Mr. Macdonald's letter. This memorandum is the official Arab analyses of the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann. For a pro-Arab evaluation of the letter see Jeffries Op-Cit pp. 633-6.

4. Already earlier, on 11.11.30, the Christian-Moslem Club of Jaffa cabled the H.C. cautioning the British Government against "a retreat from the White Paper's policy" Falastin 12.11.30.

passages of the White Paper of the 20th October with certain articles of the Palestine Mandate, and other passages having proved liable to misunderstanding - His Majesty's Government had invited members of the Jewish Agency to confer with them on these matters". On 15.11.1930 representatives of the Arab Executive met the High Commissioner and later cabled him expressing their wonder as to "why there is need for clarification of a very clear White Paper, and their worry lest these clarifications would turn out to be unfavourable to the Arabs".<sup>5</sup>

Although the Arabs did not look upon the negotiations with favour, it did not cause them alarm as they had been impressed by that portion of the White Paper and the statements made in Parliament and elsewhere that the Government would not be susceptible to pressure brought to bear by Arabs or Jews.

The debate on the White Paper in the House of Commons on 18.11.1930, proved to them once again how much Parliamentary support for their opponents was stronger than any sympathy they could raise there. Not only the majority of the Conservatives and the Liberals, including those on the front benches, but also a sizeable section of the Labour party itself opposed the policy of the White Paper.<sup>6</sup>

As the negotiations became more protracted and reports appeared in the press that Zionists had obtained some concessions, a certain amount of uneasiness was apparent and the confidence in the Government was shaken.

5. Falastin 16.11.1930 Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 16.11.1930. Those present were Issa Kazim, Y. Farraj, Auni Abd el Hadi and Mojannam Mojannam.

6. As the Government desired to avert the danger of turning Palestine affairs into an issue of Party politics, this widespread opposition to the policy of the White Paper was one of the main reasons which made the Government start the negotiations with the Zionists. The other one had to do with "international policy". See Passfield's letter to Chancellor of 6th Feb. 1931. "I have explained to you before that we felt bound, for political and international reasons, to enter upon these discussions." C.O. 733/197/87050/1.

But even then Jamal al Hussein in a speech before the Moslem's Association Club said on 15th Jan. 1931 that the White Paper would be fulfilled notwithstanding the Jews' opposition and that he had learned in London that the Mandatory power favoured the Arabs.<sup>7</sup> Shawkat Ali, who was then in Palestine, was speaking in a like manner<sup>8</sup>. These voices though emanating from influential leaders were in marked contrast to the growing suspicion of the Arab Community. In mid December "Falastin" the most pro-British Arab daily wrote in its editorial "Is the White Paper only a political game aimed at mocking the Palestinian Arabs, the way Britain made fun lately of the Egyptians and Iraqis? Let the British know, the Palestinians cannot be mocked at".<sup>9</sup> When the news reached Palestine of the Prime Minister's letter, a wave of sorrow mixed with indignation, which later turned into anger, swept Arab Palestine. Part of it was nourished perhaps by the opposite expressions of satisfaction by Dr. Weizmann<sup>10</sup> and the Jewish Community and Pro-Zionist press which heralded the letter as a Zionist victory.

"Falastin", perhaps in order to atone for its previous enthusiasm to Britain and the White Paper, came out with an editorial "Black interpretation of a White paper", in which it called for a "new period of war against the

7. Falastin 16.1.1931.

8. See Supra p. 121

9. Falastin 12.12.1930.

10. In his statement of 13 Feb. 1931. Dr. Weizmann declared: "This Statement of Policy (the P.M.'s letter) ... re-established the basis for that cooperation with the Mandatory Power on which our policy is founded." New Judea Feb. 1931. London.

British Government which the Jews can so easily lead whenever and wherever they wish".<sup>11</sup>

"Al-Hayat", the paper of the elements which later were organised in the "Istiqlal" ("Independence") party, wrote in an editorial - which was marked by anti-semitic undertones - that the British Government, facing financial crisis, gave in to Weizmann, the Rothschilds and all other Jewish international financiers. "Al-Hayat" mentioned the resignations of the Jewish leaders following the publication of the White Paper and demanded that all leaders of the Arab Executive and the S.N.C. and all Arab judges and high ranking Government officials should resign their posts.<sup>12</sup>

Protest meetings were held in all towns and large villages. The central one took place in Jaffa, where Hoggannam Hoggannam, a joint secretary of the Arab Executive, said before a big crowd "We have lost our faith in the British. Nobody, not one soul in Arab Palestine and perhaps in all the Arab and the Moslem worlds, believes now in England".<sup>13</sup>

The moderate elements lost all their influence which was so apparent after the publication of the White Paper and had to follow a more extreme line. The Moderate paper 'Mira'at al Sharq' wrote that "henceforth the Arabs should depend only on themselves, as British policy is intent on establishing the Jewish National Home."<sup>14</sup>

The reaction following the Prime Minister's letter was particularly noticeable in the towns, but it also existed in the larger and more advanced villages.

There the fellaheen, whom the Government was trying so hard to convince

11. Falastin 15.2.1931.

12. Al-Hayat 15.2.1931.

13. Falastin 17.2.1931.

14. Miraat al Sharq 23.3.1931.

that it has their interests at heart, were losing hope that any measures which were recommended by the recent commissions for their immediate relief would be adopted.

The situation became tense and racial animosity had again become acute. The reaction of the Arab leadership to this new and dangerous challenge took the usual method of protesting to the H.C.

The Arab Executive was called for an emergency meeting on 15.2.1930, which was continued on the next day, following which they waited upon the High Commissioner to present a formal protest<sup>15</sup> asserting that the Prime Minister's letter constituted a new policy of the Government which was absolutely inconsistent with the policy laid down in the White Paper of October 1930. The main points in the protest which was written and signed by Auni Abd El Hadi on behalf of the President Musa Kazim were : that the Arab Executive considered that the Prime Minister's letter created new principles and rights calculated exclusively to further the establishment of the Jewish National Home. They protested in particular against the principle of giving employment to Jewish labour on Municipal and Public works in proportion to Jewish contributions to public revenue, ignoring all the rights in such matters of the overwhelming Arab majority. They observed with deep regret that the policy of the Government had been subjected to continued and unjustifiable changes and vacillations and that the Government violated undertakings given in the White Paper. They considered this development as a very serious one, as it would result in creating a deep abyss between the Government and the Arabs and would prompt the Arabs to lose confidence in the Government. They stated that the new declared policy would enable the Zionists to continue to purchase additional lands, and they protested most strongly against the "interpretations" made by Mr. Macdonald.

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15. Falastin 17.2.1931. Present were Musa Kazim, Y. Farraj, Auni Abd e-Hadi, Jamal Hussein and Mogannam Mogannam.

They observed that in upholding the Jewish Agency's right to employ Jewish labour only, the Prime Minister's letter entitled them to boycott Arab labour, so they would be compelled to follow the same principle and study the proposition of boycotting the Jews in all matters by virtue of the principle of reciprocation. In conclusion they said that the letter had ruined any hopes, if they had existed, of any policy of cooperation between Arabs and Jews and had made the possibility of understanding between the two parties completely impossible.

In the last paragraph of the protest they said that they would leave it to the Executive Committee of the Seventh Arab Congress to determine the lines of policy which it might consider consistent with the country's interests in view of the Government's new policy<sup>16</sup>.

The report of this meeting<sup>17</sup> makes very interesting reading. It must have been very painful to all its participants. The High Commissioner, Sir J. Chancellor, who did perhaps more than any other person to bring about this change in British policy towards Palestine which found its expression in the White Paper<sup>18</sup>, stood there disappointed and bitter, having to defend the revised policy which actually spelt the bankruptcy of everything which he had strived for during the period of his service in Palestine. According to his defence of the Prime Minister's letter was very lame and when pressed by Auni Abd El Hadi he practically admitted that the letter constituted a

16. For a full text of the protest see C.O. 733/197/87050/2.
17. Record of the meeting with the Arab Executive at Government House, on Monday, February 16th 1931 at 3.45 p.m. Ibid.
18. After meeting Lord Passfield on 23.9.1930, one day before the cabinet approved finally the policy of the White Paper, Chancellor noted, "Lord Passfield wished to congratulate me on having brought His Majesty's Government round to my views as regards future policy in Palestine - it was a great achievement". J.C. Box 20/ME 17.

revised policy<sup>19</sup>.

As for the Arab leaders, one could feel their grief and sorrow, their frustration and their helplessness in the face of the new policy. But there was something additional. In their case too, the meeting pronounced the bankruptcy of their leadership. Very revealing in that respect are the words of Husa Kazim, the President of the Executive, who said "that they (the leaders) had now to meet the public, which had had great expectations as to what the British Government would do for them, and they did not know what to say to them. They could only humble themselves before them".<sup>20</sup> Y. Farraj, the Deputy-President of the Executive betrayed the same worry when he said that "their (the leaders) situation before the public was now precarious and anxious" ....<sup>21</sup>. And when Auni Abdel Hadi - on behalf of Husa Kazim concluded his protest with the words, "I must, however, leave it to the Executive Committee ... to determine the lines of policy" .... one wonders whether it was of choice or rather recognition of how much the office of the Arab Executive and its generally moderate policy were criticized and discredited.

And when the office of the Arab Executive stood discredited, there remained only one national figure to whom the Arabs could look for direction and leadership.

Already on 15th Feb. 1931 Issa el Issa, the editor of "Falastin" - generally considered the organ of the Arab Executive at that time - and himself not specially friendly to the Mufti, cabled to the latter urging him to consult Shawkat Ali and others in order to plan a unified policy for the Arab and Moslem countries<sup>22</sup>.

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19. Auni Bey said he believed that his Excellency would agree that this letter laid down what was practically a new policy. His Excellency observed that His Majesty's Government denied that, and he could not assent to it. Ibid p.5.

20. Ibid p.2.

21. Ibid p. 7.

22. " Falastin" 15.2.1931.

because we know how behind the Executive had become." All the 'decisions' remain on the paper only. Let the Executive with its hands down being

in order to discuss the Prime Minister's letter, the Mufti's paper, Al Jamiah al Arabiyya, came out with a scorching attack on the Executive, thus breaking the political truce which had existed in inter-Palestinian Arab politics since shortly before the Arab Delegation went to London a year or so earlier.

In an editorial entitled<sup>23</sup> "The position of the country, the violation of the White Paper and the duty of the Arab Executive", the paper criticised sharply these "misled preachers of good tidings" who had many hopes from the White Paper and preached moderation. The only use of the White Paper was a negative one in that it uncovered the truth. The nation expected results from the Executive's next meeting, and unless they got them they were entitled to call for an 8th Congress based on new foundations and new programs.

Continuing the attack in the following issues, the paper said<sup>24</sup>, "The leadership of the Executive's Office is a twisted one. It lacks ability and it lacks experience, but it abounds with jealousies and conflicts. It is a formal leadership, not a real one. Its membership is decided according to personal and local interests. The Executive consists of real nationalists and of those who are not so but try to appear as such, therefore there is no unity and coherence. The Executive should activate and direct the people, but it is the other way round, the people push the Executive. We have to admit with sorrow, "We are poor in our nationalism and in our political nature".

And the paper concluded: "We do not expect much from the assembly

23. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 27.2.1931.

24. Ibid 1.3.1931.

25. Ibid, 2.3.1931.

because we know how useless the Executive had become. All its decisions remain on the paper only. Let the Executive wash its hands from being our leadership since it is not suitable for that."

And in a third article,<sup>25</sup> the paper blamed the Executive for Palestine's disaster, and attacked it for its policy of moderation, weakness and self-ebasement, and criticized it for its "proximity" to the High Commissioner's Palace.

On the same day in which this article appeared, the Arab Executive Committee had 3 meetings. The first one only dealt with the financial affairs of the Executive. The second one met at the afternoon under the presidency of Musa Kazim and was attended by 22 members.

Auni Abd al Hadi analysed the difference between Passfield's White Paper and the Prime Minister's letter, and then followed a general discussion. Though the speakers - including the moderate ones, - were more extreme in their pronouncements, the general tone of the meeting was not so. The extremism, as much as it was expressed, was mainly directed against the Jews, with very little against the British. The only one who attacked then was Sheikh Abdul Kader Musaffar, who demanded far reaching decisions as their responsibility towards the Arab Palestinians was great. He proposed :

- a) that all lands sold to Jews in Palestine since the war should revert to the Arabs as their purchase was illegal.
- b) All Jewish immigrants to Palestine since after the war should be expelled.

and c) In case the Government should refuse these demands, the Arabs should abstain from paying taxes and should declare a general boycott against the Jews.

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25. Ibid. 2.3.1931.

Issa al Issa, the editor of "Falastin", commented on the fact that only less than half the members attended this meeting, which was considered to be of prime importance, and proposed to hold a third meeting and to invite to it the members of the London delegation.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, a third meeting started at 9 o'clock at night presided by Y. Farraj<sup>27</sup> and attended by the Mufti and Ragheb Nashashibi. Their presence gave the meeting a special importance which other meetings usually lacked.<sup>28</sup>

The main issues on which the meeting was called to decide were :

a) How to react against Jewish efforts to meet Arab leaders for common meetings<sup>29</sup>, or what was known as the political boycott of the Jews and

b) The economic boycott of the Jews. On each of these issues the two leaders adopted opposing stands. On the problem of meeting the Jews, Ragheb Nashashibi said,<sup>30</sup> "Suppose Weizmann would come to Palestine and we should meet him and learn his views, what could be the harm in that unless you will say that it will be a quiet admission (in the original "secret") (on our side) in their (i.e. the Jews) rights in this country."<sup>31</sup>

26. I.e. the Mufti and Ragheb Nashashibi as the other delegation's members were anyway members of the Executive Committee.

27. Musa Kazim left because of tiredness.

28. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya of 4/3/1931 took special care to note that the atmosphere at that meeting was pleasant and nice. Some months later, the Jamiah Al Arabiyya of 22/10/1931 hinted that the Government tried to intimidate this meeting by sending a military aeroplane over the Executive's building, whose loud engines disturbed the discussions.

29. See *supra* p. 190 -192.

30. For record of the meeting, as well as the previous 2 meetings see file "Report of the Arab Executive Committee meetings" No.3797:65 I.S.A.

31. The Mufti's paper in an article "the nationalists and the opposition in their real clothes" wrote that Ragheb Nashashibi continued and said "I do not agree that what you say is enough to bring us to refuse meeting him". Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya 22.10.1931. No such sentence appears in the official record of the meeting. There were also several other differences between the two versions.

Which in the then circumstances was as far as one could express himself in favour of a common meeting. On the problem of economic boycott, Ragheb Nashashibi mentioned that it was actually he, who in the past, was the first to propose such a boycott. But in the present conditions, when the country and the people were not ready for such a boycott, declaring one would only result in its failure, as happened to the previous one.<sup>32</sup>

The Mufti spoke twice during the meeting. The first time he declared his accord with the Arab Executive<sup>33</sup>, saying, "The Arab Executive represents the country. The members of the delegation are only individuals cooperating with it and following its directions. The Mufti did not touch at all upon the question of meeting the Jews, as if to express the total impossibility of such a meeting taking place, but on economic boycott he said :

"the boycott is one of the best medicines to our malady. The reason which caused the failure of our previous boycott was shortage of sufficient quantities of commodities, as well as the fact that we did not contact our brothers in the neighbouring countries. But the most important reason for the failure was lack of faith in ourselves. We should spread self-confidence among each one of our nationals. However, let not our previous failure debar us from trying again. The acute financial position in which we are would be one of the reasons which would facilitate the boycott. We in this country are very poor. If we continue to spend our limited resources we shall certainly go bankrupt and that means selling lands and success of the

32. While talking on the boycott he also said, "from where shall we buy our needs, from Syria you say, well, what did Syria ever do for us? It sold the land which it owned in Palestine to the Jews". 3797:65 I.S.A. To which both the Mufti and Muhi Abd Al Hadi answered, "those who sold land to the Jews were Syrian individuals, not the Syrian people. They also resented his irony when he said, "show me a cloth of national product and I promise to wear it". Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 22.10.31.

33. While at the same period his paper, Al Jamiah al Arabiyya, was doing its best to undermine the Executive's authority and influence.

Jewish national home. We therefore have to consider very seriously using our products, such as the cloth of our own manufacture. It may be difficult and it may not prove an immediate success, but gradually we will succeed in wearing it, and by that we will advance an important step both in the boycott of the Jews and in progress of our economy. I propose that the Executive office form a committee of economists and experts to study very thoroughly all the aspects of this problem, and that this committee prepare a plan for national production. I also propose to form a committee of women to assist in these matters and local committees in each of our communities and with God's help we shall succeed". Several speakers supported Hashashibi's opinion as far as the impracticability of the boycott and the damage it may cause the Arabs. But all were against meeting Weizmann.

After repeating the Arabs' traditional demands for the abrogation of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration the meeting decided :

- "a) To refuse completely and totally any contacts with the Jews.
- b) To confirm the protest of the Executive Office to the H.C. against the letter of the Prime Minister to Dr. Weizmann.
- c) To declare an anti-Jewish boycott and appeal to the Arabs to encourage and support Palestinian Arab products and especially clothing.<sup>34</sup>
- d) To establish an "Arab National Fund" (to be directed by Fuad Saba) based on small periodical payments of one-two Qurush. (1/100 of £1)

The Arabic press expressed its dissatisfaction with the Executive Committee's decisions.

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34. This had a certain effect. The "National dress" movement started to spread from Gaza (Gaza and Majdal being the centre of the clothing industry). The reporter of "The Times" wrote that "The tarbush was pushed out by the "more national" Sidara or Faisaliya", but goes on to say that "however, this dress reform received a fatal check when it transpired that the Chief importer of Tarbushes was a sound Arab Nationalist. The Times 27/3/1931.

Al Jamiah al Arabiyya continued its attacks, saying<sup>35</sup> that the meeting was a failure and that the decisions taken were ordinary ones and did not match the enormous challenge facing the Arabs. It mentioned sarcastically the fact that less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the members attended the meeting and remarked that since there was no harmony among the Executive's members, the meeting was marked by a spirit of weakness. It concluded by demanding the expulsion of the destructive and treasonable elements from the Executive Committee.

But even the papers who generally were more friendly to the Executive, such as Al Hayat, Mira'at al Sharq, and Al Carmel, criticised the decisions. Al Carmel said<sup>36</sup> that the Arab people were tired with the policy of delegations, petitions, protests and useless festivals.

Still, the decisions calling for an anti-Jewish boycott and for the establishment of an "Arab National Fund" were welcomed.

Accordingly, the Executive Office published a declaration to the Arab people asking them to abstain totally from any economic transactions with the Jews. Jamal al Husseini who signed the declaration explained the boycott thus: "The Arabs will sell to the Jews everything but land, and will not buy from the Jews anything but land."<sup>37</sup> Some months later the Arab Executive - on behalf of the Palestinian Arabs - published a manifesto appealing to Arabs and Moslems all over the world to show their support to the Palestine cause by boycotting the Jews.<sup>38</sup>

35. Jamiah al Arabiyya 4.3.1931.

36. Al Carmel 7.3.1931.

37. Falastin 11.3.1931.

38. The manifesto was signed by Musa Kazim and appeared in all Arab papers of 29.10.31 Al Jamiah al Arabiyya of 7.11.1931 in his editorial explained that the boycott should spread to all Arab countries and include their Jews as well.

To reply to all the criticism directed against it, the Arab Executive published a "Manifesto to the Noble Arab Nation" saying it was very easy to criticise as it is easy to destroy, but that their aim was to build. "It is our duty, we the Arab nation, to strengthen the ties of unity between us, to unite our ranks". The manifesto was a dignified and proud document and its main theme was self-dependence. "Before anything else, we should give up thinking of relying on H.M.G. in defending our national and economic interest and entity .... Let us depend for help upon ourselves and upon the Arab and Moslem world ... Palestine is an Arab country and shall remain such". The manifesto took special care to emphasize that the Arab people would fight the policy expressed in the Prime Minister's letter with lawful means<sup>39</sup>.

The widespread reaction to the Executive Committee's decisions proves once again what is termed as the "negativism" of the Arab National movement in Palestine. With the exception of a small group of extremists centered around Sheikh Muzaffar, whose proposals for civil disobedience were refused - with the Mufti's tacit agreement - none came forward with any positive proposals other than those agreed by the Executive. The papers and the critics demanded that "the Executive" should be less moderate and more active, that the Arabs should rise to the occasion and face the challenge etc. etc., but none specified what that meant in practice.

The Executive's resentment against the criticism directed against it to the effect that the Executive was using nothing but words with no real and substantial policy behind it, could well be understood because it applied as well to the critics themselves. They too used words with nothing real and substantial behind them.

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39. My italics.

There were, however, then other elements who thought of other means than words. Their basic profession was violence, and at the time they were outside the traditional circles of those who constituted the recognised national movement. They professed the idea of "armed struggle" which in due course came to dominate political Arab action in Palestine.<sup>40</sup>

The Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann contributed perhaps more than any other factor to re-direct the Arab national movement once again towards its rendez-vous - several years hence - with violence.

On the Jewish side the effects of the policy of the Prime Minister's letter were summed up by Dr. Weizmann thus: "It was under Macdonald's letter to me, that the change came about in the Government's attitude, and in the attitude of the Palestine administration which enabled us to make the magnificent gains of the ensuing years".<sup>41</sup>

On the opposite side, the Arabs' reaction to the letter was the re-start of the chain of events leading to the Anti-British disturbances of October 1933 and the Arab revolt of 1936-39.

As for the Mufti it was said<sup>42</sup> that the disillusion caused by the Prime Minister's letter originated, or it at least accentuated, the change in his attitude towards the British. Basically it is so, but as future chapters of this work will show this change was slow, and it took several years - through which the Mufti cooperated with the H.C. more fully than ever before, for the change to be a complete one. There are even some

40. See infra. Chapter 14.

41. In his autobiography Trial and Error p.415. However, even the letter did not succeed in restoring the amicable Jewish-British relations to what they had been in Plumer's time. Sykes. Op-Cit. pp.153.

42. By the Pro Arab writer N. Barbour Nisi Dominus London 1946 p. 130.

hints pointing to the possibility that the comparatively peaceful Arab reception of the P.M.'s letter was caused by a tacit understanding between the authorities and the Mufti.<sup>43</sup>

Christopher Sykes, in his very informative book writes : "British belief in Haj-amin's moderation helped on the attempted Passfield policy more than any other single factor. If the belief was true the policy made some sense, if not it made none".<sup>44</sup> Sykes is very clear in his statement that this belief was based on British misconception of the Mufti's character. He proves his opinion by future developments and events, by the Mufti's cooperation with the Nazis during the war etc.

But in his enthusiasm to blacken the Mufti Sykes ignores the fact that the "Passfield policy was never actually attempted", but was replaced by the policy of the Prime Minister's letter.

One is tempted to speculate. Had the Passfield policy really been attempted and implemented would this British belief in the Mufti's moderation have been proved wrong? If we take into account that although the Passfield policy was not attempted at all, the Mufti nevertheless cooperated with the H.C. Sir A. Vauchope for the next few years, one would find it difficult to say that the belief was wrong.

43. See infra p.

44. C. Sykes Op-Cit p. 100.

## Chapter 10.

### The Wailing Wall Commission and its report.

In the aftermath of the disturbances of 1929, the report of the "Shaw Commission", the Hope-Simpson's enquiry, and Passfield's White Paper were all attempts to give recommendations and solutions for settling the political issues.

The Wailing Wall Commission, which was established on 14 January 1930 by His Majesty's Government with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations "to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem", was supposed to settle the religious conflict over the Wailing Wall, which - as is generally agreed - was one of the main reasons, and the most direct one, for the outbreak of the disturbances.

The story of how "the removal of the screen, from the pavement in front of the Wailing Wall, on the Jewish Day of Atonement in September 1928, was the beginning of a series of incidents" which led to the outbreak of the disturbances on 23.8 .1929 is told in the report of the 'Shaw Commission'. <sup>1</sup>

The religious importance of the Wailing Wall - "Al-Buraq" in Arabic - for Moslems <sup>2</sup> in Palestine in particular and throughout all the world is well and widely known and it is not for us to examine it here.

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1. See Shaw Report (Report of the Commission on the Disturbances of August 1929 Cmd 3530) pp.153-5.
  2. See Memorandum on the "Buraq" presented by the S.M.C. in Palestine to the League of Nations, Geneva 17 February 1930. C.O. 733/179/77013. See also Aref el Aref (Al Mufasal fi taarikh al Quds) the complete History of Jerusalem, 1961 Jerusalem, pp. 498-9. See also G. Pollak "Jerusalem and the protection of the Holy Places in contemporary international politics." (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science 1957) pp.81-2.

But it is important for our study, to note, that the Moslems feared what they called "Jewish intentions to take possession of this holy place of theirs". Jewish repudiation of such intentions did not convince them to the contrary, for they knew of several Jewish attempts<sup>3</sup> to acquire the pavement in front of the Wall, which belonged to the Waqf, by exchanging it with some other plot. The S.M.C. in a memorandum submitted to Luke in a protest against the introduction of the screen on the Day of Atonement, stated that "having realised by bitter experience the unlimited greedy aspirations of the Jews in this respect, Moslems believe that the Jews' aim is to take possession of the Mosque of El-Aqsa gradually on the pretence that it is the temple, by starting with the Western Wall of this place, which is an inseparable part of the Mosque of Al-Aqsa".<sup>4</sup>

There is no doubt that the Mufti and his followers made much of the Wall incidents and succeeded in bringing a revival of nationalist feeling throughout the country.<sup>5</sup> And the ways in which they exploited this religious issue to further their political ends and advance their position within the Movement will be studied later, but it must be stated at this juncture that the Arabs' anxiety concerning the Wall was a genuine one

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3. In 1899 by Baron Edmond de Rotschild and Nissim Bahar. See Memorandum by Bahar attached to Sokolov's letter to Kol. Kisch 19/6/30. London. Zionist archives S/25 File 2899. In 1911 see Zionist Archives S/25 File 2911. In 1915-1916 see M. Assaf (Hitorret Haaravin Be'ay Uberichatam) Arab awakening in Palestine and their escape p.231 remark No. 953. In 1918 Dr. Weizmann was ready to spend £75,000 and even more R. Storrs, Orientalism London 1937 pp. 406-7. Further attempts were made later. As Waqf property may not be sold, plots of land were exchanged. This practice known as "Istibdal" was quite common.
  4. October 8th 1928. Quoted in the Shaw Commission Report Cmd 3530 pp.31-2.
  5. See A Survey of Palestine I p.23.  
See also Darwaza op-cit p.63.

The Arabs' view that it was the Jews - and not themselves - who turned this religious issue into a political one and that the Jews were to blame for causing the difficulties over the Wailing Wall, was shared by the Government of Palestine. In one of his despatches after the "screen incident", Luke wrote "Here it will be well if I point out that Jewish public opinion in Palestine has quite definitely removed the matter from the purely religious orbit and made it a political and racial question. Jews who have made no point of practising their faith have been as loud in their protests as the most orthodox".<sup>6</sup> Writing after the disturbances Chancellor said "there is evidence to show that the Jews, realising the need for arousing interest in the National Home among the Jews in the world and the need for a rallying cry to stimulate subscriptions, deliberately seized upon the Wailing Wall incident of a year ago, and worked it for all it was worth, and converted the religious question into a political one."<sup>7</sup> The Shaw Commission trying 'to select - out of a series of events - an incident, which in their view was more than any other single incident, an immediate cause of the outbreak' selected the Jewish demonstration which took place at the Wailing Wall on the 15th August 1929.<sup>8</sup>

And Arab apologists have hinted since that there was a political motive for this demonstration i.e. "it may have been designed to produce such disorders indicating that the country was unprepared for self-government".<sup>9</sup>

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6. To the Colonial Secretary Amery 13.10.1928 C.O. 733/160/57540.
  7. In a letter to his son, Christopher 30.9.1929. J.C. Box 16/3. A similar claim is made by R. John and S. Hadawi The Palestine Diary 1914-1945 Beirut 1970 pp. 199-200.
  8. Shaw Report p. 155. Though they go on to state "that the acting members of the Palestine Zionist Executive were in no way responsible for and in fact opposed that demonstration".
  9. John and Hadawi op.cit p.207.

It may be argued that both Luke and Chancellor were not totally objective. Because had they blamed the Moslem leadership for inflaming the Wailing Wall dispute, they would have admitted indirectly that the Government was responsible for doing so little to contain the dispute. However, by putting the blame on the Jews they absolved the Government from this responsibility. And as for the Shaw Commission, it has been established since that they were influenced by Chancellor to a great extent. Still it is a fact that the Administration joined the Arabs in putting the blame for the Wailing Wall dispute on the Jews.

Having stated this, let us now examine what were the considerations of the Mufti. He was experienced in exploiting the Wailing Wall problem for his benefit. Already in 1921, during the campaign for the election of a new Mufti of Jerusalem (which ended in his appointment to the post), the Husseinis used the Wailing Wall as a means of assuring the election of their candidate. They claimed that if one of their opponents were elected he "would assist the Jews by selling to them Waqf property and particularly the Waqf of Abu-Midian which included the Western Wall .... he would hand over to the Jews the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque so that they might pull them down and rebuild the Temple".<sup>10</sup>

In 1922 the S.M.C. - with the Mufti as its president - was established. Increasing the importance of Jerusalem in the Moslem World, and repairing and promoting the two big mosques of Jerusalem became two basic elements of its policy and defending the Wailing Wall from Jewish encroachments became its battle cry.

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10. A notice posted on 19/4/1921 in the old City of Jerusalem entitled "Wake up Moslems, the Jews are interfering in the election of the Mufti." see C.S. file 245 I.S.A.

According to two decrees issued in 1840 and 1911, the Jews were prohibited from using certain appurtenances at the wall. By various means (mainly money) the Jews - during the last years of Ottoman rule - succeeded in getting some concessions. These were not official, but were tolerated. The British, after their occupation of Palestine adopted<sup>11</sup> - in regard to the Holy places - the Ottoman formula of the Status Quo. During the first years after the war the Jews continued to bring to the Wall benches and other appurtenances<sup>12</sup>, but once the S.M.C. came into existence, it demanded that only the practices which were recognized officially by the Ottoman regime should be allowed but not the tolerated ones. The Jews objected and the dispute began.

This dispute enabled the S.M.C. to present itself as the defender of the Moslem Holy places. A picture of the Dome of the Rock and above it the Shield of David<sup>13</sup> served their purpose in proving the Jewish designs on the Dome. The delegates of the S.M.C. to the Moslem countries used this picture again and again in their efforts to get support.

The years 1924-28 were comparatively quiet in Palestine. The Arabs were busy in their own conflicts (the S.M.C.'s followers against its opposition) and as a result the Wall dispute was in abeyance as well.<sup>14</sup>

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11. General Allenby's first proclamation in Jerusalem 9/12/1917.
  12. It must be remembered that Kamal al Husseini, the Mufti at the time and Haj Amin's predecessor was tolerant and showed moderation towards the British and the Jews.
  13. All Jewish explanations that the picture served as an ornament or for the purpose of collecting money abroad were of no avail. The Mufti himself made use of this picture in his evidence before the Shaw Commission. Shaw Commission Evidence pp.496-7.
  14. Even during these years the Jews renewed their efforts to acquire the area in front of the Wall, but could not raise the money. See Zionist Archives S/25 File 748. Frumkin pp. 279-276 OpCit

After the screen incident on the Day of Atonement in September 1928, Mr. Amery, the Colonial Secretary, presented to Parliament a Memorandum (published as a White paper) on the Western Wall in Jerusalem<sup>15</sup>, in which the British Government set out the main facts of the dispute and defined the Status Quo as it understood it.

On the whole, this White Paper was more favourable to the Arabs' stand and they were satisfied with it. But as it defined the Status Quo only in general terms and did not specify exactly what appurtenances the Jews could bring to the Wall, the difficulties remained.

The screen incident also gave the Mufti an opening he was looking for. If the Jews were going to convert the religious issue into a political one, he too could do it, and even better. Thus started the famous series of events leading to the outbreak of the disturbances in August 1929 with the Mufti playing the leading role. Though the Shaw Commission concluded that the Mufti "had no intention of utilising the religious campaign over the Wailing Wall as the means of inciting disorder"<sup>16</sup> it is now generally agreed that this was so. Even at the time Mr. Snell disagreed with his colleagues on the Commission and stated that the Mufti "must bear the blame for his failure to make any effort to control the character of an agitation conducted in the name of a religion of which in Palestine he was the head".<sup>17</sup>

More definite was Mr. Williams of the Colonial Office, who wrote, "I think I may say that it is our private opinion in the office that the Mufti and some of his supporters were probably very much more responsible

15. Cmd 3229. His Majesty's Stationery Office London 1928. Published in Palestine in the Palestine Gazette 11/12/1928.

16. Shaw Report p. 158.

17. Ibid p. 172.

for some of the deplorable incidents which have occurred in Palestine than the majority of the Shaw Commission appear to think, and such intelligence information as we have had since the outbreak has tended to confirm this impression."<sup>17</sup>

We have also the admission of Izzat Darwaza - who was employed by the S.M.C. as director of Awkaf - about "those who initiated the rising from behind the scenes".<sup>18</sup>

Following the disturbances, in which the Wall played such a conspicuous part, Chancellor pressed for "appointment of a commission under Article 14 of the Mandate, terms of reference of which should be confined to studying, defining and determining rights and claims of Moslem and Jews in connection with the Wailing Wall".<sup>19</sup> A similar recommendation was included in the Shaw Report<sup>20</sup> and on 14 January 1930 the Wailing Wall Commission was appointed<sup>21</sup>. While the Jews welcomed the Commission, the Moslems declared that they did not recognise the competence of any body, except a Sharia court to settle a question about a Moslem Holy Place.<sup>22</sup>

17. In a minute 26.4.1930 C.O. 733/183/77050 B.

18. Izzat Darwaza. (Hawl al Harka al Arayiyya al Hadiha) Concerning the Moslem Arab movement. 1950 p. 86 My italics.

19. Telegram to Colonial Secretary 4/9/1929 App 11.C.P.241 (2) CAB 24/205

20. Shaw Report p. 166. Actually this was done even before the report was published. See letter by T.I.K. Loyd, the Commission's Secretary to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies 20/12/1929 C.O. 733/177/67492.

21. Because of the opposition of the Catholic Powers, the appointment was under article 13 of the Mandate which facilitated the limited enquiry of the Wailing Wall issue alone, and not under article 14, which would have meant a wider enquiry on the Holy Places in general.

22. Wailing Wall Commission Report, p. 19 see also Esco II, p.614.

However, before the Commission was appointed, Chancellor issued on the 1st Oct. 1929 instructions<sup>23</sup> regulating the use of and conduct at the Wall by both Jews and Moslems. These instructions acknowledged the Jews' right of access to the Wall and specified the appurtenances to be allowed there. Both Arabs and Jews showed much resentment to these instructions. The Moslems complained that these instructions constituted a violation of the "existing rights" as stated in the 1928 White Paper regarding the Wailing Wall. On 8.10.29 the Mufti delivered a protest to the H.C. saying that "the S.M.C. cannot bear any responsibility for the Moslems who cannot find it possible to accept this violation".<sup>24</sup> But the H.C. was firm. Describing their meeting Chancellor writes that the Mufti "threatened that disturbances would occur if the instructions were enforced. I told him that I had approved of the regulations after careful thought ... I also told him that I had no intention of altering a word of the regulations, and that I would hold him responsible for seeing that order was preserved during the ceremonies at the Wall .... Before he left me, I took the opportunity of asking the Mufti if he liked a hot climate. The significance of the enquiry was not lost upon him."<sup>25</sup>

The Executive met on 13.10.29 and decided there would be a complete and peaceful stoppage of work on the 16th Oct. 1929 by Arabs all over the country as a protest against these instructions.<sup>26</sup>

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23. For full text of the instructions see Shaw Evidence II Exhibit 41, pp. 1047-8.
24. "Al Jamiah el Arabiyya" 9.10.29.
25. Chancellor's typescript for Memoirs section on the Wailing Wall. J.C. Box 18/2. See also p. 80.
26. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 14.10.29.

The timing of the publication of these instructions is interesting.<sup>27</sup> In a communique which was published on 10.10.1929 the H.C. stated that the "instructions are of a temporary character .... and will remain in force only pending the determination of existing rights by an authoritative body which "he" has requested the Secretary of State to cause to be constituted".

By making his proposal - to appoint the Wall Commission - public, the H.C. forced the British Government - which was very reluctant to do so - to back him up.<sup>28</sup>

The Moslems, too, opposed the appointment of the Wailing Wall Commission and were speaking of boycotting it. Their view was that the Wailing Wall was their property and they resented the interference of foreigners in regard to Moslem Holy places. Furthermore, they claimed that the White Paper of 1928 had already dealt with the problem - and demanded that it should be implemented. The most clamorous paper expressing this extreme line and calling for boycott of the Wall Commission was "Al Jamiah el Arabiyya"<sup>29</sup>, the mouthpiece of the Mufti.

27. The delay in their publication was criticised by the P.M.C., which stated that "had regulations been issued earlier ..... many incidents would have been avoided. The dangerous excitement to which they led was kept at high pitch until the eve of the disturbances". Summary of the Report of the P.M.C. 17th Extraordinary Session.
28. The first reaction to his telegram of the 4th Sept. 1929 in which he proposed such appointment was very cool. Shuckburgh informed him that his proposal "was raising a good many difficult questions" and that he does "not feel .... that it will be found practicable". (Private letter 12.9.1929. J.C. Box 16/4). After his communique the Colonial Office found itself "committed to a commission of some kind" since the H.C. "would be placed in an awkward position if he had to announce that his proposal had not been approved". The Colonial Office in a Memorandum to the Cabinet 8.11.1929. CP. 309(29) CAB 24/206.
29. See "Jamiah Al Arabiyya" 19/5/30.

But as for the Mufti himself, though he spoke and acted in accordance with the general Moslem line, one gets the impression - from close examination of the Mufti's pronouncements, that his opposition was less than that of his followers. Not perhaps in the matter of principle i.e. that only Sharia Court can settle a question on Moslem Holy places - but on the practical question of boycotting or not boycotting the Wall Commission. Maybe it was because he realized how adamant the H.C. was about the Wall Commission and he did not want to antagonise him, or perhaps because he knew that the Commission would come anyway. But there is another explanation.

The Mufti recognised how much the Wall dispute contributed to his emergence as the most important Palestinian Arab leader. The dispute emphasized the religious aspects of the national struggle against Zionism. The Wall became a real and concrete object which the Arab people had to defend, and which meant to them and was understood by them much more than the abstract national slogans put forward by the Executive. And it was the Mufti who represented this fight to the Moslems and was its symbol. And if the 1929 disturbances reactivated the national movement and placed him on the throne of local Arab leadership to continue the struggle before an international forum could canalize and organise the widespread sympathy for the Palestine Arab cause which was manifested in the neighbouring Arab and Moslem countries, and at the same time advance his fame and strengthen his position.

It can be safely assumed that already at this juncture the Mufti was thinking of the Moslem delegations which would come to assist the S.M.C. in presenting their case before the Wall Commission and of the Islamic Congress which met in Jerusalem towards the end of 1931. As he was also thinking of the possibility of using the Commission's coming in inter-Palestinian Arab politics and with regard to his relations with the Government.

At a meeting with the H.C. on 28.10.1930<sup>30</sup>, he proposed that the Wailing Wall Commission should come only after the Arab delegation had returned from London, so as not to interfere with the delegation's work. After their return with - as he hoped - a certain agreement reached in London, the atmosphere would then be better and the population quieter and a solution of the Wailing Wall question would be found easier. He also expressed his sorrow that the members of the Commission were not British, because the Moslems believed in British Judges and British justice and because British members of the Commission would think of their Government's reputation and their large Moslem interests, while other judges would be affected by Jewish influence which was very strong throughout the world.<sup>31</sup>

Thinking of his position in the Moslem World, if something were to go wrong - he went on to say that the S.M.C. was preparing a memorandum addressed to the League of Nations regarding the Wailing Wall Commission, which would show the importance of the Wailing Wall in the eyes of Moslems. So that if they were displeased with the decision of the Commission they would be excused before the Moslem World.<sup>32</sup>

30. C.O. 733/179/77013. II. Musa Kazin, the President of the Executive and Ragheb Nashashibi, the Mayor of Jerusalem, participated in that meeting as well, but it was the Mufti who did most of the talking.
31. Several days earlier on the 24th Jan. 1930 the Mufti told Ruhi Abd El Hadi of the Government's Secretariat that he hoped no French or Italians would be appointed as these nations had interests in Palestine and their representatives would intrigue. He went on to say that the Jews could bribe French or Italian members of the Commission. Ibid.
32. My italics.

It is important to note that the H.C. tried his best to impress upon the Mufti the limited scope of the inquiry saying that "this Commission had only to deal with comparatively small issues .... and only to decide what actually were existing rights. That the Wall and pavement were admittedly Moslem property and there was no question of deciding to whom the Wall belonged or of the Jews being granted new rights or of the Moslem Holy places being put under foreigners as some Moslems seemed to fear."

The Memorandum to the League of Nations was sent through the Palestine Government on 17.2.1930<sup>33</sup>. The S.M.C. lodged in it their protest against the League's resolution to appoint the Commission but did not hint of any boycott, on the contrary one could read between the lines that the Moslem side would appear before the Commission. However the League's attention was drawn to the fact "that Moslems, in no circumstances, will accept any such settlement or interference which they consider as an infringement of their established rights".

The protest also said that "any reference to the rights and claims of Jews in this Moslem Holy Place is in itself, notwithstanding our non-recognition thereof, a serious infringement of the rights of Moslems".

We have seen above that the question of the Wall Commission got intermixed with that of the delegation to London. Those of the opposition elements who objected to the delegation in general, and to the Mufti's membership of it in particular, used the Wall Commission's coming as an argument, and claimed that it would be much better and befitting if the Mufti

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33. For a full text see C.O. 733/179/77013. II

who was the president of the S.M.C., should stay in Palestine and prepare the Moslem case before the Wall Commission and organize delegations to Arab and Moslem countries and not go to London.<sup>34</sup>

This same argument was held in reserve by the Mufti himself, if he should decide - for one reason or another - not to go to London. And the Government, fearing that he would make trouble if he stayed alone in Jerusalem, pressed for delay in the Commission's arrival, until after the delegation's return, so as to deprive the Mufti of an excuse to remain behind.

Accordingly, the Wall Commission reached Jerusalem only on 19.6.30. They stayed in Palestine for a month, during which they held 23 meetings and visited and studied the various sites and other circumstances bearing on the dispute. Each side had a set of authorised and recognized representatives to act as Counsel. The S.M.C. authorised a battery of lawyers and Sheikhs, headed by Auni Abd Al Hadi and Ahmad Zaki Pasha from Egypt, who represented Moslems from practically every country in the world with a Moslem population.<sup>35</sup> The Moslem side repeated its well-known arguments and based its case on the decisions of 1840 and 1911. With regard to the legal status of the area in dispute, they referred to the registers of the Sharia Court in Jerusalem and especially to Waqf documents.

The Commission left Palestine on 19.7.1930<sup>36</sup> after concluding their work there. Before leaving the Commission tried to bring about a friendly settlement between the parties.

34. Al Karmal 11.2.1930.

35. For full details of the proceedings, witnesses etc. see Wailing Wall Commission Report. With Moslem population.

36. They were seen off by the Mufti. The day being Saturday, there were no Jewish representatives.

At the closing meeting the Chairman emphasized that an agreed solution would be very much preferable to a verdict, and promised that the Commission would hold the door open until the 1 September for proposals and arguments from the parties directed towards that end.

During the sittings, and actually all through the controversy, the Palestinian Christians showed their solidarity with the Moslems. Even those Christian papers which were very anti-Mufti identified themselves with the cause, and contended that the dispute was not a religious, but a national issue which concerned the Christians as well as the Moslems of Palestine, and called on the Christians to support - with all their strength - their brothers, the Moslems, until justice should be achieved.<sup>37</sup>

Outside Palestine, Moslem interest and support was forthcoming and British representatives reported being approached with enquiries, protests etc.<sup>38</sup>

The negotiations to achieve an agreed solution continued, directed by Sir Spencer Davis.<sup>39</sup> No agreement was reached by the 1 September, but the negotiations showed progress so the Wall Commission - in response to a request by the Government - extended the delay until 15 Sept. A second delay until the 8th of October was given as the Moslem authorities in Palestine wanted to consult Moslem representatives from Syria, Iraq and Egypt who appeared before the Commission. It seems however that the decision was left in the hands of the Palestinian Moslems.

37. "Al Carmel" 25.6.30 "Mira't el Sharq" 27.6.30.

38. See letter from British Consul in Damascus to the Foreign Secretary, A. Henderson, 21.6.1930 C.O. 733/179/77013. II.

39. The Treasurer of the Palestine Government who in the absence of the H.C. and the Chief Secretary was the Officer administering the Palestine Government at the time that his mediation started.

Both the Jews and the Government preferred an agreement between the two sides to a decision by the Wall Commission. The Jews were ready to concede on several points,<sup>40</sup> (mainly in form but not in substance. Still these concessions met Moslem religious objections). After long and weary discussions - with each of the parties alone - Sir Spencer Davis prepared a draft agreement.<sup>41</sup>

The Mufti opposed the draft agreement, saying he could not agree to a section in the preamble of the agreement, stating that the Jewish Community have a right of access to the pavement in front of the Wall for the purposes of their devotions. (This formula was already a Jewish concession. Their original one was that "they have a right of access" for the purposes of praying). He was supported only by Amin el Tamimi, another member of the S.M.C. The three other members were inclined to accept the draft agreement and especially Amin Abd al-Hadi who was entirely in favour of it.

The decisive meeting between representatives of the Government and the S.M.C. was held on the 5th Oct. 1930<sup>42</sup>.

40. See F.H. Kisch Palestine Diary. London 1938 pp. 334-335. Describing the proposed settlement Kisch wrote, "The Moslems intend to make the pill as unpleasant as possible for us to swallow. It is, however, worth taking a good deal of medicine.
41. For full particulars of the discussions see Memorandum on discussions with the parties with a view to voluntary settlement of the Western (Wailing) Wall dispute, prepared by Sir Spencer Davis 10.10.1930. See also letter from C.S. to S.M.C. 10.9.30. Memorandum from S.M.C. to C.S. 14.9.30. Letter from C.S. to S.M.C. 9.10.30 memorandum from S.M.C. to C.S. 15.10.30 C.O. 733/179/77013 V.
42. Present were the H.C. the Chief Secretary, Sir Spencer Davis, and on behalf of the S.M.C. the Mufti, Amin Abd Al Hadi, Amin al Tamimi, and Abdul Rahman Taji with Ruhi Abd Al Hadi to interpret. Ibid.

The H.C. explained to the members of the S.M.C. that he did not desire to coorce them in a matter affecting their religion, but he tried to impress them again and again with the advantages of agreement and to overcome their hesitations and reservations. He explained that the proposed settlement would be eminently advantageous to the Moslems, in as much as it ruled out many things which were desired by the Jews and opposed by the Moslems, and which had actually been allowed by himself in his instructions of 1.10.1929.

By then, the terms of decisions of the Wailing Wall Commission were more or less known, and as the Mufti himself hinted there was every prospect that they would be far more favourable to the Jews and more repugnant to Moslem feeling than the proposed agreement prepared by Sir S. Davis.

The H.C. remarked that if the terms of the proposed agreement and of the Wailing Wall Commission's decision would be made publicly known at the same time, it might damage the prestige of those who will decide to reject the agreement, and went on to ask how the S.M.C. if they reject the agreement would be able to justify their attitude and thereafter be blamed by their Moslem antagonists for what they had brought upon themselves by throwing away a far more favourable settlement.

The Mufti, after repeating his objections, said that he himself would prefer that a less favourable decision should be imposed on him from without rather than that he should acquiesce in a settlement however favourable which was in any way contrary to his convictions.

When the H.C. counselled him to show statesmanship, he answered that he was not a statesman but a man of religion.

The discussions lasted almost two hours, but no conclusions were reached. Before the Mufti and the members of the S.M.C. left the H.C. again expressed his sincere hope that in their further deliberations on this matter they would appreciate the paramount importance in their own

interests and in the interests of peace, good order and the general welfare of the country of accepting the proposed settlement.

Two days later the S.M.C. informed the Government of their refusal to accept it.

It should be noted that the Mufti, though in a minority, forced upon the S.M.C. his extreme line. His reasons for refusing the agreement were clearly summed up by the mediator, Sir S. Davis, who write in his memorandum above mentioned "Apart from the difficulties experienced by the President of the Supreme Moslem Council by reason of Moslem religious law, there is, I think, a reluctance on his part to come to an agreement owing to uncertainty as to the future policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to Arab interests. It is nevertheless apparent that in keeping alive the Wailing Wall controversy the President retains politically in his hands a weapon that may be employed at his will". 43

It may be asked why did the Mufti agree at all to start these long negotiations if after getting so much he still refused the agreement. Certainly he did not expect more, when he embarked on them. And it is hardly possible to believe that he entered the negotiations only to satisfy the Government, the Wall Commission etc., because their disappointment following the failure of the negotiations would be even bigger.

A probable answer would be that the Mufti knew well enough that the Government, under pretence of reforming the Sharia Courts and the administration of the Awkaf, was aiming to eliminate or at least to reduce his power, by curbing his control over the S.M.C. Some cables were actually exchanged between London and Jerusalem for that end. Sir S. Davis, who at the time was the officer administering the Government, firmly

objected to any declaration of intention to reform the Sharia Courts and Awkaf, because it might hinder the Wailing Wall negotiations.<sup>44</sup> Because of that objection it was decided to postpone any such action for the time being. So it could well be that by entering into the negotiations, the Mufti prevented an action against him<sup>45</sup> and won a respite of some months during which his position became stronger and any thought of eliminating his influence later became even more difficult.

The negotiations having failed, the Wall Commission completed its report and submitted it to the Foreign Secretary on 16.12.1930. The findings of the Commission confirmed those of the White Paper of Nov. 1928, but while the latter was vague and in general terms, the report is couched in clear and explicit terms. The Commission found that the Wall and the pavement were Moslem property. The Wall was a sacred place to the Moslems, the pavement was not. To the Jews both were holy. The Jews had no legal claim to the pavement, but they had rights of access to the Wall for their devotions at all times. As for the practices of worship, and the appurtenances which the Jews might bring to the Wall, the Commission accepted Chancellor's provisional instructions of October 1929. They restricted the right of the Jews to bring the Scroll of the Law only to special festivals, and prohibited the blowing of the Ram's horn. The Moslems should not be permitted to carry out the Zikr close to the pavement during Jewish devotions, and they were not to build or repair any buildings adjacent to the Wall in such a way as to encroach on the pavement, impair the access of the Jews to the Wall, or involve interference with the Jews during their prayers.<sup>46</sup>

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44. See his telegram 4.9.1930 and minute by Williams 15.9.1930 C.O. 733/193/77304.

45. There were rumours that the Mufti sent Jamal Hussaini to London to try and prevent any action against him. See letter by J. Chancellor to his son, Christopher 24.10.1930 J.C. Box 16/3.

46. See Summary of Wall Commission's recommendations in N. Bentwich. England in Palestine. London 1932 pp. 209-10.

The P.M.C. at its 20th Session in June 1931 confirmed the report and expressed its hope that "it will put an end to the past controversies".<sup>47</sup>

Following the Mufti's refusal to accept the settlement proposed by Sir S. Davis the "Society for the Protection of the Moslem Holy Places"<sup>48</sup> resumed its activities. Several informal meetings and discussions took place, and the Government and specially the Police were worried lest a new wave of agitation, on the lines of that which preceded the 1929 disturbances, would start if the report of the Wall Commission were prejudicial to Moslem interests. The Government, therefore, had some hesitations about the publication of the report in Palestine.

The funeral of Mohammad Ali, the Indian Moslem leader, took place in Jerusalem on the 22nd Jan. 1931, and drew attention in the Moslem World. The Government thought it undesirable to do anything which might add to the excitement,<sup>49</sup> and the publication was delayed.

On the 13 Feb. 1931 was published the letter of the Prime Minister to Dr. Weizmann causing a lot of tension. Col. Kisch, the Chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive in Jerusalem, expressed his apprehension and the Government asked for further delay.

47. P.M.C. Minutes of the 20th session 1931. p.96.

48. After the screen incident on 24.9.28 a General Moslem conference was convened in Jerusalem on the 1st Nov. 1928 under the presidency of the Mufti. This conference decided to establish or rather to adopt an organization which was established shortly before that by the name of "the Society for the Protection of the Moslem Holy Places". The Shaw Commission described the activities of this society as the second important cause in the chain of events leading to the 1929 disturbances. See Shaw Report p. 155.

49. Minute by Mayle 17.1.1931 C.O. 733/195/87013/I.

The Nebi Musa festival that year fell on 2.4.1931 coinciding with Passover. This again caused some apprehension. The idea was either to publish the report as early as possible before the Nebi Musa festival in order to allow time for the excitement which the report was likely - perhaps with some help from the Mufti - to generate among the Moslems, to abate. Or to delay publication - as actually was done - until after the festival.

Then the H.C. went to Britain for his holiday, and the British Government was reluctant to publish the report in his absence.<sup>50</sup>

At last the report was published on 8 June 1931, approximately six months after its completion. Together with it the British Government published an order in Council empowering the H.C. to implement its recommendations.<sup>51</sup>

The Jewish Community, on the whole, accepted the report with satisfaction. But not the Arabs. The Arab Executive met on 9.6.31 to discuss it, and all the Arab papers criticized it sharply. Auni Abd el Hadi, who headed the Arab lawyers appearing before the Commission, declared that the report could be considered formally as a Moslem victory, but there was no doubt that it constituted a political and religious victory for the Jews. The report granted them the right of devotion while according to Moslem's view they were entitled to mere visits of the place.<sup>52</sup>

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50. Minute by Shuckburgh 3.6.1931 Ibid.

51. The Palestine (Western or Wailing Wall) order in Council in Drayton the Laws of Palestine in Force on the 31st day of Dec. 1933. London. 1934 Vol. III p. 2635.

52. "Al-Hayat" 9.6.1931.

The Mufti, in an interview with the New York Times said "We cannot acquiesce with the rights granted to the Jews. No one can expect the Moslems to surrender their legal right of ownership of the Wall in such a manner. We never agreed to the appointment of the Commission, and we cannot accept its decision. All the affair is unjust."<sup>53</sup>

The fellahoon who were then occupied in reaping their crops took little interest in the report, and the announcement - shortly before the report's publication - of the remission of tithes and of the promulgation of the Protection of cultivators ordinance, had a good effect upon the Arab population. However, the religious leaders started to organise a campaign of propaganda against the report, and a flood of cables and memoranda<sup>54</sup> all protesting against the report was sent to the Government, the Colonial Office in London, and the League of Nations and P.M.C. in Geneva.

The opposition did not let this chance go without using it to criticise the Mufti. In a memorandum submitted on the 22nd June 1931, by the Palestine Liberal Party<sup>55</sup> they said "It must be remarked that the

53. "Al-Jamiah al Arabbiyya" 9.6.1931.

54. The Executive Arab Women Congress 22.6.1931  
 The Moslem Christian Society Nablus 11.6.1931.  
 " " " " Jaffa 4.7.1931  
 The Mohammedan Society, Haifa 14.6.1931  
 The Ulemas of Hebron 23.6.1931 etc.  
 Arab Villagers Association Acre 21.6.1931  
 see C.O. 733/195/27013/4

55. The Palestine Liberal Party was founded on 11.10.1930 in Haifa, representing the opposition elements in Northern Palestine (such as Assa'ad Shukairi-Acre and Tawfiq Fahoum-Nazareth etc.) with a view to counteract the influence of the S.M.C. and the Moslem Association of Haifa which supported the Council.

Supreme Moslem Council in Palestine which is constituted of officers drawing monthly salaries from the Palestine Government, have but restricted powers", and went on to say that "the S.M.C. did not hold any powers of representations" from the Moslem World. "As this is solely the right of the Moslems Kings and Princes".<sup>56</sup>

The S.M.C. itself appointed a sub-committee, headed by the Mufti, to study the report. The sub-committee met on the 18.6.30 and drafted a short statement of protest which was sent to the Government on 25.6.1931. A second detailed statement was sent on the 25th October 1931.<sup>57</sup>

A point raised in this statement is interesting. In its last paragraph, the statement says "Article 5 of the Palestine (Western or Wailing Wall) Order in Council, 1931, entitles His Majesty, His heirs and successors in Council, to revoke, alter to amend this order at any time. Under this Article the ownership of Moslems in their Holy Places is subject to revocation or alteration through a non-Moslem authority having no religious jurisdiction to determine such matters which are of great religious concern".

At some point in the discussions on the Western Wall, during the Islamic congress, which met in Jerusalem towards the end of the year, Auni Abd Al Hadi raised an objection to this same issue, i.e. that ownership of Moslems in their Holy places is subject to revocation or alteration by His Majesty the King ..... in council. It was a heated discussion

56. C.O. 733/195/87013/4.

57. Ibid.

and there were strong differences of opinion. The Indian Muslim leader, Shaukat Ali, claimed that the policy of the Moslems towards the British should be one of friendship, while Sheikh Muzaffer, and especially Auni Abd Al Hadi, demanded that the struggle should be against the British and Jews together. When he proposed that the congress should pass a resolution protesting against this right of the British Crown, he was stopped by the Mufti, who ruled him out of order.<sup>58</sup> It says much about the Mufti's position and relations vis a vis the British that the same protest which he himself submitted in writing should be ruled by him out of order in public meeting.

Before concluding this subject two important facts should be recorded :

1. The Report of the Wailing Wall Commission and the Palestine (Western or Wailing Wall) Order in Council, 1931, did put, de facto, an end to the Wall affair, as the Royal Commission said in its report : "on this particular question of the Wailing Wall there has been no serious controversy since".<sup>59</sup>
2. The Wailing Wall dispute, the Wall Commission and its report, mark the start of a real Arab and Moslem interest, and later interference, in the Palestine problem, which was first expressed during the Islamic Congress of Jerusalem in 1931. In the sphere of Palestine Arab politics, it marked the emergence of the Mufti as the most important Palestinian Arab leader.

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58. "Doar Hayom" 12.12.1931. The Arabic press did not describe this incident, mentioning only that following Auni's speech the Mufti urged the speakers to shorten their speeches as time was limited and many more wanted to talk. "Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya" 13.12.1931.

59. The Royal Commission Report p. 70.

Chapter 11The Islamic Congress of Jerusalem 1931

On 6th December 1931, on the eve of the Moslem feast (Laylatu-'lilra), the Islamic Congress opened in Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

This was the third Islamic Congress which met after the First World War. The first one was convened by a committee of Ulema, with the full support and backing of the Egyptian King, in Cairo in May 1926 to investigate the situation of the Caliphate<sup>1</sup>. The second one, termed the Congress of the Islamic World, was convened by King Ibn-Saud and met in Mecca from the 7th June to 5th July of the same year<sup>2</sup>. The third one, in Jerusalem, to which both kings were rather cool, was to a considerable degree a 'one-man show' of the Mufti of Jerusalem.

During June and July 1930, many Moslem personalities arrived in Jerusalem to support the S.M.C. in presenting the Moslem case before the Wailing Wall Commission. Views were exchanged about the possibility of holding a general Islamic conference and opinions were favourable<sup>3</sup>. More practical discussions followed in January 1931 when many Moslem leaders attended the funeral of the Moslem Indian leader Mohammad Ali. The initiator of the Congress together with the Mufti, was Shaukat Ali the Indian leader<sup>4</sup>, who had attended the Round Table Conference on India in London, and who came to Jerusalem for the burial of his brother. Moslem Indian leaders wishing to emphasise the Islamic character of their movement and distinguish it from the general stream of Indian nationalism<sup>5</sup>

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1. For account of this Congress see E. Kedourie Egypt and the Caliphate 1915-1952 in the Chatham House Version. Op-Cit p. 194 - 195
  2. See Ibid . See note p. 48
  3. See declaration of the Preparatory Committee of the General Islamic Congress. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 29.10.1931
  4. I. Darwaza states that the initiators were the Mufti and the Tunisian leader Abd al Aziz al Ta'alabi. See Darwaza Op-Cit p.70. That is perhaps true as far as the idea of the Congress is concerned.
  5. See W.C. Smith Modern Islam in India London 1946 pp.247-249

were seeking to spread among Indian Moslems sympathy towards, and a feeling of mutual interdependence with, Moslems everywhere. The Wailing Wall dispute, and the 1929 disturbances, directed this sympathy towards Palestine<sup>6</sup>.

British Intelligence reports of early 1931<sup>7</sup> speak of a scheme for using Palestine as a focus for achieving Arab and Islamic unity, with the final object of ridding Moslem countries of 'Western domination'. An important feature of the scheme was to be the convocation of an Islamic Congress in Jerusalem in the early summer of 1931. The reports go on to say that because of Arab dissensions in Palestine, the incompatibility of various Moslem elements, and the local pre-occupations of non-Palestinian delegates, the congress might be delayed.

When Shaukat Ali was in Damascus during February 1931, he told his friends that several Moslem leaders, such as Mustafa Namas from Egypt, Amir Said Abdal Kader from Syria and Yassin Pasha al Mashami from Iraq, had provisionally consented to form an Islamic Committee to prepare the Islamic Congress<sup>8</sup>. He also spoke of his agreement with the Mufti, to establish a Moslem University in Jerusalem, for which subscriptions were to be sought from Moslems all over the world which would serve as the nucleus of a vast Islamic propaganda organisation<sup>9</sup>.

On 17 March 1931, the Mufti arrived in Egypt. The Arab Palestine papers, and especially 'al Carmel' (which at the time was against the Mufti) were speculating about the reasons and aims of this visit<sup>10</sup>. The Mufti's paper 'al Jamiah-al Arabiyya'<sup>11</sup> reported only his social engagements during the visit. But it is known<sup>12</sup> that in a private conversation

6. See Supra p. 94

7. See C.O. 733/204/871561

8. The report adds - "It is desirable to accept even these alleged provisional assents with some reserve". Because of his subsequent opposition to the Congress the appearance of Yassin al Mashami's name in the list seems strange.

9. Ibid.

10. 'Al Carmel' 17.3.1931. 20.3.1931.

11. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 13.3.1931. 22.3.1931.

12. See Intelligence report 18.6.1931 C.O. 733/204/87156/1

he described the situation in Palestine as 'decidedly serious' and said that unless there was a radical change in the policy of the Mandatory Government, there would be trouble. Referring to the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann he said that it had the effect of cementing more closely Moslem-Christian co-operation against the British and the Jews. Shaukat Ali's visit, he said, had made a deep appeal to Moslem consciousness and might ultimately alter the whole political and economic situation in the Middle East. He also said that he wished to discuss with Moslem leaders in Egypt the proposed Islamic Congress, which was projected for June of the same year, and at which the formation of an Islamic Federation would be elaborated. This federation would be of vast importance to all Moslems and would, if it succeeded, mean the end of 'Western dominance' in the Islamic countries.

On the 12th May, however, the Mufti received a letter from Shaukat Ali suggesting the postponement for a while of the Congress because of his pre-occupation in India.

A meeting of the Supreme Moslem Council on 26.7.1931<sup>13</sup>, attended by four of the five members, and lasting several hours authorised the Mufti to send invitations to the Congress.

On the 4th September, Shaukat Ali declared publicly that the Islamic Congress would be held shortly in Jerusalem.

During a conversation with Sir J. Chancellor, the ex-High Commissioner of Palestine, on 29.9.1931 Shaukat Ali said that arrangements were being made for the Moslem Congress to be held in Jerusalem about Christmas time. He emphasised that it would be purely religious in character and expressed the hope that it would be attended by eminent Moslems, including the brother of the Amir of Afghanistan.

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13. The Mufti, Amin al Tamimi, Amin Abd al Hadi, Mohi al Din Abd al Shafei. The Times 27.11.1931 as reported by H. A. R. Gibb. The Islamic Congress in December 1931, survey of International Affairs, 1934. pp99. 'To the best of my knowledge this information was not published at the time in any of the Arabic Palestinian papers.'

The invitations were sent out on 20 October<sup>14</sup>. They were sent not only to the Islamic Governments and purely religious bodies, but also to different political and semi-religious organisations (such as the Wafd Party and the Indian Caliphate Committee) which according to the organiser's view formed a new and important element in the structure and life of the Moslem society.

The aims of the Congress, the invitations explained, were to discuss the prevailing situation of the Moslems and examine the certain problems affecting the Moslem world, such as the safeguarding of the Moslem holy places in Palestine, as well as other subjects for the promotion of Moslem interests and welfare.

In addition to positive reactions, the news of the Congress brought a strong opposition on different grounds and in different ways.

Judging by the Mufti's efforts to appease it, the most important opposition from the organiser's point of view, came from the Egyptian Government and Egyptian Court, and I shall discuss it later.

Other Islamic Governments opposed the Congress too. Turkey, in accordance with its' secular policy, as the Foreign Minister declared in the Great National Assembly would have no dealings with the Congress as such invitations were of no value to any country ... and distracted the people from the path of progress. "In particular", he said, "we are opposed to any internal or external policy which makes use of religion as a political instrument"<sup>15</sup>.

The Turkish Government, he continued, had consulted the Persian, Afghanian, Albanian and Hedjazi Governments and they had all agreed not to participate in the congress officially<sup>16</sup>. Later the Turkish Consul

14. "Falastin" 20.10.1931.

15. Oriente Moderno November 1931 pp.579-80 as reported by Gibb Op-Cit p.101.

16. Assaf. Op-Cit p.126

General approached the Mufti asking him to take down the Turkish flag from among the flags of the Islamic countries which were hoisted around the meeting hall.

Ibn Saud took the easy way out. While informing his Cairo representative that he was against holding the Islamic Congress in Jerusalem<sup>17</sup>, he wrote to the Mufti congratulating him and wishing the Congress full success, but informing him that the invitation had reached him too late to be able to send a representative<sup>18</sup>.

A sympathetic message was received from the Amir of Kuwait who excused himself for not attending the Congress because of his preoccupation with his local affairs<sup>19</sup>.

The only Arab King to send an official representative to the Congress was the King of Yemen<sup>20</sup>.

The unofficial Iraqi delegation was distinguished by its inclusion of Kashef al Ghata, the famous Shiah divine,<sup>21</sup> thus making a certain effort to narrow the deep schism between the two great sects of Islam.

In Egypt, the opposition to the Congress was derived from local political circumstances in which it became intermixed. As it was rumoured that the Congress might discuss the Caliphate problem, the King and the Court opposed it<sup>22</sup>. The al Azhar and its Ulama, were not pleased with the possibility that a new Islamic university might be established in Jerusalem. Some Egyptian liberal elements had their reservations too, owing to the 'reactionary character' of the Congress<sup>23</sup>. Those who supported the Congress were centered around the Wafd Party, who because of their growing opposition - at the time - to the British were looking

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17. Ibid.

18. In an undated letter published in 'al Mukattam' and 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya', 10.1.1932.

19. Ibid.

20. See his letter to the Mufti of 6.11.1931. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 20.11.1932.

21. Who on the opening night of the Congress led the prayers of a predominantly Sunni congregation.

22. See E. Kedourie Egypt and the Caliphate Op-Cit. 197

23. Gibb Op-Cit. p.104.

for Arab and Eastern sympathy and saw in the Congress a good opportunity to make a bid for popularity.

Fearing that Egyptian opposition might endanger the Congress as a whole, the Mufti tried hard to appease it. Already on 17.10.31, even before the invitations were sent, the S.M.C. had denied that the Congress would discuss the Caliphate problem. This was repeated in an interview which the Mufti gave to an Egyptian paper<sup>24</sup>. He, himself, went to Egypt on 4.11.1931 to explain the aims and objects of the Congress<sup>25</sup>. On 7.11.1931, he called on the Egyptian Prime Minister for a visit of  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. He assured him that the Congress would not discuss matters relating to Egypt, that the Caliphate problem would not be discussed, and that the proposed University of Jerusalem would not affect the primacy of al-Azhar. He later repeated this assurance in writing<sup>26</sup>. It seems that he succeeded in allaying Egyptian suspicions<sup>27</sup> as the Government consented to send representatives<sup>28</sup>. It later changed its mind, but made no difficulties for individuals going in their private capacities. Most of those were followers of the Wafd, whose leader Mustafa Nahas supported actively the Congress all along<sup>29</sup>.

As for Arab Christian Communities outside Palestine, if they had some reservations towards the Congress they took care not to express them. Some communities later sent it their support<sup>30</sup>.

There is no conclusive evidence as to British official view with regard to the Islamic Congress.

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24. 'Al Jihad' 27.10.31 as reported by 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 30.10.31.

25. Interviews with him were published in Egyptian dailies 'Al Ahram', 'al Jihad', & 'Al Balagh' 6.11.31 as reported in 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 7.11.31 and 3.11.31.

26. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 9.11.31.

27. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' described visit in Egypt as 'victory'. It followed visit to Egypt of Fakhri al Nashashibi who stayed from 30.10. to 2.11.32 & 'with unlimited funds supplied to him by the Jews' as claimed by paper 'tried to wreck Congress' Ibid 14.11.31.

28. 'The Times' 9.11.31 as reported by ~~gibb~~ Op-Cit 104. None of the Palestinian Arab papers mentioned this.

29. See his very warm wable of 6.12.31. 'Falastin' 7.12.31.

30. See for example the cable of the Christians of Irbid and Ajloun in Trans-Jordan. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 7.9.32.

The Foreign Office suggested that the Mufti should be threatened with removal from the post of President of the Supreme Moslem Council if he did not exercise proper control of discussions at the Congress. The H.C. was strongly opposed to such a threat and the suggestion was dropped<sup>31</sup>.

However, towards the end of November, the Mufti was called to the H.C.<sup>32</sup>, in order to define the objects of the Congress and was warned that the Government would not allow the convening of a Congress in which questions might be raised affecting the internal or external affairs of friendly powers. This information was communicated to all governments concerned. The Jews had opposed the Congress. Considering it as an instrument to fight and destroy the Jewish National Home - which it was - they urged that it should be prohibited. They believed that the Palestine Government advised against the holding of this Congress but was pressed into it by the Colonial Office. The latter rejected that, and said that it was primarily at any rate a religious conference and that while certainly not wanting it they had allowed it to proceed<sup>33</sup>. Shaukat Ali, it seems, invited Sokolov, the President of the Zionist Organisation to address the Congress but he refused and suggested instead a Round Table Conference<sup>34</sup>.

The Arab opposition elements also believed and kept on hinting that Britain was supporting the Congress. In an interview given to al-Mukattam reporter in Jerusalem,<sup>35</sup> Sheikh al Taftazani from Egypt, while

31. See C.O. 733/193/77364.

32. Gibb The Islamic Congress Op-Cit p.103

33. See letter from Parkinson to the H.C. (Parkinson's Italics) 11.8.32 C.O. 733/215/97054 about his conversation with Arlozoroff.

34. 'Falastin' (English version) 12.12.31. Zionist sources are not clear about this subject. See file S/25-5 The Z.A.

35. As reported by the Jewish Daily 'Doar Hayom' 15.12.31. it seems that this interview irked the Mufti. His paper, came out with a long editorial criticising sharply al-Taftazani. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 29.12.31.

speaking on the Congress, said about the Mufti, that it was evident not only that he was an official of the Palestine Government, subordinate to the H.C., but that he was a tool in the hands of the Government which directed him at its will.

And in an editorial about the Congress, the opposition paper, 'Miraat al Sharq' said - 'Now, it was proven again, that the Government moves and directs the Mufti'<sup>36</sup>.

An enthusiastic article about the Congress which appeared in the English version of 'Falastin' had this to say - "The British Government stood to both gain and lose from the Congress. It stood to gain if Congress dispersed without bringing political questions into debate, and it effectively closed the door by forbidding the discussion of the affairs of friendly powers. On the other hand, it wanted the Moslem and Arab opinion on its side, in order to help it in its trade, in keeping control of India and in keeping the overland route in friendly countries"<sup>37</sup>.

However, if we take into consideration earlier British support for certain Pan-Islamic plans, and her subsequent support for some Pan-Arab plans<sup>38</sup>, and judging by the general trend of its middle Eastern policy at the time, we can safely assume that the British in general supported the Congress.

36. Mira'at al Sharq 21.1.32.

37. Falastin (in English) 12.12.31. The article is signed by the initials M.R.A. but there are signs that it was written by G. Antonius.

38. For British sympathetic views of these plans see minute by Eastwood 21.9.36 and the letter by Sir A. Kerr to the Foreign Secretary 27.10.36. C.O. 314/75528/44.

As for France and Italy, the other imperial powers, which had a large Moslem population under their control, they did not oppose the Congress openly but approached Britain to make sure that no subjects dealing with their colonies would be discussed and also prevented some delegates from attending the Congress<sup>39</sup>.

The most bitter opposition to the Congress came from some of the people whose interests it was going to defend. The Arab opposition elements in Palestine claimed that the Mufti's main object in convening the Congress was to enhance his own prestige. They pointed to the fact that the Preparatory Committee lacked representative character as it was composed of unknown persons<sup>40</sup>, all followers of the Mufti. The fact that they (i.e. the opposition) were not consulted in the preparations for the Congress proved to them that the Congress was intended by their rivals as a tool by which to exploit the prestige and support of the Islamic world in gaining supremacy in Palestine.

The papers 'Miraat al Sharq' and 'Al Sirat al Mustakim' criticised and fought the Congress all along. One of the opposition leaders, Fakhri al Nashashibi, preceded the Mufti in his visit to Egypt and spread rumours about the objects and programme of the Congress, moving some Egyptian papers to write anti-Congress articles and influencing some al-Azhar Ulami to come out against the Congress<sup>41</sup>. On 19.11.1931 the

39. Actually several delegates who represent the French North African Colonies and Lybia had lived for many years as political refugees in Cairo, and not in their countries.

40. The Committee consisted of the Mufti as Chairman, and Abd al Aziz Ta'alabi Amin al Tamimi, Izat Darwaza, Ahmed Hilmi, Sheikh Mahmoud Dajani, Sheikh Hassan Abu Saud, and Ajaj Nuwayhid as members. See I. Darwaza Op-Cit p.79

41. This in fact, is admitted by the Mufti's paper who attacked Fakhri Nashashibi's visit to Egypt. The paper mentions that most of the anti-Congress articles which appeared in Egyptian press such as that in 'Al-Balagh' of 29.10.31 and 'La Bourse Egyptienne' of 3.11.31 etc., were published in papers either owned by Jews or influenced by them because of their important economic standing. The paper goes on to say that all the anti-Congress campaign of 'Mira'at al Sharq', 'Sirat-al-Mustakim' and Fakhri Nashashibi was financed by Jews. See 'Al Jamah Al Arabiyya' 16.11.31.

opposition published a "Message to the Islamic World" in which they explained their view of the Congress<sup>42</sup>. The Mufti felt bound to publish a counter-message in which he blamed the Jews as instigating all the efforts to cause the Congress to fail<sup>43</sup>.

Recognizing the bad effect and the damage which this bitter division and rivalry might have on the gathering delegates, several independent Palestinians tried from early November to mediate between the two camps. These efforts were taken over by Abd al-Hamid Said<sup>44</sup> from Egypt, but with not much success. He was joined later by Shaukat Ali and the two of them succeeded in convincing the opposition to participate in the Congress and accept invitations<sup>45</sup>. Later, however, the opposition changed their minds and did not participate.

During the Congress, the Mufti tried to prevent any contact between the non-Palestinian delegates and the Palestine opposition elements and there existed a kind of 'war of invitations' with both sides inviting the delegates to dinners, entertainments etc. at exactly the same hour.

The anti-Congress "Congress of the Palestine Moslem Nation" met in Jerusalem at King David Hotel on 11 December 1931. It will be discussed elsewhere<sup>46</sup>, but it should be emphasised here that an impressive gathering which commanded quite a considerable support of the urban and rural Moslem population of Palestine, decided unanimously to withdraw their confidence from the president of the Supreme Moslem Council<sup>47</sup>, who only a few days earlier had been elected as the President of the Executive of the Moslem Congress.

42. 'Miraat al Sharq', 'Al Sirat al Mustakim' and 'Falastin' 20.11.31.

43. 'Al Jamaih al Arabiyya' 25.11.31.

44. The head of the 'Moslem Youth Associations' in Egypt who was considered to be the unofficial observer of Ismail Sidqi the Egyptian Premier at the Congress.

45. See their declaration 'Falastin' 7.12.31.

46. See Chapter 14.

47. 'Falastin' 12.12.31.

But all this opposition, could not really detract from what seemed to the majority of the Arabs the importance and eventually the success of the Congress.

Following the set-back which the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann caused to the Palestinian Arabs and believing that only with the support of the Islamic World would the Palestinian Arabs be able to counter balance the support of World Jewry to Zionism, the Mufti sought to consolidate and systemically organise the widespread sympathy for the Palestine Arab cause which the 1929 disturbances aroused in the Islamic World<sup>43</sup>. The subjects of discussion as submitted by the Preparatory Committee to the general Congress<sup>49</sup> were :-

1. Moslem Co-operation. 2. Purification of the Islamic religion, preservation of its traditions, diffusion of its culture and defence of its holy places (including Al aqsa Mosque and the Buraq). 3. The establishment of a Moslem University in Jerusalem. 4. Restoration of the Hijaz Railway<sup>50</sup>.

The Committee goes on to say that since the aim was to co-operate and maintain a unified front, delegates were requested not to discuss controversial subjects which might increase and cause differences of opinions between the Moslems.

The proceedings<sup>51</sup> of the Congress which opened on 6.12.31 and in

49. In an undated minute. See entry No. 1 in G. Antonius file The Moslem Congress No. 00707 I.S.A. See also *Oriente Moderno* October 1932 pp.324-5 as reported by Gibb. The Islamic Congress Op-Cit p.102.
50. It is interesting to note that an undated article in the Vatican paper 'L'osservatore Romano' stated that the Congress had 2 objects :  
1. The question of Baghdad-Haifa Railway. 2. The establishment of the Moslem University in Jerusalem. See entry No. 15 in G. Antonius file The Moslem Congress file No. 00707 I.S.A.
51. For a full report of the meetings see 'Falastin' 7-18. 12. 1931. or 'Al Jamaih al Arabiyya' 7-18.12.1931
48. See E. Kedowrie *Egypt and the Calphate. 1915 - 1952.* in the Chatham House version Op Cit p. 196. see also N. Sadaqa Op Cit. p. 160 and I. Darwaza Op Cit. p. 80.

which 233<sup>52</sup> delegates participated were on the whole orderly and in accordance with the programme<sup>53</sup> it is interesting to note that the Mufti in his opening speech attacked the Jewish National Home but did not say a word about Britain or the Palestine authorities<sup>54</sup>. It was mainly a religious speech with a call to return to the true Islam.

Towards the end of the second meeting the delegates took the following oath - "I swear by Almighty God to defend the Holy places in Palestine against all offensive acts"<sup>55</sup>.

The Mufti, as expected, was elected President of the Executive of the Congress<sup>56</sup>. Eight sub-committees were formed to make reports on the following subjects :

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|---|--|
| 1. The Constitution of the Congress.                | 2. Propagation of Islam.                         |
| 3. Finances and organization.                       | 4. Muslim Culture and the proposed University of |
| 5. The Hedjaz Railway.                              | al-Aqsa.   |
| 6. Defence of the Holy places and the Wailing Wall. | 7. Publicity, propaganda and guidance.           |
| 8. Proposals laid before the Congress.              |  |

52. Palestine-14, Transjordan-10, Syria-8, Lebanon-16, Iraq-12, Egypt-17, Hedjaz-6, Tunis<sup>0</sup>, Persia-13, Turkey-2, Tripoli (Libya)-11, Tunis-3, Morocco-18, Algeria-5, Caucasus-15, Russia-7, Yugoslavia-22, Nigeria-19, India-20, Java (Indonesia)-4, Ceylon-9, China-1, Issa al Safari Op-Cit p.178. Other sources give different numbers according to a version mentioned by Assaf there were 133 delegates. Assaf Op-Cit note 1495 p.280 and Antonius also speaks of 130 delegates. See his annual report of 1932 to the Ins of current world affairs. G.Antonius file 00704 I.S.A.
53. There was a scuffle during opening ceremony between 2 Egyptian delegates, and the disturbance which followed the attack by Abd al Rahman Azam against Italian Government for its policy in Tripoli. In both cases police had to interfere. Azam was later expelled from Palestine by British authorities before the end of the Congress.
54. For the full text of the speech see "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 7.12.31.
55. Assaf Op-Cit p.126
56. With Zia al Din Tabatabai from Persia, Mohammad Ali Aluba-Egypt Sir Mahmud Iqbal-India and Mohammad Zubara-Yemen Vice Presidents. Rauf al Ceylani-India, Shaykh Ibrahim al Waiz-Iraq and Sheikh Musaffar & Izzat Darwaza from Palestine as secretaries, and Ahmad Zilfi, & Sheikh Mahmoud Dajani from Palestine as Treasurers, and Riad al Solh-Lebanon & Shukri al Kuvatly-Syria as marshals. (controllers) see 'Falastin' 12.12.31 see also Darwaza Op-Cit p.83.

The sub-Committee on the Constitution of the Congress recommended a constitution consisting of 17 articles which was accepted. Articles 3 - 6 envisaged the re-assembly of the Congress every other year, normally in Jerusalem. It called for the election of an Executive consisting of 25 members<sup>57</sup> and of a central permanent bureau of 7 with the Mufti as President and Tabatabai as Secretary<sup>58</sup>. Other recommendations concerning Palestine which were resolved by the Congress were No.8. complete boycott of Jewish goods in all Islamic countries. No.9. establishment of a big agricultural association in Palestine to purchase and exploit Palestinian lands. No.11. to protest against the Walling Wall report as well as against the policy of the Mandatory Power in this respect.

Other protests were against the usurpation of the Hedjaz railway, the Italian regime in Lybia, persecution of Moslems in U.S.S.R. and French law concerning the Berbers in North Africa.

The Congress showed its weakest side when it discussed the problem of finances. As for the expenses of the Congress itself, it was generally understood<sup>60</sup> that they were paid mainly by the Indian Caliphate Committee, but that a certain sum was paid by the Supreme Moslem Council.

But in order to facilitate its future activities the Congress resolved to levy a uniform small tax on all the world Moslem population, and besides it take a part of the "Zakat" as well as skins of the sacrifices<sup>61</sup> which in practical terms amounted to nothing.

The call for contributions resulted in a very poor response. The biggest one was of LP.100<sup>62</sup> - Amir Said al Jazairi gave gift of a gold

57. For their names see Darwaza Op-Cit p.85. From Palestine it included the Mufti, Auni abd al Hadi, and Haj Taufic Hammad from Nablus.
58. Mohammed Ali Aluba, Treasurer, Nabin al Azma Assistant Secretary and Ta'alabi, Riad al Solh, and Said Shamel as members.
59. See H. Sadaqa Op-Cit p.160
60. Gibb, The Islamic Congress Op-Cit pp.105-106
61. 'Falastin' (English version) 12.12.31.
62. by Ahmad Hilmi, who according to certain report, was moved to it by the Mufti, with hope of making good impression on delegates who would elect him Treasurer. 21.12.31. File 8/29 the H.A.

watch and Mr. Charles Crane (of the King-Crane Commission) sent as his present a picture of Jamal al Din al-Afghani<sup>63</sup>!

But these were worries for the future. At the time, the enthusiasm and excitement were great. Though several delegates - including, it seems, Shaukat Ali himself - started to be cool towards the Congress, and the Mufti personally, and showed a more reserved approach. This was the result of the Mufti's behaviour in the conference and the means he adopted to secure his nomination to the presidency and the election of his followers.

Prof. A. H. R. Gibb remarks that "care was taken that the Congress should not assume the appearance of a Pan-Arab rather than a Pan-Islam gathering"<sup>64</sup>.

Shaukat Ali, however, "was disappointed at how Arab rather than Islamic, the Congress turned to be"<sup>65</sup>.

The Mufti and his Palestinian followers were indeed satisfied with the Congress "resolutions" in which politics and religion were blended together and which were in accordance with the Arab Palestinian's point of view<sup>66</sup>.

Most observers agreed at the time that the Congress was a success. G. Antonius went so far as to describe it in the following manner<sup>67</sup> :  
 "It deserves to rank as an epoch-making conference for this reason, if for no other, that for the first time in centuries Moslem effort has at last found its expression in systematic and business-like organisation ... I have no hesitation in regarding this as potentially the most important

63. The ceremony of presentation was described in a long letter which G. Antonius wrote to Mr. Crane. G. Antonius file 00368 I.S.A.

64. Gibb, *The Islamic Congress* Op-Cit p.197

65. H. C. Smith *Op-Cit* p.249

66. H. Sadaga *Op-Cit* p.158

67. In his annual report for 1932 to the Institute of Current World Affairs. *My Italics*. G. Antonius file 00704 I.S.A. This pronouncement seems very misplaced in the light of the absolute death of the Congress 3 or even 2 years later.

constructive effort among Moslems in recent years, and one which is fraught with far-reaching possibilities". Some three months after the end of the Congress, the permanent executive of the Congress began operations. Branches were opened inside<sup>68</sup> and outside Palestine<sup>69</sup>.

In Palestine each opening of a Branch was a part of a local festival<sup>70</sup>. The Mufti and Tabatabai, the Persian secretary of the Congress Executive who lived as an exile in Palestine, usually came from Jerusalem, and after praying in the local mosque they were entertained by the local notables.

The Branch of the Moslem Congress was then opened officially in a popular gathering with speeches about the need to return to the true Islam, and the call for sacrifices, contributions etc. On the whole people were contributing generously<sup>71</sup>.

This continuing activity created, no doubt, the feeling of doing and achieving things. The bureau met regularly<sup>72</sup> to discuss its widespread plans (construction and repairs of mosques, establishing hospitals, clinics etc., organising social assistance to the needy and poor, encouraging co-operative societies etc.) which were explained by Tabatabai to a meeting of the representatives of all branches which met in Jerusalem on 12.3.1933<sup>73</sup>.

68. By the end of 1932, 13 branches were opened all over Palestine.

69. The paper 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' reported the establishment of the following branches in its following issues: 1. Indonesia 4.3.32. 2. India 13.5.32. Iraq 26.4.33. 3 Transjordan (Irbid-Ajloun) 22.8.32 4. Beirut Lebanon 4.9.32. 5. Nigeria 4.10.32. 6. Mombasa for East Africa 10.10.32. 7. Berlin Germany 1.1.33.

70. See for example the description of opening the branches in Lydda. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 12.7.32, in Beerseba Ibid-9.8.32. Beit-Dajan Ibid 24.11.32.

71. See C.I.D. report no.51/32 of 29.12.32 FO 371/16926.

72. There were, however, rumours of strong differences of opinion between the Mufti and Tabatabai as regards method of work - Mufti advocating open activity as against secretive methods preferred by Tabatabai. There were also differences about financial affairs. See Reports in files 8/29 & 8/30 the H.A.

73. For the full speech and description of the meeting see 'Falastin' 13.3.32.

But the main efforts of the bureau, said Tabatabai, were directed towards establishing the Al-Aqsa University. Mohammad Ali Aluba wrote an article about the intended University<sup>74</sup> and so did Shakib Arslan<sup>75</sup>.

The bureau published a manifesto which it sent to Moslem architects and planners asking them to volunteer and come to Jerusalem to prepare the plans for the future university<sup>76</sup>.

Another manifesto was published a week later, directed to all authors, libraries etc., requesting them to donate books for the library of the intended university.

At its meeting of 18.11.1932, the Supreme Moslem Council decided to participate in covering part of the survey expenses when the university would open, and to let it use the building of Palace Hotel<sup>78</sup>.

But money was short and the financial position of the Congress became worse. In January 1933, it was decided to send a delegation to India to collect funds for the university<sup>79</sup>.

The delegation, composed of the Mufti Mohammad Ali Aluba and assistants left Jerusalem on 5.5.1933<sup>80</sup>.

After the tour of the Moslem world they returned to Palestine, having visited India, Afghanistan, Persia and Iraq. No announcement was made

74. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 25.8.32.

75. Ibid 22.1.33.

76. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 15.8.32.

77. Ibid 22.8.32.

78. Ibid 30.11.32. Later the Hotel itself caused the S.M.C. a financial loss as the constructor went bankrupt.

79. 'Falastin' 14.1.33. I. Darwaza says that the fund were both intended for the university and for rescue of Arab lands see Darwaza Op-Cit p.86

80. 'Falastin' 6.5.33.

as to the result of the tour, but it seems they were far from successful<sup>81</sup>. However, the Mufti's followers believed that the moral effect of the delegation's visit was greater than the material benefit. The departure of the delegation was connected with the report that the question of the Caliphate would be raised at the forthcoming second session, and the permanent bureau had to publish a denial<sup>82</sup> saying that the delegation would absolutely not discuss the Caliphate issue, and that its only aim was to try and establish the Al Aqsa university before the second session of the Congress.

When the war broke out between Ibn Saud and the Imam of the Yemen in April 1934, the Congress formed a delegation consisting of the Mufti, Mohammad Ali Aluba, Hashem al Atassi and Amir Shakih Arslan. The delegation visited Mecca and San'a and their efforts at mediation played a certain part in the peace treaty which was concluded about the middle of June 1934 between the two Arab states<sup>83</sup>.

This however, proved to be the swan song of the Congress. The bureau continued to exist in Jerusalem confining itself to routine duties, until it also ceased to be.

Observers agree that the failure was because of lack of money and the political feud with the Nashashibis<sup>84</sup>. Darwaza in his summary of

81. The Mufti claimed that their campaign was very successful, that the Nizam of HaydarAbad contributed Million Rupees, and that other Indian princes undertook to contribute big sums amounting all together to several millions (rupees?) but that the British Government put obstacles in the delegations' way, so they failed. Amin al Musseini Op-Cit p.143. I. Darwaza also blames the British and Jewish influence as well for the delegations' failure. (According to Darwaza the Nizam of HaydarAbad contributed only 100.000 rupees - and not million - to be spent under the supervision of the Government for buying land and making it a Waqf) Darwaza Op-Cit p.86 In addition to the obstruction by the British and by Zionist propaganda, the other reasons given for the failure of the delegation were: the obstruction by Shaukat Ali because of his opposition to the Mufti, the death of King Feisal of Iraq, and the financial crisis.

82. 'Al Jamaih al Arabiyya' 30.5.33.

83. Darwaza Op-Cit p.86

84. Gibb. The Islamic Congress Op-Cit p.108

the Congress says : "In a moment of exciting splendour the Congress organisers really believed that they had succeeded in establishing a big Islamic association ... but later the oriental character started to assert itself by showing neglect, ignoring the regulations, deviating egotism etc., so that the deep and meaningful substance of the Congress was dissipated and only the frame remained<sup>85</sup>."

N. Sadaqa<sup>86</sup> claims that though many resolutions of the congress remained only on paper, it still had a far reaching influence on Moslem public opinion and stimulated their feeling towards the Palestinian problems.

Before finishing the chapter, I would like to examine the reactions of the Arab Christians of Palestine towards the Congress.

Their views were not uniform. They could not ignore some anti-Christian undertones during the proceedings, and the resolution to combat missionary activities.

Still, the paper 'al-Carmel', which usually opposed the Mufti, changed its line and explained it by saying<sup>87</sup> that as the Mufti was making the Palestine problem into a problem of the whole Arab Moslem world, they should give him their full support. At the end of the Congress, the Mufti<sup>88</sup> sent them a letter of thanks for their support.

On the other hand, the paper 'Saut al Shaab' of Issa Baidak from Bethlehem, who in general was pro-Mufti, opposed the Congress saying that<sup>89</sup> the Palestine problem should remain as an all-Arab problem and should not be turned into a Moslem one. The paper also mentioned that many members of the Arab Executive expressed their view that the Mufti should leave politics and confine himself to religious matters.

85. Darwaza Op-Cit p.85

86. Sadaqa Op-Cit p.160

87. 'Al-Carmel' 7/11.31

88. 'Al Carmel' 9.1.32

89. 'Saut al Shaab' 23.11.31.

'Alastin' supported, on the whole, the congress of the opposition, but its English version supported the Moslem Congress.

The Arab Orthodox Conference which met in Jaffa sent the Islamic Congress their greetings. In response to an appeal by Nakhlah Kattan, the Chief supporter of the Mufti amongst the Orthodox Arabs, the Moslem Congress adopted a resolution to regard the Orthodox question as a part of the Arab cause, and to request the Government to grant the Orthodox Community its rights in the church and the right of electing an Arab Patriarch<sup>90</sup>.

It also passed a vote of thanks to the Christians of Palestine and Transjordan for their sympathy towards itself.

The Mufti could well be satisfied with the Congress results. For what it was worth, and as long as its influence lasted the Congress enabled him better to organise sympathy towards Palestine, and to enhance his personal prestige in the Arab and the Moslem world.

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90. 'Al Jamaih al Arabiyya' 21.12.31.

## Chapter 12

The Political Issues

The three issues around which revolved the politics of Palestine during the British Mandatory regime were those of: (i) The Legislative Council and self-government. (ii) Immigration. (iii) The problem of land sales. A fourth issue which was important during the early 30's was the subject of the Development Scheme.

We shall now examine, in short, each of these problems.

(i) The Legislative Council

Article 2 of the Mandate which read "The Mandatory Government shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion"<sup>1</sup>, imposed on the Mandatory Power three difficult obligations:

1. The establishment of a Jewish National Home.
2. The promotion of self-government.
3. The safeguarding of the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants.

The obligation to promote self-governing institutions was not embodied in a separate clause or article<sup>2</sup>. It was lumped together with other provisions into one single article. The compression of these three obligations into a single article gave rise to intractable difficulties. It raised the problems of their compatibility and the degree of priority to be attached to each one of them.

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1. Cmd 1785 p.2.

2. Article 3 which read "The Mandatory Power shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy" refers to the level of Municipal and Local Government. See J. Stoyanosky "The Mandate for Palestine" London 1928 pp.243-7. See also Palestine Report for 1925 Col. No.20 (1926) p.4.

The fact that in the sphere of central government, the mandatory obligation was limited to the development of self-governing institutions only, was continuously denounced by Arab leaders as a violation of the Covenant. But even when they were prepared - for the sake of argument - to accept the Mandate as a legally binding document they maintained that the provision relating to self-governing institutions had been grossly infringed<sup>3</sup>. This was practically admitted by the Peel Report which said<sup>4</sup> "Nowhere indeed in all the fields in which the Mandate operates is the deadlock so complete as in this last field" (of self-governing institutions)<sup>5</sup>.

(ii) Immigration

The Hebrew word for immigration into Palestine - Aliyah - means "ascent", a term derived from the Old Testament where the verb meaning "going up" is always used for entry in Palestine<sup>6</sup>.

Aliyah - immigration - was the essence of Zionism. At the end of the First World War, the Jews of Palestine were less than ten per cent of the whole population. The National Home depended from its beginning on immigration from abroad. And it could be stated in the most simple terms - no immigration, no National Home.

The enactment of the first Immigration Ordinance<sup>7</sup> on 26.8.20 granting

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3. See evidence of Arab leaders before the Peel Commission, Jamal al Husseini - The Peel Evidence p.318 Raghab Nashabishi ibid p.336 and others.
  4. The Peel Report p.362.
  5. For a detailed history of constitutional development in Palestine during the 1920's see the paper "Notes on Constitutional questions" written by Mr. Lloyd - The Colonial Office December 1929 C.O. 733/178/67500. The Churchill White Paper Cmd 1700 p.20.
  6. Esco Op Cit p.349.
  7. See the Para "Samuel and Bentwich and their impact on the establishment of the Jewish National Home. Darwza Op. Cit. pp.33-35.

8. Indeed, with the exception of the year 1923 when there were 21,701 arrivals, this year was not reached until 1933. The full numbers of the authorized immigration from September 1920 to the end of 1929 are table the Peel Report p.274.

9. Cmd. 1700. The Mandate for Palestine p.7.

10. See Arab material submitted to the Anglo-American Committee 14. Cit. C.I.I. Digest Policy 1917-1934.

a quota of 16,500<sup>8</sup> immigrant Jews for the first year facilitated the start of regular immigration.

The Mandate for Palestine which was approved by the Council of the League of Nations on 24.7.22 contained 2 articles which specifically dealt with immigration. Article 2 and especially article 6 which stated "the Administration of Palestine.....shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions"<sup>9</sup>.....

Summing up Zionist policy from 1917 to 1939, Arab ideologists<sup>10</sup> stated that "in the first flush of triumph after the issue of the Balfour Declaration, the political Zionists behaved and spoke with the greatest frankness.... and even Dr. Weizmann.... spoke of making Palestine as Jewish as England is English. The opposition and misgivings which such statements aroused however caused a change in Zionist tactics..... although no doubt, they remained faithful to the ideal of a Jewish State, tactically they thought it best to postpone all other political demands and concentrate upon one demand which although essentially political could be disguised in economic or humanitarian terms: large scale immigration which, if only it could be achieved would make possible the achievement of all other objects.

### (iii) The Land Problem

The first issue being more abstract touched mainly the intelligentsia, and meant nothing to the average illiterate fellah. As for immigration, the second one, immigrants were seen and heard and therefore were more real and more of a problem. But their impact was limited on the Arab urban population of the mixed towns, and perhaps in the villages in their immediate surroundings. The third problem, however, was brought to the personal

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8. Indeed, with the exception of the year 1925 when there were 33,801 immigrants, this quota was not reached until 1933. For full numbers of the authorized immigration from September 1920 to the end of 1936 see table the Peel Report p.279.

9. Cmd. 1785. The Mandate for Palestine p.3.

10. See Arab material submitted to the Anglo-American Committee Op. Cit. C 13 Zionist Policy 1917-1939.

notice of almost each fellah even in the remotest village, as wide Jewish purchases of land resulted in an acute land hunger<sup>11</sup> described thus by Hope-Simpson in 1930 "The extent of land hunger is evident from the fact that every available plot of soil is cultivated, even when it is so small that the plough cannot be employed.

The Arabs well knew that acquisition of land for agricultural settlement, has always been held by the Zionists as a necessary pre-requisite for the re-birth of the Jewish people.

The first ever organized Arab action against Zionism was a petition to the Ottoman authorities signed by 500 Arab notables and people in Jerusalem in 1891, prompted by Jews' purchase of land. The petition which said "the Jews are taking all the land away from the Moslems, starting to control all the commerce and are bringing arms to Palestine"<sup>12</sup>. They saw how from the small beginning of 1882, when the Jews possessed only 22.530 dunums of agricultural lands, the Jewish-owned area gradually increased to 420.500 dunums by the end of the first war<sup>13</sup>. At the start of our period of study in 1930, it increased to 1.200.000 dunums<sup>14</sup>, reaching more than 1.300.000 dunums at the end of 1935<sup>15</sup>, after big purchases specially during 1933-35.

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11. Jewish efforts, mostly successful, to disprove the correctness of this statement are irrelevant. Arabs, even if only as a result of political agitation, believed the statement to be true, and as I emphasized not the facts, but when man believes them to be, dictate conduct. The land hunger was described thus - "There, cultivation is carried on with the mattock and the hoe". The Hope-Simpson Report Op-Cit. P.14.
  12. A. Cohen Op-Cit pp.49-50.
  13. The Jewish Case before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in Palestine. Statements and Memoranda. Jerusalem 1947. p.339.
  14. Evidence of Dr. Ruppin, of the Jewish Agency before the Shaw Commission. The Shaw Report p.113.
  15. The Peel Report p.18.

This Jewish area, was more than 1/5 of the cultivable lands of Palestine, excluding Beersheva a sub-district, of such grade as to be tax assessed for Rural Property tax, and included most of the richer and fertile land of the 5 plains of Palestine<sup>16</sup>.

#### The Development Scheme

But as the result of Jewish policy, not only to acquire ownership of the land, but to ensure that - as far as possible - all the work required on the land, should be performed by Jews, and in the case of the Jewish National Fund, (the official land-purchasing agency of the Zionist Organization) by Jews only, it followed, that when land was purchased by Jews, not only was the landlord changed, but the tenants, and practically all the wage earning class were compelled to move also.

As a result of this policy, a number of Arab villages had entirely disappeared, and have been deleted from the official schedule of villages<sup>17</sup>.

The problem of land-hunger was brought to the fore by the reports of the Shaw Commission and Sir J. Hope-Simpson and dramatised by the human aspect of evicted landless Arabs, the most celebrated case of which, in the early thirties, was that of Wadi Hawareth<sup>18</sup>.

During the years, there grew up a body of landless Arabs. In the White Paper of Passfield<sup>19</sup> the Government accepted responsibility for the settlement of Arab cultivators who were landless.

16. See Palestine Annual Report for 1934 p.52. See also "Memorandum of sales of lands by Arabs to Jews", 22.2.36. C.O. 733/272/75072.
17. See Memorandum by L. Andrews, the Development Officer 27.4.34. C.O. 733/252/37272/1.
18. For a full description of the case see the files "Wadi Hawareth Lands". File 190/77182 for the year 1930 File 200/37032 for 1931 file 213/97082 for 1932 and file 234/17282 for 1933. F.R.O.C.O. 733.
19. Cmd 3692 para 15 p.16. In the Prime-Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann this responsibility was narrowed and defined. See The Prime-Minister's letter, para 9 p.2.

Speaking in the House of Commons on 17th November 1930, Dr. Shiels, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies said, "The scheme (i.e. the Development Scheme) is intended in the first place to provide for those landless Arabs who can be shown to have been dispossessed as a result of land passing into Jewish hands, any balance will be available for both Jewish and Arab settlement"<sup>20</sup>. As for the funds required for the scheme Dr. Shiels spoke of a loan guaranteed by the Government of £2.5 millions.

I shall not try to present here a detailed study of how the Arab National Movement in Palestine dealt with those 4 issues<sup>21</sup>. I shall, however, concentrate on the views and activities of the Mufti in that regard.

Already on January 1930, the magazine "the Christian Century" published<sup>22</sup> an interview with the Mufti in which he strongly criticized the Balfour Declaration and demanded the stoppage of Jewish immigration. "it is impossible to put two swords into the same sheath, likewise it is impossible to put two people into one small country."

When the Arab Delegation<sup>23</sup> reached London towards the end of March 1930, they presented their customary demands of cessation of immigration and land sales, and the establishment of a democratic government. At a certain stage, some of the Arab delegates seemed inclined to accept the concessions on immigration and land sales which the Government was ready to grant, and to be ready in return to defer their demands for constitutional changes.. The more extreme line, however, prevailed and the delegation closed the discussions and returned to Palestine.

20. Hansard. Commons. 5th Series Vol.245 Col. 95-6.

21. For a full study of the subject see Part IV of my wider work Op-Cit.

22. As reported in "Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya" 9.1.30.

23. See chapter 6 "the Arab Delegation" 1930.

The H.C. was trying his best, at that time<sup>24</sup>, to salvage what he could from the policy, as laid down by the Passfield's White Paper, endeavouring to make the new policy which was going to be laid down by the Prime-Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann, differ from it as little as possible.

Discussions were going on then, between Government officials and Jewish delegates about the Development Scheme.

He therefore suggested that Arab representatives should also be invited to be present at these discussions in London, claiming that such an invitation might help to diminish the growing suspicions of the Arabs as to the intentions of the Government regarding the development policy<sup>25</sup>. And suspicions they were. In consequence of the Prime-Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann, all their previous readiness to co-operate in the implementation of the recommendations of Passfield's White Paper changed. They deduced that their share of the £2.5,000,000 development fund would be limited only to (I) the expenditure required to resettle on the land Arabs who have been displaced through their land having passed into Jewish hands, and (II) to develop the land in the hill districts, while the wide remainder of the £2.5 million will be expended in land development for settlement by the Jews.

"Was it really going to be so", Chancellor wrote, "the confidence of the Arabs in the British Government will be lost once and for all"<sup>26</sup>.

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24. See his long cables of 12.1.31 and 24.1.31 to the Colonial Secretary in which he commented on the draft of the P.M.'s letter to Weizmann. C.O. 733/199/87072.
25. See his cable to the Secretary of State 19.3.31. C.O. 733/210/87402/1 The discussions in London were agreed on by the Cabinet which also decided that "It being understood that these proposals (i.e. the Development Scheme) would also be discussed simultaneously with the Arabs by the High Commissioner in Palestine. Cab 13(31) 11.2.31.
26. In a private letter to Sir J. Shuckleburgh 1.3.36. C.O. 733/210/87402/1

Chancellor sincerely wanted a second Arab Delegation to go to London, but fearing the Government would be reluctant to consider such an idea, he used another argument - besides that of diminishing the Arabs' suspicions - to persuade the Government to agree to the Delegation's coming. He suggested that it might furnish an opportunity for bringing the leaders of the Jews and Arabs together.

In that connection, it would be useful to examine here Jewish endeavours to contact Arab leaders. Weizmann, and other Zionist leaders, were making at the time, quite an effort to meet Arab leaders. All through 1930, when the Arab Delegation was in London during April-May, and then towards the end of the year, Arab leaders were invited to meet the Zionists at a round table conference and refused<sup>27</sup>.

These efforts increased after the publication of the Prime-Minister's letter. The Arabic newspaper "Falastin" described it thus: "After achieving his victory by obtaining the Prime-Minister's letter, Dr. Weizmann plans now to consolidate it by reaching an understanding with the Arabs<sup>28</sup>".

At the beginning of February 1931, Weizmann announced to Lord Passfield "his intention of visiting Palestine about February 26th, in order to try and come to terms with the Arab moderates"<sup>29</sup>.

On 17.2.31, Sir S. Wilson - The permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office wrote to the H.C. Lord Chancellor "of Weizmann's visit. His primary object, at this juncture, is to arrive at some kind of understanding with the Arabs, which will form the basis for better relations in the future"<sup>30</sup>.

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27. Survey of International Affairs, 1930. p.287. See also Sykes Op-cit p.149.

28. "Falastin" 20.3.31. The paper went on to say that though Weizmann met 2-3 leaders of the Syro-Palestine congress in Egypt, no Arab would agree to meet him in Palestine with the exception of some known traitors.

29. Cab 11(31) 4.2.31.

30. C.O. 733/203/87139.

Weizmann's efforts to establish contacts with the Arabs in order to reach a certain understanding were looked on with favour and encouraged by the British Government in London. The Inter-Departmental Sub-Committee of the Cabinet Committee on policy in Palestine recommended that "His Majesty's Government might consider sympathetically any proposal for a round table conference with representative Jews and Arabs"<sup>31</sup>.

A big part of Dr. Weizmann's visit<sup>32</sup> to Palestine - March 18th to March 31st - was "devoted mainly to the examination of ways and means towards reconciliation with the Arabs"<sup>33</sup>. On March 27th he attended a joint session of the Jewish Executive and the managing Committee of the Vaad Leumi on the subject of Arab relations. "He spoke with deep feeling and earnestness when pressing representatives of the Yishuv to understand that an agreement with the Arabs must be sought and found."<sup>34</sup>

But all his efforts to contact Arab leaders failed.<sup>35</sup> "The Arab

31. In a memorandum to the Cabinet 7.2.31. C.O. 733/197/87050.
32. The security arrangements of which seemed to worry the British. On the 25th February 1931, the Colonial Secretary cabled the H.C. in Palestine instructing him to take all necessary precautions. The H.C. in turn, passed the instruction to the Commandant of Police. C.O. 733/203/87139. In a letter of the 10th March 1931, the Air Ministry - which were then responsible for security of Palestine - informed the Colonial Office that they are "a little alarmed at report that Dr. Weizmann is to visit Palestine.....It appears to us all the more important just now in view of the delicate position in Transjordan vis-a-vis Ibn Sand.....Ibid.
33. Kisch Op-Cit p.394.
34. Ibid p.396.
35. Weizmann intended also to visit Trans-Jordan. A month approximately earlier two Jewish leaders, Kol. Kisch the Chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive, and Mr. D. Yellin, visited King Hussein who "sent for Abdallah and told him that he should always respect that kinship and should do his utmost towards establishing friendly relations between the two peoples". Ibid p.387 Arab papers attacked the Jews strongly about this visit. See "Falastin" 23.2.31.

Emir Abdallah sent a message that he would welcome Weizmann in Amman, but a combined opposition of the Palestine Government, using Weizmann's safety as the ground for its refusal to allow the visit - and the Mufti's pressure, succeeded in blocking the visit. Kisch Op-Cit P.396. See also C.O. 733/203/87139.

moderates", whom he told Lord Passfield, he would try to meet "were simply not there". It could be argued that maybe they were afraid, and had not the courage of their convictions to come forward openly, but it seems more probable that following the Prime-Minister's letter the moderate camp vanished, for the time, at least. Col. Kisch, who was better acquainted with local conditions, "read" the situation better and knew that the time was ill-suited, he had therefore tried, without success to persuade Weizmann to postpone his visit.

Only in Beisan, on 22.5.31 was Weizmann welcomed by some local notables who brought on themselves the wrath of the Arab press.<sup>36</sup>

However, from Arab reactions to these Jewish efforts, it can be deduced that the possibility of a positive response to them by one or more Arab leaders, was seriously considered and fought against. The Office of the Arab Executive met daily for 3 weeks - except Fridays and Sundays with "their main business, was to watch Weizmann's movements and to see that he does not meet leading Arabs"<sup>37</sup>.

The decision of the Executive Committee passed at its meeting of the 2nd March<sup>38</sup>, "to refuse totally and completely any contact with the Zionists", was mentioned almost daily in the press. In another declaration to the Arab people, on the 24th March, the Executive forbade any contact with Dr. Weizmann, saying it would not hesitate to publish in public the name of any Arab whoever he may be, who would betray his people by meeting Weizmann.

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36. See "Al-Jamiah al Arabiyya" 25.3.31. 18 notables of Hebron wrote a mazbata inviting Weizmann to visit Hebron and meet them. This move was initiated by the opposition elements. Because of the strong opposition to it, the visit did not take place. Ibid 22.11.31.
37. A letter from Chancellor to Passfield 24.3.31. C.O. 733/203/87139. See also "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 24.3.31.
38. For account of the meeting see 3797:65 I.S.A. At that meeting the Arab Executive decided also to establish an "Arab National Fund" (Sanduk al Umma) which was to serve as its financial organ with the aim of preserving Arab lands and keeping them in the hands of their Arab cultivators. For the activities of the Fund see Chapter 12 in my wider work Op-Cit.

The most active in this respect was "Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya", the Mufti's paper. In a series of articles<sup>39</sup>, it cautioned against Jewish evil devices such as round table conference etc., the aim of which was to convince the Arabs to give in to the "fait accompli" of the policy of the Prime-Minister's letter, and to save the Zionist from the terrible crisis - financial and general - in which they found themselves because of the Arab opposition.

"On March 13th the Mufti of Hebron, acting on a general instruction from the Mufti of Jerusalem, delivered a sermon insisting that no negotiations with the Zionists should be undertaken"<sup>40</sup>. Similar sermons, no doubt, were preached all over Palestine.

The result - as expected - was that Weizmann did not meet any Arab leader.<sup>41</sup>

The half-hearted attempt of the H.C., who was asked by the Colonial Secretary "to do all he could to help Weizmann establish friendly relations between Jews and Arabs"<sup>42</sup> failed too. He - like Kisch - was of the opinion that Weizmann's visit was very ill-timed and he was very reluctant to arrange the meeting.

Having failed in arranging a meeting in Palestine he now proposed sending an Arab Delegation to London where opportunities of bringing Arab and Jewish leaders together were better.<sup>43</sup>

39. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 13.3.31, 19.3.31, 20.3.31, 22.3.31, 25.3.31, 27.3.31.

40. Kisch Op-Cit P.394

41. But when the fact that the Mufti left for Egypt on 16th March 1931, started a wave of all sorts of rumours and speculation by the opposition paper Al Carmel, there were people who "explained it by the Mufti's desire to be quite safe against any accusations that he secretly met Weizmann. Ibid p.393.

42. C.O. 733/203/87139.

43. Chancellor also cabled Passfield on 23.3.31 informing him that Weizmann Agreed to the proposal that Arab representatives should be invited to London to participate in the talks. Ibid.

Accordingly, he was authorised by the Colonial Secretary to sound Arab leaders as to whether an invitation to London would be acceptable to them<sup>44</sup>.

The Mufti's paper, "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" stated its belief that a delegation to London would not be of any use but would damage Arab interests<sup>45</sup>.

The Executive Committee met on 14.4.31 under the presidency of Musa Kazim and decided against sending a delegation to London. It agreed, however, to participate in the discussions about the Development Scheme in Jerusalem but not together with Jewish delegates<sup>46</sup>.

All Arab papers, in differing degrees, welcomed the Executive Committee's decision. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" set the tone when it stated<sup>47</sup> that "acceptance of the Government's invitation to send a delegation to London would have meant an insult to the nation's honour, and desertion from its principles and ideas. The discussions in London would have constituted the second stage in which only the Development Scheme, would be discussed. The first stage, in which the political issues - on basis of which the development policy would be decided - were discussed, was won by the Jews with the Prime-Minister's black letter to Dr. Weizmann, so no good would come to the Arabs from accepting the Government's invitation".

On the 16th April 1931, the H.C. met Arab leaders<sup>48</sup>. They submitted to him the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee meeting of the 14th April and requested that a copy of it dated 15.4.31 would be transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

44. In a cable 31.3.31. C.O. 733/210/87402/1.

45. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 12.4.31.

46. For a full record of the meeting and a full text of the decisions, see file 3797:65 I.S.A. See also "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 15.9.31.

47. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 15.4.31.

48. Those present were the members of the Arab delegation to London in 1930 - except A. Rock. For a description of the meeting see C.O. 733/210/87402/1.

The H.C. tried to persuade them to change their resolution but failed. The Mufti himself did not express his opinion during the meeting but it should be noted that 3 out of the 5 members of this delegation which met the H.C., were during the Executive Committee meeting in favour of sending the delegation to London<sup>49</sup>. The fact that they followed a more firm line during the meeting testifies to their belief that the general Arab mood at the time, was on the whole - in favour of such a hard line. Feelings still ran high and the temper of the Arab population was bitter and excited, with lots of rumours circulating about the Jews buying big plots of land and of further evictions of Arab tenants.<sup>50</sup>

The position taken by the Arab leaders in this meeting was widely praised by the Arab press. "Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya", the most critical - at the time - of the Arab Executive wrote "Not since its election in the Seventh Arab Congress, was the posture and the status of the Arab Executive so honourable as at its last meeting with the H.C. when it refused to concede to him and accept his suggestion to send a delegation to London. This refusal is a big victory to the national cause"<sup>51</sup>.

Emir Abdallah of Trans-Jordan was then visiting Jerusalem and it was rumoured that he was summoned by the H.C. in an effort to try and influence the Executive to change its mind regarding the delegation. Even were it so, the Palestinians were not in a mood to be influenced by him.<sup>52</sup>

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49. Mousa Kazim al Hussein, Jamal al Hussein and Auni abd el Hadi. Also Y. Farraj from among the officers of the Executive was for it. Only I. Darwaza the fifth member of the office voted for the other resolution, which he himself proposed. The Mufti and R. Nashashibi the other 2 leaders who saw the H.C. were not members of the Executive.
50. For Arab views of the land problem at the time and Arab resentment against further Jewish purchase of lands, see the article "Wadi Kaabani after Wadi Hawaret". "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 22.4.31.
51. Ibid 23.4.31. See also issue of 19.4.31.
52. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" went even so far as to caution the Emir by praising him as a clever and experienced leader who would certainly not embark on such a venture as trying to influence a people against a fateful resolution of the Executive - its recognized leadership - as such a foolish step would be strongly resented by the people themselves. 20.4.31.

On the 21st April, the H.C. communicated to the Secretariat of the Arab Executive an outline of the Development Scheme. An urgent meeting was convened<sup>53</sup> that night at the house of Musa Kazim the President of the Executive. Besides him it was attended by the three joint secretaries of the Executive, Auni Abd El Hadi, Jamal al Hussein and Mugannam Mugannam, and the 2 national leaders outside the Executive, the Mufti, Haj Amin, the President of the S.M.C. and Ragheb Nashashibi the Mayor of Jerusalem. The general view was that the Development Scheme in the form presented by Government, would not be in favour of the Arabs, and therefore there should not be any official discussion. But at the same time it was agreed that the three secretaries of the Executive should meet the next day the H.C. and speak with him in their personal capacity. The Mufti did not oppose this decision.

This meeting during which the Arab leaders offered their comments on the outline of the Development Scheme, took place on 22.4.31,<sup>54</sup> but when a communique<sup>55</sup> was published on 24.4.31 on the discussions, about the

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53. The invitations were sent through the telephone. For 'record' of the meeting see what was said about it by the three joint secretaries at the Executive Committee's meeting of 16.8.31, 3797:65 I.S.A. See also the interview given by the Mufti and published in "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 21.8.31. The Mufti gave this interview in order to deny the hints published in "Al Carmel" of 19.8.31 to the effect that he agreed to hold the discussions with the Government. But he did not comment on what Mugannam said during the Executive Committee that the Mufti did not oppose their going to speak with the H.C. in their personal capacity.
54. Arab papers did not report then on the contents of the meeting. For a full description of the meeting see Chancellor's cable to the Col. Sec. 22.4.31, C.O. 733/210/87402/1 and the record of the Executive Committee's meeting of 16.8.31. File 3797:65 I.S.A. It is significant that these discussions were kept secret even from the members of Arab Executive Committee who were informed of them only about 4 months later.
55. For text of the communique, see C.O. 733/210/87402/2. The communique was published as a result of Jewish insistence. The representatives of the Colonial Office in the Inter-Departmental Committee which directed the discussions with the Jews, objected to it but had to give in. See minute by J. Shackburgh, 28.4.31 Ibid.

Development Scheme, with Arab delegates in Jerusalem and Jewish delegates in London, the Executive bureau fearing an outcry immediately retreated and published a statement<sup>56</sup> in which it denied having any official discussions with the Government.

From the above it could be seen that the extreme line adopted by the Mufti, even though expressed indirectly in his mouth-piece "Al Jamiah Al Arabiyya" (as he did not pronounce himself openly in this matter), prevailed against the views of the Secretariat of the Arab Executive with Musa Kazim, Jamal Husseini and Auni Abd el Hadi aided perhaps by, the behind the scenes influence of Emir Abdallah and the open efforts of the H.C. But perhaps on this occasion his hard line proved to be the right one, and the sober and moderate views of the Executive Secretariat, had they been followed, would have not brought the Arabs any real fruit. Because, in the meantime, the Jews in London were using all their influence and able diplomacy to achieve what was described by the H.C. Chancellor in the following words: "The policy of the Jewish Agency has all the time been to postpone the operations of the Development Commission, until the Jews are in a position

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56 "Falastin" 25.4.31. The Executive bureau repeated its denial in a special interview which they had for that reason with the H.C. on 26.11.31 even though it was a Sunday. They protested strongly against the publication of the communique which made it appear as if official negotiations were then in progress with the Arab Executive while they emphasized - "during the previous contacts they had expressed their personal opinion only and had not spoken in their official capacity.

to take advantage of them and to prevent the settlement of any Arabs on any land that may be available"<sup>57</sup>. The Agency succeeded also in blocking the appointment of Sir John Hope-Simpson as the director of the Development Scheme though he was strongly backed by the H.C. Sir John Chancellor,<sup>58</sup> and was regarded as the best available man by the Colonial Secretary.<sup>59</sup>

In his place, Lord Passfield selected Lewis French, formerly Chief Secretary in the Punjab, who was appointed as the Director of Development and left for Palestine in August 1931. His duties were described in a lengthy dispatch.<sup>60</sup>

The Arab Executive met on the 16th and 17th August, following the strike which was declared by the Arab Congress of Nablus<sup>61</sup>, all over Palestine, on the 15th, as a protest against the Government's arming of the Jewish Colonies.

The meeting was presided over by Musa Kazim and attended by 32 members with 2 additional persons representing the Nablus Congress. The discussions<sup>62</sup> were excited and heated and all along the extremist opinion prevailed.

57. In a letter to Williams of the Colonial Office 10.5.31 C.O. 733/210/87402/2. For other manifestations of the Jewish influence in action see letter by Malcolm MacDonald member of the Inter-Departmental Committee to Sir S. Wilson of the 10th July 1931 where he writes "This is simply an expression of my alarm at what had happened" (i.e. the publication of the development scheme before the Zionist Congress, thus weakening the position of Weizmann. Because of that, the publication was actually delayed until after the Congress) "and of my belief that the situation will never improve as long as the administration in Jerusalem so consistently ignores Jewish susceptibilities", and another letter by the Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald to the Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield of the 30th July 1931. Very revealing in that respect are also the Minutes written in that file by Shuckburgh and Williams. Commenting on the fact that the Jews put pressure - using him the P.M. Shuckburgh wrote in a minute to Sir S. Wilson on 25.9.31 "it is embarrassing to say the least of it, that we should be obliged... to send another message to the Acting High Commissioner saying (in effect) that we dare not do something because the Jews don't like it. But I hardly see how it is to be helped." *Ibid.*

58. See record of his conversation with the Secretary of State. 7.5.31.

59. See his letter to the Prime Minister C.O. 739/87050/2. 30.4.31. *Ibid.*

60. See despatch of Secretary of States for the colonials to the High Commissioner of Palestine No.487 of 26th June 1931, C.O. 733/211/87402. The dispatch was incorporated in the Hansard, House of Commons. Co. 1060: 64. 20.7.31.

61. For the Arab Congress of Nablus see Chapter 15.

62. For record of the discussions and the resolutions see file 3797:65 I.S.A. See also "Al-Hayat" 18.8.31 and "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 18.8.31.

The 3 joint secretaries of the Executive who met at the time the H.C. came under very strong fire, and all their explanations that no official discussions were held, were of no avail. They were even criticised - which was not usual in Arab circles, by some of their close associates. Sheikh Muzaffar even demanded the resignation of the Secretariat of the Arab Executive. The meeting rejected the Development Scheme.

The second session also was governed by a spirit of bitter discontent with the Government's policy of arming some of the Jewish colonies. The speakers' general tenor was distrust of the Government and a demand for a vigorous measure of opposition to its policy, even to the extent of civil disobedience. Jamal Husseini proposed that the Executive should publish a manifesto to the people calling on them to arm in order to defend themselves.<sup>63</sup> The meeting then passed several political resolutions of an extreme nature.

The problem of the Development Scheme continued to be discussed by Arab leaders among themselves and in formal and informal contacts with the authorities.

On 18th September 1931, Musa Kazim sent to the Officer administering the Government a long memorandum presenting the Arab Executive's answer to the Development Scheme.<sup>64</sup>

The new H.C., Sir A. Wanchape met the officers of the Executive Secretariat and discussed with them the Scheme.<sup>65</sup>

63. Jamal al Husseini's appearance that day at the Executive Committee's meeting marks actually a turning point in his political views. Until then he was perhaps one of the strongest advocates, among Arab leaders, for co-operation with the British. After that he started to follow a more extreme line until he reached the stage when the H.C. Sir A. Wanchape described him as "the most honest but most fanatical among all Arab leaders. C.O. 733/236/17313. Perhaps the issue of the arming of the Jews really moved him, but it can be safely assumed that the strong criticism directed against him one day earlier, for his readiness to co-operate with the Government played an important role in this change.

64. For a full text see C.O. 733/211/87402.

65. For a description of the meeting see C.O. 733/214/97049/Pt.2.

The Arab Executive Committee discussed the subject again in its meeting<sup>66</sup> on 6.3.32 and decided to reject the Government proposal to form an ad hoc Committee to consider and attempt to settle the problem of finding other lands for the settlement of the Wadi Hawareth Arabs.

Actually, the problem of settling the Wadi Hawareth Arabs was the most pressing one facing the Director of Development. Being the most striking case - and perhaps one of the very few real ones - of dispossessed landless Arabs, their re-settlement, minutely planned, was to be the striking proof of the sincerity of the Government's intentions.

Schemes of re-settlement costing, with the land, more than £62,000 were prepared at Tell-esh-Shauk and adjoining lands in the Beisan area. In addition the H.C. authorised special expenditure for preliminary tractor ploughing and land improvement. Work was commenced on 1st April, 1933, and by 31st August 1933, the major portion of the area was ready for occupation. In order that the Arabs (the Wadi Hawareth Arabs) would have food for their subsistence and fodder for their animals during the winter of 1933/34, a quantity of millet and dura was grown on the Tel-esh-Shauk Estate, to be harvested by them on their arrival. But they never arrived there. Preferring to stay near their original habitat, they refused to take up the land and be re-settled. And though they were encouraged in this by extremist agitators both from the Istiqlal party and the Communists<sup>67</sup>, it can be safely assumed that the real reason was, that they obtained there a living, many of them by being employed in the neighbouring Jewish colonies.

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66. For a report of the meeting see 3797:65 I.S.A.

67. See the C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation Summaries No.17/33 of 20.6.33, No.18/33 of 7.7.33 and No.19/33 of 21.7.33. F.O 371/66926.

After Mr. French submitted his reports<sup>68</sup> to the Government copies of them were given on 13.6.72 both to the Arab Executive and the Jewish Agency which were asked to offer their observations to the H.C.<sup>69</sup>

A Jewish intelligence report<sup>70</sup> states that the French reports were discussed shortly after in an informal gathering of Arab leaders in the Mufti's house. The Mufti expressed his view that the Arabs should oppose the reports even only as a tactical move as it would compel the Government to propose to them better conditions.

The Arab Executive Committee met on 9.9.32 and again on 28.9.32<sup>71</sup>. All the speakers who discussed the French reports opposed them strongly and the meeting - on Izzat Darwaza's proposal decided:

- (I) to reject the Development Scheme because of its detrimental effects of the Arabs.
- (II) to ask the authorities to prohibit the sale of land to Jews.

68. The first on 23.12.31 and a supplementary one of April 20th 1932. See C.O. 733/211/87402. The reports on the whole were pro-Arab. For a pro-Arab evaluation of them, see Jeffries Op-Cit pp.367-8. The Jews did their best to try and prevent the publication of the French reports or at least "those parts which expressed views on policy incompatible with the P.M.'s letter to Dr. Weizmann and which went beyond Mr. French's terms of reference". See letter from M. Macdonald to the Col. Sec. P. Cunliffe-Lister 22.4.32, record of Interview between Cunliffe-Lister and Dr. Brodesky 29.4.32, Sokolov's cable to Cunliffe-Lister 8.5.32 and Brodesky's letter to Parkinson 13.5.32. C.O. 733/214/97049/2. However, "the French investigations, if they did not quite, as is sometimes suggested, dispose of the "landless Arab" as a myth, certainly established that far fewer Arabs had been dispossessed than had been suggested". Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1945 Information Paper No.20. R.I.I.A. London 1964. The real contribution of the French reports to future developments was negligible.
69. They were also asked to treat the reports in the meantime, as strictly confidential.
70. See report dated 27.6.32, File 6/32 the H.A. No other source, however, mentions this meeting.
71. For record of the meetings see file 3797:65 I.S.A.

- (III) To ask the authorities to stop Jewish immigration entirely.
- (IV) To declare a general strike on November 2nd (the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration), and to protest on that day against Jewish immigration and sale of lands to Jews.

But then the meeting discussed hotly for more than 2 hours those passages in the French Report, which stated that members of the Arab Executive and Supreme Moslem Council sold land or acted as agents. All speakers demanded that the Executive Committee should purge itself of the traitors, and called for the convening of the Eight Congress. The meeting then elected a committee consisting of Auni Abd El Hadi, Sheikh Muzaffar and Izzat Darwaza to investigate the allegation that members of Arab Institutions sold land to Jews and to submit a report within three months.<sup>72</sup>

The observations of the Arab Executive Committee on the French Report were submitted on 10.3.33. The memorandum<sup>73</sup> written by Auni Abdal Hadi concluded "It is considered that the fundamental object of the Development Scheme will be to allot additional lands to Jewish immigrants and to continue the present "direct rule" for tens of years. In these circumstances the Arab Executive Committee feels it incumbent upon itself to reject the proposed scheme".

The Jews, for their own reasons, rejected the scheme too, so the H.C. wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 15.4.33 what actually amounted to a recommendation to shelve the scheme because of its rejection by both Arabs and Jews, and because of financial considerations.

On 22.6.35 the Development Scheme - achieving very little, was finally terminated<sup>74</sup>. Before we complete our study of the Development Scheme we should examine the Mufti's role in it. Though he was not involved in this

72. This decision could perhaps count partly for the fact that the Executive Committee did not meet for another year and then it met for the last time on 8.10.33. As for the investigation and the report I never came across any further mention of them.

73. For a full text see C.O. 733/231/17249.

74. See letter of the Col. Office to the Treasury 22.6.35 Ibid.

matter directly his paper Al Jamiah al Arabiyya, reflecting his line and expressing, no doubt, his views was leading the fight against it since its initiation through all its stages. The paper fought against any contact with Dr. Weizmann and the Jews, it opposed strongly sending a delegation to London and it was against accepting the Development Scheme.

Later, the publication of those passages in the French report concerning the complicity of certain Arab personalities in Jewish purchases of land supplied the Mufti's camp with good arguments against the opposition.

All through that period, the Arab Executive led and directed Arab moves with regard to the 3 other issues. Little by little, however, the Mufti, who was mainly active until then behind the scenes, started to act openly.

The economic position of the fellahin continued in the meantime to be deplorable and Arab papers complained of the worsening situation<sup>75</sup>. The High Commissioner described how his visits through the country made him realise the extreme poverty of the fellahin where many lost half their flocks through starvation, and he spoke of the general hopelessness which prevailed in each community. And remarking about the relation of politics and the economic situation the H.C. said that the plea that Government had done little for the fellahin was widely held, and that it was inevitable under such circumstances that the fellahin should be ready to believe anyone who told them that the Government was to blame for their unhappy situation. The H.C. then commented dryly "Well does Haj Amin know the Arabic proverb that the Sultan's worst enemy is the empty belly of the Fellah"<sup>76</sup>.

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75. See article on the economic situation of the fellah "al Yarmuq" 10.10.32.

76. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary. 5.3.32. C.O. 733/217-97072.

The Mufti asked to see the High Commissioner before the latter's going to Geneva and was granted an interview on 1st October 1932<sup>77</sup>. He opened by saying that the two main questions about which the Arabs were exercised were immigration and the sale of land, and in view of the Government's negative attitude on these two questions, the Arabs would not collaborate with the Government. The Arabs maintain, he said, that by the entrance of 200,000 Jews and by the purchase of 1.5 million dunums of the most fertile land in the country, the Jewish National Home had already been achieved. He suggested a law on the lines of the 5 feddan law in Egypt, which would conserve 150 dunums for each tenant in the hill country or 20 dunums in the Citrus area.

He complained that there were many villages, where formerly the people had plenty of land, but which had become dispossessed to great extent, mentioning as example Umm Khaled and Ghor Zeidan near Tulkarm. He cautioned the H.C. about the growing strength of the extreme "Independence" party which was gaining ground daily, because of the continued immigration and sale of land. In confidence and shame he admitted to the H.C. that even a member of the S.M.C. was acting as broker in land sale to Jews.

Well could the Mufti complain of the increasing influence of the Istiqlal Party. Ever since it was formed in August 1932<sup>78</sup>, it had been making diligent preparations to increase its activity and popularise its cause using the issues of land sales and immigration. In each of its public declaration<sup>79</sup> it strongly emphasized "the terrible danger of annihilation facing the Arab nation in Palestine by the continuing process of the alienation of its land".

77. C.O.733/217/97072 pt.2.

78. Darwaza Op-Cit p.103.

79. See its declaration for the Nablus conference on the occasion of 2nd November the anniversary of the Balfour declaration, Darwaza Op-Cit pp.311-314. See also its comments on the H.C. report to the P.M.C. in Geneva. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 17/1/1933.

With the advent of Hitler to power in January 1933, Zionist immigration policy grew more extreme and Zionist propaganda became more urgent and insistent, appealing almost irresistibly to the humanitarianism of English people<sup>80</sup>. Though the full terrifying results of the anti-Jewish Nazi policy became apparent only years later, there was an immediate effect of an increased pressure of Jews to immigrate to Palestine<sup>81</sup>.

The Arab agitation, therefore, against immigration and sale of lands became more and more acute, and under its pressure, Musa Kazim convened a non-party assembly in Jerusalem on 24.2.1933. It was attended by approximately 60<sup>82</sup> leaders - all the "Who's Who" in Palestine Arab politics<sup>83</sup>. The assembly<sup>84</sup> was marked by the extremism of its pronouncements. The influence of extremist opinions was so strong throughout the meeting that even the members of the opposition who were regarded as moderate, advocated non-payment of taxes and civil disobedience with Fahri Nashabishi making one of the most violent speeches, calling for non-cooperation and civil disobedience and the issue of a warning to the Government.

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80. As was clearly evident by the spirit and tone of the debates in the House of Commons on 3.4.1933 and 13.4.1933.
81. According to a telegram from Sir H. Rumbold (British Ambassador in Berlin and later Vice-Chairman of the Peel Commission) dated 5th April 1933, between 1st March and 4th April the Passport Office at Berlin received about 2500 applications for visas for Palestine (See C.O. file - Immigration from Germany C.O. 733/236/17313/3 Pt.I) as against a previous annual average of about 500. Arab writers, however, claimed that the relationship between the establishment of the Nazi regime in Germany and the increase in the number of Jewish immigrants into Palestine was not perhaps as simple as has been generally believed. They pointed to the fact that in 1933 the number of immigrants from Germany was only 5,392 as against 13,125 from Poland. (The Peel Report p.82) and that Poland continued to be the main source of Jewish immigration until 1937. See material presented to the Anglo-American Commission Op Cit Chap. Immigration. See also John al Hadawi Op Cit p.242
82. The organizers claimed that 150 attended.
83. With the exception of Ragreb Nashabishi who had, it seems, a political illness.
84. For a full description of the assembly see "al Jamiah al Arabiyya 25.2.33". See also Daily Intelligence Summary No. 39/33 of 25.2.1933 C.O. 733/234/17272 and C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation Report No. 7/33 of 28.2.1933 F.O. 371/16926.

The morning session, however, resulted in a division, not on principles about which all agreed - and if there was one who differed he kept it to himself - but on a technical point. A few days before the assembly was held, the H.C. had accepted the request of Musa Kazim to grant an interview to a deputation of the assembly. But during the morning session, most of the Husseinis led by Jamil Husseinii opposed the suggestion to send a deputation to see the H.C. as it would be fruitless. A strange coalition, however, composed of Musa Kazim, the Nashabishis and the Istiqlalists assisted perhaps by<sup>85</sup> the Mufti himself, won the day and during the lunch break the deputation under the Chairmanship of Musa Kazim<sup>86</sup> went to see the H.C.

The deputation<sup>87</sup> expounded to the H.C. the views of the assembly on the problems of the sale of lands and on immigration.

85. See sem-official letter from Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister 25.2.1933 in which, after mentioning the strong opposition of the assembly to send a deputation, he wrote "However, the views of Muza Kazim and the Mufti prevailed that it would be unwise to sever connection with the Government" C.O. 733/234/17272.
86. With auni aled al Hadi, Mughannam Mughannam, Omar Bitar, Rashid Hij Ibrahim, Fahmi Abboushi, Issa Bandack and Hamdi Nabulsi as members. It should be noted that 3 out of the seven were members of the Istiqlal part which was very active in the assembly as a whole and in particular in the division about the deputation. See Darwaza On Cit p.111.
87. For a full description of the interview and the text of the Assembly's resolution, see the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 4.3.1933 C.O. 733/234/17272.

The H.C. was very firm<sup>88</sup> in his answer and stated definitely that he did not contemplate prohibiting the sale of lands to the Jews and Jewish immigration, at the same time he promised that every effort was being made to put a stop to illegal immigration.

The H.C.'s answer was bitterly resented at the afternoon session (in which the Mufti did not participate having retired for the Friday prayers). It was decided to cancel certain parts of the resolution passed in the morning and also the declaration of a strike on 5th March, considering these to be inadequate means of expressing the disapproval of the Arabs.

The assembly also resolved<sup>89</sup> to hold another meeting at Jaffa on 26 March in which the attitude to be adopted by the Arabs towards the Government would be decided.

The Arabic papers<sup>90</sup> praised the assembly and its resolutions and criticized the official communique, giving the text of the H.C.'s reply which was issued on 25th February.

As the assembly in Jaffa was going to discuss the decisive question of adopting a policy of non-cooperation with the Government, it was to be an important occasion in the political life of Arab Palestine and was even referred to as the "Eighth Congress"<sup>91</sup>.

It was preceded by some precautionary Government steps. The H.C. asked<sup>92</sup> and received<sup>93</sup> authority to enact certain provisions to enable him to deal with instigation not to pay taxes.

88. In a letter to Parkinson dated 4.3.1933, the H.C. stated that he did not anticipate anything very dreadful resulting from the intended assembly on 26.3.1933, and that though the inclination to refuse all cooperation with Government was gradually strengthening, he did think that the Arabs were sufficiently united to adopt a successful policy of disobedience or refusal to pay taxes. Ibid. It should be noted that the Colonial Secretary informed the H.C. twice that he approved of the firm language used by the H.C. during this interview in a semi-official letter dated 13.3.1933 and in an official one 23.3.1933.

89. See "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 26.2.1933.

90. See Arab papers 26-28.2.1933.

91. See The Palestine Rebellion 1936 (Tawrat Falastin 1936) compiled by the "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" Jaffa 1936 p.11.

92. See Cable to Colonial Secretary 25.3.1933 C.O. 733/234/17272.

93. See Cable from Colonial Secretary No. 62 27.3.1933 Ibid.

During the second week of March, the Army, R.A.F. and Police carried out some operations in the North of Palestine which were referred by the Arabs<sup>94</sup> as being precautions against any trouble occurring during or after the meeting of 26th March.

It was also preceded by some Arab efforts, mainly by Haj Taufic Hammad from Nablus to remove differences between the Arab parties and to re-unite the political forces.

These efforts failed, apparently because the Husseinis being sure of being supported by the Arab public, refused to accede to the Nashabishi demands, and insisted on participation in the Eighth Congress only on the basis of elections.

Another reason was because both sides believed that<sup>95</sup> Haj Taufic Hammad's object was to regain his lost prestige and to try to transfer the centre of the National activities to Nablus.

Some preliminary meetings were held, some in secret, at Haifa, Nablus, Jenin, Jaffa and Jerusalem and on 21.3.33 the Arab Executive published<sup>96</sup> a statement to the nation stating "the general tendency by Jews to take possession of the lands of this Holy country and their streaming into it by hundreds and thousands through legal and illegal means has terrified the country" and ending "the country calls on its sons for action and sacrifice in these hard times. Anyone who disregards its call is a deserter and he who does not work with his nation is not one of it".

The invitations to the assembly were sent out by the Arab Executive.

94. See C.I.D. Summary Report No.10/33 of 25.3.33 F.O. 371/16926.

95. See C.I.D. Summary Report No.11/33 of 1.4.33 Ibid.

96. "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 22.3.33

The assembly was attended by about six hundred persons, townsmen and villagers of all classes and parties. All of them identified - more or less - with the three main parties, the largest one being supporters of the Mufti, the Nashashibis and the Istiqlal party.

Jamal al Housseini opened the assembly<sup>97</sup> in the name of the Chairman Musa Kazim and explained the objects as being to discuss non-co-operation, Jewish immigration and sale of lands. However, these questions became of secondary importance and the assembly was turned into a scene of undignified party conflict with delegates and speakers insulting each other and almost exchanging blows.

The Istiqlal party, who perhaps cared more for the political issues, confined themselves to their proposals which were submitted by Auni abd al Hadi but they delivered no speeches and took no part in the discussions, attracting little attention. The opposition, headed by Fahri Nashabishi,<sup>98</sup> appreciating that the Mufti - in his desire to maintain his good relations with the H.C. and the Government, was unlikely to agree to non-co-operation, and wishing to embarrass him by exposing him to the public as a Government supporter unfit to be a leader, came out strongly in support of non-co-operative measures as a means of uniting with the Istiqlal party against the Mufti. With the policy itself, it can clearly be assumed, they in fact, were not concerned.

Already the second speaker, Abdul Ghani Sinan from Jenin asked that both the Mufti and Ragheb Nashabishi should commence the campaign of non-co-operation by tendering their resignation from their respective posts.

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97. For a full description of the assembly see "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 27.3.33, 29.3.33 and "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 28.3.33. See also Darwaza Op Cit pp.111-112. See also Enclosure III to the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 1.4.33. C.O. 733/234/17272 and the C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation summaries No.10/33 dated 25.3.33 and No.11/33 dated 1.4.33 F.O. 371/16929.

98. With Raghab Nashabishi again having one of his political sicknesses. So apparently had Hassan Shukri, the Mayor of Haifa, but they both telegraphed their agreement with the deliberations of the meeting.

Sheikh Sabri Abdin declared that he favoured non-co-operation, on condition that the whole nation should take part in its execution. However, he pointed out that religious bodies had nothing to do with non-co-operation. No Moslem he said would agree to his religious leaders withdrawing from their religious posts.

After some speakers who did not touch this subject, Ahmed al Shukairi, who like his father Asiad Shukair hated the Mufti,<sup>99</sup> but unlike him was not a moderate at all, returned to the subject of resignations. He emphasized the inactivity of the leaders and their lack of sacrifice, quoting the examples of Ghandi and Mustafa Nahas. He spoke in favour of non-co-operation and asked that the two leaders of the nation Haj Amin Husseini and Ragheb Nashabishi should then and there declare their resignation. At this juncture, Assem al Said, the Mayor of Jaffa and one of the opposition leaders, reported a telephone message from Ragheb Nashabishi in which he agreed to any decision agreed by the nation and al Said said that he himself agreed to do likewise.

An uproar arose lasting some time. With the opposition delegates calling on the Mufti to make a similar declaration and his supporters shouting at the tops of their voices "Haj Amin is the representative of the nation. He should not resign because the nation does not want him to resign, and anyway he is not an official who may resign. He was elected and the nation granted him its confidence. We want to listen to Haj Amin."

Some of the Mufti's younger followers even assailed the opposition and as a result several of its leaders<sup>100</sup> withdrew from the assembly returning after a while with the exception of Assem al Said.

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99. As seemed evident from his words, their mutual hatred continues until today.

100. Assem al Said, Shukri and Abdul Rahman al Taji, Fahri Nashabishi Abdul Fattah Darwish etc.

The Mufti then spoke and said "Before coming here today I was advised by some people not to attend as there would be an attempt to embarrass me and these friends informed me of the resolution calling upon me to resign. I told them "don't you worry, I am not going to be put into an awkward predicament (fana lastu miman yatawaratun)". He went on to say that he was not a stranger to the nationalist movement in which he worked ever since its inception before the war (W.W.I). The post was a secondary matter and did not prevent him and would never prevent him from activity and sacrifice. Were he an official he would not have been present amongst them and would have been unable to take part in political affairs. If the success of his country depended on his resignation, resignation was an easy task. Whenever it was considered that resignation from posts such as his was of any benefit, he was ready to resign not only from this office but even from his life. After a break during which Abdul Latif Salah and Mughannan spoke, the Mufti spoke again and asked that nothing should be caused to bring about the failure of the assembly, and that personal interests should be put aside. He was prepared to receive any criticism but they should not disappoint the nation and should adopt decisions which would do them honour. The nation was like a body which felt with all its members. No great value should be attached to posts or even to life. They should not waste their time on personalities. He was at the head of the nationalist movement and would continue to be so, and his post he utilized only for the good of the people. The Mufti finished by emphasizing the importance of unity.

Several speakers then followed mainly on the land issue and when the turn of Jamal al Hussein arrived, he said he was unable to understand in what respect non-co-operation depended on the resignation of the Mayors and the President of the Supreme Moslem Council. These were at the head of National Institutions, and were elected by the nation. He mentioned his visit to India and meeting Ghandi in 1925 where he learned that it took years to put into effect a scheme of non-co-operation. It was impossible

to apply such a scheme in one hour one day.

After long and heated discussions with many opposition delegates withdrawing during the afternoon session and the Istiqlalists keeping quiet, the Husseini majority asserted itself and practically shelved the non-co-operation scheme by deciding to appoint a committee to study the question and to submit a report to a further meeting to be held in two months time,<sup>101</sup> to discuss ways and means of adopting a wide form of non-co-operation.

Other resolutions were passed by the assembly, the first of which read thus:<sup>102</sup>

1. The adoption of the principle of non-co-operation and the immediate execution of its first steps forthwith such as boycotting (i) receptions and exchange of courteous relations with Government (ii) Government Boards and (iii) British and Zionist goods, products and commercial premises;

The following entry in a C.I.D. periodical appreciation summary<sup>103</sup> is very interesting as it is a comparison between (i) How the political parties considered their "achievements" in the assembly, and (ii) the views of a neutral observer. "The anti-Mufti faction believes that it did actually place Haj Amin in a difficult position and exposed him as a self seeker. The Istiqlal party considers that their non-interference with personal affairs was to their credit, while the Husseini party think that they have attained a victory. It is the opinion of certain of their leaders that the question of the success or failure of the assembly was not of great intent and that having defeated the opposition, it will now organize the Nationalist Movement on a proper basis, and possibly call for the convention of the 8th Congress and the election of a strong Executive Committee..

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101. The Committee never met.

102. For a full text of the resolutions see the "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 28.3.33.

103. C.I.D. Summary No.11/33 of 1.4.33 F.O./371/16926.

It is worth mentioning that, according to a well-informed politician, all parties suffered as a result of the assembly, the Nashabishi faction for exploiting the assembly to fight Haj Amin, the Husseini party for subordinating the general issue to personal interests to defend Haj Amin, and the Independence Party for their weak stand".

The main result, therefore, of the assembly was that the breach between the principal factions had widened, and it became very doubtful if any general national policy could be attempted as long as these factions were not ready to subordinate their personal interests to the general cause, which they were not.

As to the policy of non-co-operation and the resolutions of the assembly, it could be stated that with the exception of the temporary refusal of invitations by non-officials to Government functions, and some resignations of non-officials from Boards or Committees, they remained on paper only.

As stated sarcastically by the paper Falastin<sup>104</sup> "For the most part those who advocate non-payment of taxes are not taxpayers; those who demand the resignation of officials are not office holders, nor are they likely to be; and those who insist on non-attendance of Government functions are never invited to such occasions".

It should be noted, however, that although the policy of non-co-operation failed on the whole, mainly because of lack of support by the Mufti, the most influential leader in Arab Palestine, the resolution adopted was significant inasmuch as it indicated the trend of political feeling in the country.

The failure of the policy influenced, no doubt, several people to abandon the principle of a political struggle using only peaceful and legal means and converted them to the idea of an armed struggle

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104. Falastin 27.3.22. See also Darwaza Op Cit p.112.

One aspect should be noted further. In his speech, Sheikh Sabri Abdin spoke on the sale of lands as an act against the Islamic law. He cited Fatwas and texts from the Quran. He repeated his proposal made at the previous assembly of 24th February, that sellers of land should be treated like infidels and boycotted, and that when they die they should not be prayed over or buried in Moslem cemeteries, and he asked the Moslem Supreme Council to put this proposal into effect.

It should be noted that Sheikh Sabri Abdin was a strong supporter of the Mufti. It can be safely assumed that his proposal regarding the participation of the Supreme Moslem Council in the fight against sale of lands, was "cleared" and agreed beforehand by the Mufti. And in fact, there was thereafter, an increasing participation of the Mufti personally, and the S.M.C. in general, in that fight.

On 1st December 1934, a deputation of the Arab Executive called on the High Commissioner<sup>105</sup> and submitted to him a memorandum on the subjects of land and immigration in which they said that "they believe that the present policy of Government with regard to the question of land and Jewish immigration means, if it has any meaning at all, the extermination of the Arabs and the establishment of an entity for the Jews in their place".

More important perhaps, was the letter which the Mufti sent to the H.C. on 27th December 1934 on behalf of the Supreme Moslem Council, on the sale of land by the Arabs to the Jews. In addition to requesting the enactment of a law which would prevent sale of land by Arabs to Jews, the Mufti also requested an enactment of a law which would prohibit the transfer of any plot of land to any person whatsoever, if the owner thereof did not retain for himself a lot viable. Remarking about the increased Jewish efforts to buy land the Mufti wrote that it was "liable to lead the Arabs to despair and despondency"<sup>106</sup>.

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105. For a full description of the meeting and a full text of the memorandum, see C.O. 733/257/37356. See also "Al Difa" 2.12.34 and the official Communique No.39/34 1.12.34 Ibid.

106. See C.O. 733/272/75072.

The Mufti's letter followed an attempt by the police on the 24.12.34 to evict the Zubeidah tribe from the Hartieh lands in the Haifa district. The attempt failed<sup>107</sup> because the police force which was sent to execute it was considered insufficient to overcome the Arabs violent resistance.

The Arabs told the evicting power that "the lands which were handed to the Jews were theirs, taken as inheritance from their fathers and grandfathers and that it was impossible for them to hand them over to the Jews even though they should be killed".

The Mufti's letter to the H.C. was a part of a campaign he had initiated some months earlier and to which he devoted considerable attention and energy. He himself and his subordinate Sheikhs, toured towns and rural areas, preaching sermons and giving speeches in Mosques and at public gatherings, and by the issuing of fatwas and giving religious instructions. The campaign, purposely, had taken on a decidedly religious aspect, as the Mufti considered, and rightly so, that it would be easier to arouse the people by religious propaganda.

On 29th December 1934 a meeting was held in Jerusalem attended by about 400 Sheikhs, Mukhtars and elders of villages, near Jerusalem. The Mufti spoke and said that the land belonged to God and should not be sold. Other Sheikhs read then the famous "fatwa" of the Mufti<sup>108</sup> on this subject.

Copies of the pamphlets containing it, continued to be distributed among villagers. On 25th January 1935 the Mufti convened a religious meeting of some 500 notables, mostly Qadis, Sheikhs and Ulamas from all parts of the country, to discuss the sale of land to Jews, brokerage and Jewish immigration.

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107. C.O. 733/257/75156. The eviction was accomplished on 30.1.35 when a bigger police force was sent to Hartieh and after one Arab was killed by a rifle shot. Ibid.

108. Amin al Hussein. The Fatwa of his Eminence the Grand Mufti concerning Sale of Lands in Palestine to Zionists. (Fatwat Samahat al Mufti al Akbar bishan Bie al Aradi bi Falastin Lilsihioniyin) Jerusalem 1935.

In an impressive opening speech in which he said "we are being now attacked in our beliefs, religion, country, lands, traditions, morals and language", he called on his listeners not to despair and urged them to fight against land sales with all their might and faith. His finishing remarks were directed to Arabs and Moslems outside Palestine. "If you remain indifferent watching this catastrophe, the second catastrophe of Andalusia, you will not be pleasing God, his Prophet and the history of Islam which made all Moslem brethren. You must learn that the catastrophe to which the bad fortune of Palestine has brought it, is not limited to Palestine but will extend to the other countries and Holy Places of Islam"<sup>109</sup>.

The meeting then endorsed the "Fatwa" of the Mufti and a similar one issued by Kashf al Ghata the noted Iraqi Shia leader in their fatwa<sup>110</sup> they said: "having noted the aims of the Jews to Judaize the holy country and to evict its inhabitants and to erase the traces of Islam from it through the destruction of Mosques and Holy Moslem Places....we regard every Palestinian who does any of these things (i.e. sale of lands...) as a heretic." In the letter<sup>111</sup> which the meeting sent to the H.C. the Ulama said that they felt convinced that the matter (i.e. sale of land and immigration) has reached such an extent which could not be tolerated or ignored from a Sharia point of view". "It has become the religious duty of every Moslem... to stand in the way of, and resist this danger with all possible means, in order to safeguard their existence, their religion and their religious places in the Holy Land".

Other parties, not wishing to be outdistanced, joined this campaign.

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109. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 27.1.35.

110. Ibid 28.1.35.

111. 4.2.35. C.O.377/257/75156.

The preparatory congress of the National Defence Party (the Nashashibis) sent on 28.1.35 a long memorandum to H.C. As the campaign was dominated by its religious character, the Defence Party used Sheikh Suliman al Farouki who went on the pilgrimage, to spread propaganda in support of the Palestine Arabs.

The opposition tried to discredit the religious conference and to minimise its importance, and in order to embarrass the Mufti, whom they used to present at the time as the tool in the hands of the British, they declared that it was necessary to treat British rule in Palestine in the same way as brokers and land sellers, as it was the policy of this British rule which facilitated the purchase of land by Jews. In its meeting on 17th May 1935, the party decided<sup>112</sup> to organise a company with a capital of £25,000 to be increased to £50,000 for the deliverance of lands. Some members promised to purchase shares to the amount of over £11,000.

In the campaign initiated by the Mufti against sale of lands, the issue of immigration held a secondary, but still a very important place.

The large volume of Jewish immigrants<sup>113</sup> together with the many rumours about the flood of illegal immigrants<sup>114</sup> convinced the Arabs that the number of Jews in Palestine was much bigger than it was in fact.

Towards the end of 1934, the Arabs claimed that the number of Jews in Palestine had reached more than 400,000<sup>115</sup> about 42% higher than the real number of 282,975<sup>116</sup>.

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112. F.O. 371/18957. Nothing more was ever heard of this company. The Youth Congress party organised such a company. See Issa Safari Op-Cit pp.197-201. Nothing more was ever heard of this company either.

113. During 1933 there were 30,327 Jewish immigrants, during 1934- 42,359 see the Peel Report p.279.

114. During 1932-33 about 22,400 Jews entered Palestine illegally, see C.O. Palestine Report 1933. Col. No.94, p.15.

115. See the Article "The memory of a detested day". "al Difa" 2.11.34. See also the Article "The memory of the ominous day". "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 2.11.34.

116. See table "Estimated Population of Palestine" Statistical Abstract of Palestine 1943, p.2.

Much nearer to the truth was the Mufti who, during an interview<sup>117</sup> with the High Commissioner on 20.8.34 claimed that the number of Jews in Palestine had reached 300,000.

Most of the talk during the interview was about the Legislative Council but the H.C. referred to the illicit immigration and said that he was taking all possible measures to stop it either by sea or by land, he mentioned the possible danger of clashes occurring as a result of the activities of non-official bodies organized to stop such immigration.

The Mufti regretted the Nethanya incident<sup>118</sup> and added that the immigration of Jews in such masses created a tension amongst the Arabs who feared for their future and for their race. He could not exaggerate the feeling of dismay and even anger in all countries caused by the continuance of illegal immigration and the failure of the Government to take measures against it. He pointed out that on the occupation of Palestine, the Jews were only 46,000 while in 1934 they had reached about 300,000 in number. Were this increase to continue, every Arab felt that the inevitable result would be the destruction of the Arab race in Palestine.

The H.C.'s remark about non-official bodies organised to stop illegal immigration referred to the Arabs decision<sup>119</sup> to form unofficial patrols to watch and picket the sea coast. This move was initiated by the leaders of the Arab Young Men's Executive, and indeed, owing to Arab watch and police patrol, attempts to land immigrants ashore on the night of 30th July were frustrated.<sup>120</sup>

However, following the Nethanya incident the Palestine Arab party of the Husseinis tried to "adopt" the "patrol movement".

117. For a full record of the interview see Enclosure No.2 to Wauchope's letter to Cunliffe-Lister 25.8.34 C.O. 733/265/37502.

118. On the night of 15.8.34, a group of Arab scouts watching the coastal area near Nethanya in order to intercept Jewish illegal immigrants, were attacked by a number of Jews and two of them were wounded. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 16.8.34.

119. This decision was given prominence in the Arab press. See Arab paper issues for the first two weeks of August 1934.

120. See C.I.D. summary report No.11/34 of 6.8.34 F.O. 371/17878.

Jamal al Husseini, together with Emile Ghory, attempted to organise a wider movement of unofficial coast patrolling. Recruits were canvassed and contributions solicited throughout the country with an active campaign of propaganda undertaken in the villages.

On 19.8.34, they published a manifesto<sup>121</sup> under the title "To Work". Declaration to the Arab nation for the widening of the scope for Frontier Patrolling. The manifesto called on "every loyal young Arab" to enrol as "guards" along the frontiers in a programme which would start on 5.9.34. The newspaper itself published a strongly worded editorial<sup>122</sup> bitterly complaining against the unlawful entry of Jews to Palestine, condemning the indifference and inactivity of the Government in the matter and praised the initiative of unofficial patrols guarding "the frontiers of Palestine".

The H.C. suspended forthwith the paper for a period of one month<sup>123</sup>.

Jamal Husseini, however, continued with his plan to mobilize 150 Arab scouts in Jerusalem and transport them on 5.9.34 by way of Tulkarm and Jenin to the coast at Nethanya. Nothing, however, came out of it, as the Arab Youth's Congress objected to Jamal Husseini and Emile Ghory exploiting the situation for their own and for their party's ends and after the Government published its preventive measures<sup>124</sup> against the illegal immigration, they seized the opportunity and published an announcement<sup>125</sup> on 2.9.34 saying that as the Government took effective steps to prevent the illegal immigration, there was no need for them to act.

By the middle of 1935, there appeared 2 factors which influenced the future trend of events.

121. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 19.8.34.

122. Ibid.

123. C.O. 733/255/37313.

124. For these measures see Official Communique No.32/34. Falastin 1.9.34.

125. "Falastin" 2.9.34.

(1) The first signs of an impending recession were already seen with swelling unemployment, smaller investments and runs on the smaller banks. The economy though it generally continued to expand, suffered a marked setback.<sup>126</sup>

(2) The growing tension which preceded and continued during the Abyssinian War.

The influence of this tension on Palestine politics will be discussed later but the H.C.'s view was that in the current local conditions, the Government could afford to ignore Jewish representations, but must placate the Arabs. The Government<sup>127</sup>, he wrote, must give "some satisfaction to the Arab leaders". And of immigration, he wrote:<sup>128</sup> "Immigration must be decreased, not increased", and so it was.<sup>129</sup>

He also proposed to the Colonial Secretary the enactment of measures restricting land sales.<sup>130</sup>

However, to the Arabs who were demanding the total prohibition by law of the transfer of Arab lands to Jews and the total cessation of Jewish immigration these concessions, seemed both too little and too late.

Of special importance was the role played by the Mufti with regard to the subject of the Legislative Council. This was caused as well as reflected by the "Special relationship" which developed between him and the H.C., Sir A. Wauchope to whom the Council came to be an important part of his policy in Palestine.

126. See Palestine Annual Report 1935 Col. No.112 1936 p.22. See also the Survey 1936 pp.702-706 and D. Horowitz and R. Hinden Economic Survey of Palestine Tel Aviv 1938 p.14.

127. Wauchope to Colonial Secretary 7.12.35. C.O. 733/278/75756/2 Part II.

128. Wauchope to Parkinson 6.12.35. C.O. 733/271/75054 Pt I.

129. The Labour Schedule for October 1935-March 1936 was drastically reduced to 3250 as against 8000 for April-October 1935. See C.O. 733/276/75113 Pt. II.

130. See his letter to the Col. Sec. 22.2.35. C.O. 733/272/75072 and his statement to the Arab leaders 29.1.36. C.O. 733/290/75072.

When the P.M.'s letter to Dr. Weizmann was published, it was noted that some of the important issues raised by the Passfield White Paper such as the proposed establishment of a Legislative Council, the creation of a Development Fund etc., were not mentioned in the letter and must, therefore, be presumed to retain the spirit and intention given them by the White Paper without any re-interpretation. Chancellor, anyway, continuously kept the issue alive.<sup>131</sup>

However Cunliffe-Lister, the new Colonial Secretary, and the permanent staff at the Colonial Office were basically opposed to the creation of a Council<sup>132</sup> and were inclined to seek ways to depart from the previous Government's pledges or at least to delay their implementation.<sup>133</sup>

The Colonial Office therefore, elaborated a plan of "delaying tactics" and considered the idea of having a round table conference between Arabs and Jews which was found unpracticable.<sup>134</sup>

In the meantime, Wauchope, the new High Commissioner who agreed with the Colonial Office's line, adhering to his policy of working through the notables, was holding separate informal and confidential talks with Arab and Jewish leaders. He then asked the Colonial Office a direct question: "Should the Arabs unitedly accept the form of Legislative Council which we can offer and should the Jews unitedly refuse, would the policy be to proceed with the granting of a Legislative Council or to give up the effort?"<sup>135</sup>

131. See his letter to Shuckburgh 12.12.30 and to Passfield 15.8.31, C.O. 733/202/87103.
132. Berger says that the Arabs had made of the Legislative Councils, "a focus of native opposition to foreign rule". See The Arab World Today New York 1964 p.285.
133. See Minutes by Wilson 13.2.32, Parkinson and Cunliffe-Lister 26.2.32 C.O. 733/217/97072.
134. See statement by Musa Kazem al Hussein in the name of the Arab Executive published in al Jamiah al Arabiyya of 18.2.32 and the statement of the Secretary of the Supreme Moslem Council in the name of the Mufti published in the paper of 19.3.32 in which they denied their alleged agreement to participate in such a conference.
135. Wauchope to Wilson 13.2.32. C.O. 733/217/97072.

The Permanent Secretary wrote on the margin "I should hope to give it up" and Cunliffe-Lister added to it with his red ink, "Yes". In the same manner, Cunliffe-Lister addressed his colleagues saying<sup>136</sup> "I cannot advise the Cabinet to force upon the Jews a Legislature to which they would be bitterly opposed and which I do not believe would work satisfactorily at the present time".

However, Wauchope's view in that respect totally opposed that of his superiors in London. As a result of his private conversations he reached the definite conclusion "that to make any sort of offer of a Legislative Council now, and withdraw it on the ground that the Jews would not participate, would have a deplorable effect on all Arab leaders in the country. It would be much less injurious to the prestige of this Government to make no offer at present rather than risk such an eventuality"<sup>137</sup>.

In another letter he wrote: "If we make an offer now and withdraw it owing to Jewish opposition, the existing lack of confidence or the Arabs towards our Government would be increased a hundred fold..... Haj Amin (the Mufti) told a close friend of his that I treated him as an honest man, and as I put trust in him, so he puts trust in me. The Nashabishis..... believe in my honesty of purpose, all that will go in the twinkle of an eye if we make an offer and withdraw it owing to Jewish opposition"<sup>138</sup>.

By now, Wauchope became personally involved in the matter of the Legislative Council. Thinking, as stated above, that withdrawal of the scheme would be injurious to the prestige of the Mandatory Government as well as to his own standing, he also came to believe<sup>139</sup> that by establishing a Legislative Council, he would be able to retain the co-operation of the Arab moderates and ward off the clamour of the extremists for independence.

136. See his memorandum to the Cabinet C.P. 124(32) April 1932.

137. See his letter to Cunliffe-Lister 23.3.32 Ibid.

138. See his letter to Wilson 26.3.32 Ibid.

139. See record of his talk with the Colonial Secretary 26.10.32 Ibid.

He hoped also that through a Legislative Council he would be able to achieve his long-range plan of Arab-Jewish co-operation within a multi-national state.

At the same time, accustomed as he was to the Western type of democracy and considering therefore "that a form of self-government should spring rather from the bottom than the top"<sup>140</sup>, learning of the total Jewish objection to any Legislative Council, and wishing - no doubt - to accommodate the reluctance of the Colonial Office for any real progress towards the establishment of the Council, he envisaged a plan whereby the issue would remain alive but "on a low fire". He promised Arab leaders that the Government would adhere to its pledges, but that it would prefer first of all to launch schemes for Palestinian participation in the administrative and advisory boards and to introduce a local self-government Act which would give freely elected members the opportunity of managing their local affairs. At the time he even considered holding the elections to the Supreme Moslem Council, and only later to establish a Legislative Council. As this course of action would have achieved the same results which he wished, he was backed by the Colonial Secretary. The Cabinet at its meeting of 6.4.32 decided<sup>141</sup> to compose a committee to consider the matter and decided not to issue any definite statement until the forthcoming meeting of the P.M.C. at the end of 1932.

Wauchope considered that the setting up of the Council could be postponed for a further period of 18 months, namely the end of 1933. By then, he hoped, he would be able to persuade all concerned as to the desirability of having the Council. Though he fully appreciated the difficulties, he knew well that as long as the Jews thought that the Government was unable to devise a means whereby an Arab majority in

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140. See his letter to Wilson 13.2.32 C.O. 733/217/97072.

141. Cabinet 20(32) 6.4.32.

Legislative Council would not, by indirect means, delay or hinder the advancement of a National Home, they would not object to it. As for the Arabs, he estimated that "apart from the above (reason) Arab leaders wish for a Legislative Council not so much for the public good but in order to serve their own party needs." Party feeling was at that time extremely bitter. "The Fellaheen", he thought, "are so much concerned over their increased crop failures and indebtedness that they are not interested in any ideas of a Legislative Council."<sup>142</sup>

Forecasts in regard to the formation of a Legislative Council continued to appear in Arabic (and Hebrew) papers from the middle of March 1932 onwards.<sup>143</sup> The Jaffa correspondent of the Beirut daily "al Ahrar" (himself a member of the staff of Falastin) wrote in the issue of 26th June under the heading "The Legislative Council will soon be constituted" saying that the elections would be held during 1932 and he went on to describe the three schools of thought among Arab Palestinians on the matter. Those who favour elections, those who favour nominations and those to whom the essential consideration was the extent of the powers vested in the Council. This last group believed that unless the Council would have jurisdiction over the questions of the sale of lands and immigration, the Arabs would not be better off.<sup>144</sup>

During May 1932, the High Commissioner had separate and confidential meetings with the Mufti, Rageb Nashabishi and Musa Kazim in which he explained to them his plans with regard to the elections to the Supreme Moslem Council. Nashabishi leaked the information and on the 4th June, "Miraat al Sharq" observed that the elections to the S.M.C. would take place shortly, to be followed by elections to the Municipalities, and finally by elections to the Legislative Council.<sup>145</sup> And as the H.C.

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142. See his cable to Cunliffe-Lister 9.4.32 C.O. 733/219/97105/2.

143. "Falastin" 19.3.32, 23.3.32, 26.3.32. "Al Jamiyah al Arabiyya" 21.3.32, 25.3.32.

144. "Al Ahrar" 26.3.32 as reported in C.O. 733/219/97105/2.

145. Miraat al Sharq 4.6.32.

expected, a few days later, the paper criticized the H.C. for holding the elections to the S.M.C., thus diverting public attention from the more important issue of elections to the Legislative Council.<sup>146</sup>

Turning to the implementation of his plan, the H.C. appointed non-official Arab and Jewish members to several administrative boards.<sup>147</sup> At the start the result of these appointments was most successful and the H.C. informed the Colonial Secretary that "the advice given by non-official members has been of definite value to Government"<sup>148</sup>.

In the long run, however, this step proved to be counter-productive. The Arabs could not but feel the political undertones of their participation in these boards much more so as the H.C. appointed to these boards several known leaders (such as Auni abd al Hadi for the Labour Legislation Committee, Jamal Husseini and Jacoub Farraj for the Road Board, Shukri al Taji for the Standing Committee for Commerce and Industry) members of the Arab Executive and even of its bureau.

Later the Government even addressed, apparently similar letters to the Arab Executive and to the Jewish Agency asking them to propose each a member for the Income Tax Committee and actually suggested Auni Abd al Hadi. The Istiqlal party - preaching non-co-operation - raised the issue. The Arab Executive, during its meeting of 9.9.32 and after long discussions in which Jamal Husseini indirectly, defended strongly the continuing membership of Arabs in these Boards and said that he himself had accepted his nomination as a member for the Road Board only after consultations with some of his closest friends (presumably among them the Mufti - though Jamal did not say so) resolved by a majority vote on Izzat Darwaza's proposal that persons holding representative posts in the Arab Executive could not be

146. Ibid 20.6.32.

147. These were: Labour Legislation Committee, Road, Board, Railway Board and the Standing Committee for Commerce and Industry. Later there were added the General Agricultural Board and the Citrus Fruit Committee.

148. Wauchope to the Col. Sec. 4.10.32. C.O. 733/218/97105/2.

members of Governmental Boards and called on them to resign, which they did.<sup>149</sup> To show his dissatisfaction Jamal al Hussein resigned both from the Secretariat and from his membership of the Arab Executive.<sup>150</sup>

And as Arab participation in the boards turned out to be an issue both in intra-communal strife and inter-Arab politics, forcing the more moderate traditional factions to follow a more militant line in order to vie with the Istiqlalists and the more radical young men,<sup>151</sup> the H.C. did not follow his plan to appoint Palestinians (Arabs and Jews) to the Advisory Council.<sup>152</sup>

Arab resignations from the Government's boards were discussed between the H.C. and the Mufti during their interview on 1.10.32.<sup>153</sup> Following the negative resolution of the Arab Executive in that respect, the Mufti was not prepared to advise anyone to accept nominations to the boards. When the H.C. asked him if proposals for the Legislative Councils should be made at an early date, he answered - without any great enthusiasm - that he hoped so but again emphasized the issues of immigration and land sales. This signified the change of emphasis in Arab demands. Until the Autumn of 1932 the one demand constantly put forward by the Arabs was for the early formation of a Legislative Council. However, they started then to realise that even after the establishment of a Legislative Council the Government would remain determined "to prevent interference with the rights of the Jews to maintain a National Home"<sup>154</sup>.

And indeed during 1933, Arab demands concentrated mainly on stoppage of immigration and land sales.

149. For the record of the meeting see 3797:65 I.S.A.

150. On the Husseinis efforts to "make peace" between Jamal and Musa Kazim who voted for the resignations from the Government boards thus angering Jamal. See Intelligence Report 14.9.32 3/8. The H.A.

151. See C.I.D. report 49/32 16.12.32 F.O. 371/16926. See also C.P. 374 (32) 3.11.32.

152. See his letter to Cunliffe-Lister 4.10.32 C.O. 733/219/97105/2.

153. For full record of the meeting see C.O. 733/218/97113.

154. Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister 1.4.33. C.O. 733/235/17305.

The H.C. for reasons of political expediency, and believing that this would be the only way to "hold the Arabs", pressed for explicit declaration about the intention to set up a Legislative Council.

During a meeting with the Colonial Secretary in London and a further one which they both had with the Prime Minister, it was agreed that the Government would make such a statement as otherwise "the extremists would obtain complete ascendancy and Arab co-operation would become increasingly difficult and ultimately impossible."<sup>155</sup> The Colonial Secretary proposed this line of policy to the Cabinet<sup>156</sup> which approved it at its meeting on 9.11.32.<sup>157</sup>

Accordingly, on 10.11.32, the H.C. told the Permanent Mandates Commission<sup>158</sup> that the intention of the British Government as regards the establishment of Legislative Council remained unchanged but that necessary steps would be taken after the local Government Ordinance - then in preparation - had been brought into working order. The object of this Ordinance was to extend still further the participation of local representatives in Municipal Government. Wauchope was hopeful that "moderate opinion will prevail" and that the new constitutional plan would be accepted by both parties. He further emphasized that definite safeguards would be embodied in the new proposals "so that under no circumstances could the peace and security of the country be endangered or the carrying out of the Mandate hampered". When members of the Commission expressed their doubts as to whether the Arabs would co-operate in the establishment of the proposed Legislative Council, the H.C. stated that "when the Arabs were convinced that His Majesty's Government would fulfil its promises at a reasonably early date to set up a Legislative Council, they would be far more willing to

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155. See Minutes of meeting 27.10.32 C.O. 733/219/97105/2.

156. C.P. 374 (32) November 1932.

157. Cabinet 60(32) 9.11.32.

158. P.M.C. Minutes of the XXII session, Geneva 1932 p.82.

co-operate with it", and referring to his long cherished plan of Arab-Jewish co-operation, he repeated his belief "that, with the passage of time, the Arabs and Jews would see that it was to their mutual advantage to work together".<sup>159</sup>

However, when the Local Government Bill was published in November 1932, it was denounced strongly in the Arabic - as well as in the Hebrew - papers, principally on the ground that it tended to restrict the powers of local authorities, and to concentrate all effective control over their actions in the hands of the High Commissioner.

In a long editorial<sup>160</sup> "Falastin" drew the attention of the Arab leaders and Mayors to the fact that protests would serve no good purpose and observed that the people expected their representatives to take hold and effective measures to defend their dignity and autonomy.

As stated above, there were not many developments in Palestine during 1933 on the Legislative Council issue. The H.C. and the Colonial Office, however, were studying the practical problems with regard to the Council such as its composition, election versus nomination, method of election, qualifications for electors, qualifications for membership of the Council, the extent of its authority and the very important problem of safeguards.<sup>161</sup>

These problems were hammered out in a discussion<sup>162</sup> held at the House of Commons on 24.5.33 attended by Cunliffe-Lister, Wauchope and others. It should be noted that the general spirit of Wauchope's proposals, especially concerning the provision for a small number of appointed non-officials and a larger number of elected members, seems to have been favourable to the Husseinis who, being certain of their popular support, preferred elections to nomination.

159. Ibid p.86.

160. "Falastin" 26.11.32.

161. See File "New Palestine Constitution" C.O. 733/235/17405.

162. For record of the discussion see Ibid.

It was agreed, however, to postpone further actions and discussions for several months until after the forthcoming elections.

During the 1933 Autumn riots, the H.C. twice saw the members of the Arab Executive - on 25.10.33 and on 28.10.33.<sup>163</sup> The Arab demands were to stop immigration and Jewish land purchases and to form a Legislative Council. As regards the latter demand, the H.C. had little difficulty in showing that the delay was due largely to the unhelpful attitude of the Arab leaders themselves and he went on to say: "I made a statement to this effect" (about establishing a Legislative Council) "at Geneva and I am not going to recede from it. But I must say one word of warning: if disturbances like those of the last 2 days take place, they make my task no easier. The more people work with Government the easier it is to make progress."

On 20th August 1934, the H.C. had a long conversation with the Mufti.<sup>164</sup> After mentioning that they had had a talk about the Legislative Council some 18 months earlier (the one on 1.10.32 mentioned above), the H.C. stated his intention to decrease the number of official members as compared to the 1922 proposal. The Mufti answered that the Arabs were looking forward to a Parliament with full powers and not a Legislative Council with limited powers. He said further that he hoped that the H.C. would endeavour to obtain for the Legislative Council as wide powers as possible and he desired to point out that under the mandatory policy the interests of Jews in Palestine were safeguarded but not those of the Arabs. The Mufti said that he preferred direct election since in his opinion, improper influence might be exercised over voters in the case of indirect elections. He then stated that most Arab leaders considered it a matter of principle that the majority of the members of any Legislative Council should be freely elected

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163. See Chapter 13.

164. For a full record of the conversation, see C.O. 733/265/37502.

and not nominated. Rightly or wrongly, nominated members would be looked on as members subservient to Government influence.<sup>165</sup>

The High Commissioner then expressed his hope - and we can assume - his wish as well - that the Mufti would help him in preparing the ground for the acceptance of a Legislative Council with moderate powers by the Arab population, since if that Council was again refused, a similar opportunity might not present itself for another twenty years. The Jews, said the H.C. who in any case might refuse to co-operate in a Legislative Council, would take, no doubt, the Arab refusal as an argument to show that the Arabs were not yet fit for a Council or for any constitutional change. The Mufti explained that the Council which was proposed in 1922 was refused by the Arabs. Although he had not himself been the cause of that refusal, he was convinced that a Council such as that offered in 1922 would not be of use to the Arabs nor would it satisfy their aspirations. He assured the H.C. that the acceptance of a Legislative Council by the Arabs depended on the amount of benefit which they would derive from, and the power they would have in that Council. He added that the opposition party had spread the rumour that he was not personally in favour of the establishment of a Legislative Council for fear that such a Council would have jurisdiction over the S.M.C. He said that it was unlikely that he should fear any such thing since in all past elections, public opinion had been strongly in his favour, but that what mattered to him was not the effect of a Legislative Council on his own personal authority but the amount of benefit which Arabs would derive from such a Council. He enquired further regarding

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165. On the other hand, Ragheb Nashabishi said that he would welcome a nominated Council. When asked about the subject by the H.C. he admitted that a large portion of the Arab community would probably refuse to participate in a nominated Council and finally suggested that half the members of the Council should be elected and half nominated. See Wauchope's letter to Cunliffe-Lister 26.8.35 Ibid.

the position, if the Legislative Council was not accepted by the Jews, and was satisfied to hear the H.C.'s answer that in these circumstances, and if the Arabs were reasonable in their demands, he would strongly advise the Colonial Secretary to approve the establishment of the Council.

When asked if his opinion as to the appointment of non-official members to the Executive Council, he agreed that such an appointment would be a good step forward and useful to the country.

On the basis of his talks and discussions, the H.C. dispatched his recommendations towards the end of August 1934<sup>166</sup> which - on the whole - were approved by the Cabinet.<sup>167</sup>

However, further delay occurred for almost a year.<sup>168</sup> By then, Arab leaders, including the Mufti, were pressing for an early start of the discussions about the Council. On 6.6.35 the H.C. received a deputation of the new "National Defence" party headed by R. Nashabishi who urged him "to end delays and go ahead" in starting the negotiations.<sup>169</sup>

Articles appeared in the Arab press<sup>170</sup> stating that it was generally believed that the Arabs on the whole favoured the establishment of a Legislative Council and that with the exception of the Istiqlal, all Arab parties would participate in the elections, and the C.I.D. appreciation summary reported:<sup>171</sup> "In the meanwhile several leaders commence to think of standing as candidates at the elections." Commenting on the Mufti's view the report said: "There is a suggestion that Haj Amin Hussein and his followers would oppose it were Government of the intention to appoint to the Chairmanship Ragheb Bey who would then be able to exercise influence for party interests on the Moslem Supreme Council".

166. See his two letters to Cunliffe-Lister of 25.8.34 Ibid.

167. See Cab Con. 43(34) 28.11.34.

168. Because of changes in the Colonial Office, and because of the Government's wish to delay the start of the discussions until after the 19th Zionist Congress. See C.O.733/275/75102/1.

169. See letter of Wauchope to Col. Sec. 7.6.35 Ibid.

170. "Falastin" 13.6.35, 21.6.35. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 23.6.35.

171. C.I.D. Summary No.11/35 of 27.6.35 F.O. 371/18957.

The Nashabishi leaders, however, believed that the talk of the institution of the Legislative Council was purposely spread by the Husseini faction in order to gain public support.

One factor which considerably influenced the Arabs' acceptance of the Legislative Council scheme was the acute differences between the two main parties following the publication of the alleged letter of S. Anslan to the Mufti.<sup>172</sup> Efforts had been made to allay these differences and it was hoped that if these efforts proved successful there would be less chance of rejection since each party would not be so fearful of the criticisms of the other.<sup>173</sup> But personal jealousies and antipathies were still very strong.

The first informal talk of the H.C. with the Arab leaders was with the Mufti and Jamal al Husseini on 22.7.35.<sup>174</sup> They stated that, knowing of the Jewish refusal to participate in the Legislative Council "makes them all the more eager to do so". They went on to say that they were anxious to come to an agreement with General Wauchope as High Commissioner and take part in the proposed Legislative Council, but that the objections to the Council appeared to them to be insuperable: (1) the proportion of Jewish members in the Council (they objected to the fact that the basis of population was not Palestine citizenship, and to the number of nominated members to be allotted to Jews), and (2) the limitation of the powers of the Legislative Council (they objected to the restrictions as to the Mandate and to the powers of the High Commissioner to restrict the Council). They also argued that the Council should be permitted to debate "Subjects repugnant to the Mandate" e.g. that members should be free to move a resolution to put an end to the Balfour Declaration. They also commented

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172. See *infra* p.

173. See C.I.D. reports No.10/35 of 31.5.35 and 12/35 of 5.8.35. F.O./371/18957.

174. Wauchope to Parkinson 22.7.35. C.O. 377/275/75102. For a more detailed description of the meeting see Wauchope's letters to Macdonald 25.7.35 and 9.8.35 *Ibid*. See also the Paper "Points raised at an interview with Haj Amin al Husseini and Jamal Effendi al Husseini 22.7.35".

that "subjects liable to promote ill-feeling between the communities" was so wide a phrase as to include any subject touching the Jews. The H.C. then invited Jamal Husseini to re-draft the phrase in a form which would be acceptable to H.M.G. and to the Moslem community.

The next day, the H.C. received Ragheb<sup>175</sup> Nashabishi who informed the H.C. that he would prefer a purely nominated Council for two years and would let that nominated Council put forward proposals for a Legislative Assembly. He went on to say that he would prefer indirect elections. He thought that both the direct and indirect method would be corrupt but that the difficulties of direct election for Government would be very great. He felt even more that the Government should decide as Moslems would never agree among themselves.

He also agreed with the veto and that the H.C. should retain wide powers. He did not think, however, that Arab leaders would accept a condition preventing them from discussion of the Jewish National Home.

As the Arab Executive had lost so much prestige that it no longer represented Arab opinion, the H.C., therefore, told both the Mufti and R. Nashabishi that the Arabs must form, before his return in November, a Committee of six to represent all Arab parties. They said that they thought this could be done and promised to include a representative of the Christian community.

The Mufti and Jamal Husseini had a second talk with the H.C.<sup>176</sup>

175. See Wauchope's letter to MacDonald 25.7.35 and 9.8.35 Ibid. See also the paper "Points raised in interview with R. Nashashibi, 23.7.35 Ibid.

176. Points raised in a second talk with Haj Amin and Jamal Effendi Husseini 30.7.35 Ibid. In the meantime, the H.C. interviewed also representatives of the Christian Communities. See "Interview of H.C. with Yacoub Eff. Farraj of the Greek Orthodox Community" 26.7.31 Ibid and "Interview of H.C. with Judge Francis Khayat of the Roman Catholic Community" 27.7.35 Ibid.

The Mufti opened by stating that the neighbouring Arab countries had fuller powers of legislation than those offered to the Palestinians as well as wider representation of the people; because of that, a certain section of Arab opinion might refuse the terms offered by the Government so that one section of Arabs would be in favour of a Legislative Council and one against it.

The creation of such a situation, Jamal Husseini added, "might well ruin the carrying out of the whole scheme of the Legislative Council which the country so much needed and demanded". They also urged that all members should be elected and none nominated because the public would look on the nominated members as Government servants.

They informed the H.C. that they would prefer the Government to decide - adding that they hoped it would be in favour - the problem of direct election rather than leave it to be discussed by the community as the latter course would only lead to dissension.

And contrary to what they had stated in their previous meeting, they considered that it would be most difficult to form a representative committee as each party would claim more representatives than the others. Only after the H.C. repeated his wish that such a committee should be formed before November so that it could decide whether the Arabs accepted or rejected the plan, did they promise to try to do it, emphasizing however that the difficulties were great. They suggested that the executive power of the people should be increased by the addition of non-official members to the Executive Council. And finally they begged the H.C. to consider the difficulties in their position. If they would be in a position to prove to the people that the 1935 proposals were a real step in advance of the 1922 proposals, then "moderates like themselves" would unite in carrying out the Government's final proposals. But if these proposals were narrowed down and gave no real power to a Legislative Council, then the extremists would become violent and would make everything difficult for the Government and would disturb the peace of the country.

They added that although the Jews had decided to boycott the election, they felt that the Jews would not abstain from trying to influence the result. The Jews, they said would endeavour to cause dissensions among various Arab parties as they did during the Municipal elections<sup>177</sup> and make the position of all those "who were willing to co-operate with the Government more and more difficult".

Shortly before his departure for England,<sup>178</sup> the H.C. saw the Mufti for the third talk, this time alone.

The H.C. stated that he had not given any pledge as to any changes suggested by the Mufti or Jamal Husseini such as the reduction of the number of Jewish nominated members from 5 to 4. The Mufti's answer was that he knew he could rely on the H.C. to do his best to help. Reporting on the Husseini's views in early August, the C.I.D. appreciation summary stated:<sup>179</sup> "In regard to the Council, it appears that the Husseini leaders are now inclined to participate and not to boycott the elections".

It seems that during these discussions, Wauchope felt that by pursuing the policy of a Legislative Council he became more and more vulnerable to Arab pressures. At one stage he wrote to the Colonial Secretary: "I am sure you agree that the fewer commitments that bind our hands the better. The pledge as to the Legislative Council without further delay is one example, the life appointment of the Mufti is another."<sup>180</sup>

However, he had already advanced too far, in that course and no retreat was possible.

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177. In the mixed parts of the towns which were represented by an Arab member of the municipality, the Jews used to vote en bloc for one of the two opposing Arab candidates, this being in most cases, the decisive factor.

178. See interview between His Excellency and Haj Amin on 5.8.35 Ibid.

179. Periodical Appreciation Summary No.12/35 of 5.8.35 F.O. 371/18957.

180. Wauchope to MacDonald 25.7.35. C.O. 377/275/75102.

An important discussion was held in mid-October at the Colonial Office attended by the Colonial Secretary, the High Commissioner and others in which all the important questions were examined and resolved one by one.<sup>181</sup> It was agreed that on his return to Palestine, the H.C. was committed to initiate formal discussions with Jewish and Arab representatives and that he was fully committed to going forward even if only one side should accept the proposals.

However, on 25.11.35, the Arab leaders, representing the Inter-party Committee (Lujat al Alizal),<sup>182</sup> met the H.C. and presented him with a joint memorandum,<sup>183</sup> in which they submitted their political demands: (i) The early establishment of democratic government. (ii) The total prohibition by law of the transfer of Arab lands to Jews and (iii) The Total cessation of Jewish immigration. They also informed him that they expected an answer within 3 months and that a meeting would be called at Nablus to discuss the course of action to be taken by the Arabs in case their demands would be rejected.

The new Legislative Council Scheme was finally formally communicated to Arab and Jewish leaders on December 21/22 1935 respectively.<sup>184</sup> The proposals were published in an official communique on December 23rd together with a statement by the High Commissioner which dwelt on the aims of the new plan.

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181. See Notes of a discussion held at the Colonial Office on Friday, 18th October 1935.... regarding proposals for the establishment of a Legislative Council in Palestine. Ibid Pt. II.
182. Towards the end of 1935, the Arab political parties in Palestine with the exception of the "Istiqlal" decided on a joint political action and organised themselves in an Inter-party Committee. The "Istiqlal" party advocating the more extreme policy of total non-co-operation with the Government stayed out.
183. For the meeting and the memorandum, see C.O. 733/293/75102.
184. Official Communique No.43/35 of 22.12.35 "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 23.12.35. See also Col. 133 p.86 and C.O. 733/293/75102/1.

"The intention of His Majesty's Government in amending the Constitution of Palestine by introducing a Legislative Council is, in accordance with its long established tradition and common practice, to secure the advice and assistance of the people of the country in carrying on the Government of the country".

The meeting on 21.12.35 with the Arab Leaders was attended by representatives of all political parties with the exception of the Istiqlal.<sup>185</sup> The scheme was received by them in a critical spirit and they showed that they did not consider that the proposals went far enough in the direction of self-government and they requested to be given time to study the proposals.

The Arabic press displayed interest tinged with disappointment with "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" and "al-Liwa" showing their tendencies by bringing into light the disadvantages of the proposals to the Arabs, and "Falastin" trying to point out its good points.<sup>186</sup>

An all-party meeting was held in Jerusalem on 7.1.36 to discuss the answer to be given with respect to the Legislative Council.<sup>187</sup> Abdul Latif Salah the head of the National Block party insisted that the answer should be withheld until the Government would answer the Arab memorandum previously submitted, but the other four parties disagreed with him. A further meeting took place on 17.1.36 but there were differences of opinion as regards to the extent of modifications which the Arabs should ask the Government to introduce in the plan before they would accept it.<sup>188</sup>

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185. See "Legislative Council, Summary Record of Meeting in the High Commissioner's Office on 21st December 1935 Ibid.

186. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 23.12.35, 24.12.35, 27.12.35  
 "Falastin" 23.12.35, 24.12.35, 25.12.35, 28.12.35.  
 "Al-Liwa" 23.12.35, 26.12.35.

187. "Falastin" 8.1.36.

188. "Falastin" 18.1.36.

Ragheb Nashabishi and Ishaq Budeiri for the Reform Party favoured moderate amendments with Jamal Husseini<sup>139</sup> requiring more sweeping ones which the other leaders considered were certain to be rejected by the Government. It was ultimately agreed that each party should submit a reply separately and that they should meet subsequently to consider their final attitude.

The leaders, showing their hopefulness, also agreed to postpone indefinitely the meeting which was fixed at Nablus on 15th January to discuss the course of action to be taken by the Arabs in case their political demands as stated in the leaders' memorandum would be rejected.

The four parties then submitted their comments. None rejected the proposals but all criticized them as not satisfying Arab aspirations. The Palestine Arab party made the strongest criticism, nevertheless their President Jamal al Nusseini gave a private assurance to the H.C. that nothing that he had said should be regarded as a rejection of the proposals.<sup>140</sup>

An opposition leader gave at the time his opinion that the Mufti feared that the establishment of the Legislative Council would reduce his power. The C.I.D.'s evaluation<sup>141</sup> was that: "The opinion of Haj Amin is that the Council does not realize national aspirations and should be strongly rejected. If Government perceives a unanimous refusal by all parties and newspapers, it would be forced to introduce some improvements. Should Government not do so and proceed with the establishment of the Council, Arabs should participate in their private capacities. In this case, it seems it is the intention of Haj Amin that the majority of nominated members should belong to his own party as he is desirous that the interests of the

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139. The C.I.D. remarked that in those days there was closer rapprochement between the independent young men groups and the Istiqlal and the Palestine Arab party who all fell in line with these criticizing the Legislative Council.

140. See Wauchop's cable to Thomas 22.3.36. C.O. 733/213/75102.

141. C.I.D. Summary report No.1/36 of 22.1.36. F.O. 371/20018.

S.M.C. and his own interests should be well defended."

The Chief Secretary sent identical letters to the leaders of the four parties in which he clarified and answered some of their criticism and added: "I am to say that His Excellency is confident that in the light of the explanations furnished in this letter you will find yourself able to co-operate with His Excellency in the establishment of a Legislative Council in Palestine".<sup>192</sup>

In the meantime the Arab press in different shades had been critical of the restricted powers of the Legislative Council and had minimised the importance of the Government's offer without however, recommending outright rejection.

The authorities, however, were satisfied "that the tide of opinion is flowing steadily in favour of the Legislative Council".

The Acting District Commissioner of the Northern District, the very experienced Mr. Bailey, reported on the basis of considerable consultations with leading Moslems that in his view 80% of the Moslem population of the Northern District desired that the Legislative Council should be brought into being. Only in Haifa town - where the Istiqlal party had some following - it was estimated that about 70% were in favour.<sup>193</sup>

Similar reports had been received from other District Commissioners.

The representatives of the Christian Arabs informed the H.C. "that the consensus of Arab Christian opinion was unanimously in favour of accepting the Legislative Council, it being understood that the Arab population should have the right to claim wider powers for the Council and stronger Arab and Christian representation".<sup>194</sup>

192. See Letters by Hathorn Hall 9.3.36. C.O. 733/293/75102.

193. See his Memorandum to the Chief Secretary 16.2.36 Ibid Pt. II.

194. See letter of Y. Farraj and Alfred Rock to the H.C. 3.3.36 Ibid.

In the meantime, pro-Zionist circles in London raised the issue of the Legislative Council in Parliament.<sup>195</sup>

On 26.2.36, Lord Snell initiated in the House of Lords a debate during which the Legislative Council proposal was attacked by members of all parties who urged that the scheme should either "be abandoned or suspended while a Royal Commission inquired into the question on the spot."<sup>196</sup>

A month later the debate took place in the Commons on 24.3.36 with a similar result. Most of the speeches asked for the suspension or drastic modification of the scheme and Thomas himself was attacked from all sides bringing him to the conclusion described thus: "I am sure there is serious doubt in all parts of the House as to the desirability of proceeding with the proposals".<sup>197</sup>

The debates on the Legislative Council in the House of Lords until then usually considered friendly towards the Arabs, and then in the House of Commons, had a considerable effect on the Arabs. It had made them realize more than ever what they described as 'the strength of Jewish influence in England'. The Arabs became definitely apprehensive that the Jews had succeeded in their efforts to prevent the establishment of the Council.

195. Weizmann arrived then in London to direct the Zionist political efforts See Sharett Op-Cit 37-38. Weizmann himself considered the British policy of a Legislative Council with Arabs in the majority, as part of England's policy of appeasement towards the aggressive powers and their possible satellites among whom the Foreign Office placed the Arabs, a policy accentuated by the outbreak of the Abyssinian War in 1935. For his view of the Legislative Council see Weizmann Op-Cit pp. 379-381.

196. See Hansard Lords Vol.99 Cols. 750-795. See also The Peel Report p.91 and Thomas cable to Wauchope 20.2.36 and his despatch to Wauchope 2.3.36. C.O. 733/293/75102. Pt. II.

197. Hansard Commons Vol.310 Cols. 1079-1210. See also the Peel Report p.91 and Thomas letter to Wauchope 25.3.36 Ibid.

What increased their bitterness and their fear of Jewish strength was the fact that the establishment of the proposed Council was a sort of test case. They were given to understand many times that if one section of the population- in this case the Jews - was not going to participate in the elections, the Government was adamant to nominate members for the empty seats. Now they saw that Parliamentary opinion in "obedience" to Zionist pressure rejected the Council and they wanted to see whether the Government would still keep its pledge.

The fact that two former Colonial Secretaries (Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery) both of whom were concerned in negotiations of a similar nature, during their terms of office when they then endeavoured to persuade the Arabs to accept somewhat similar and if anything more advantageous proposals, expressed themselves against the Council was commented upon with considerable bitterness and attributed to corruption. The Arabs were sure that had the British Government really wanted the Legislative Council, it would have easily secured parliamentary approval by making the matter one of confidence.<sup>198</sup> The fact that it did not, proved beyond doubt that it did not want the Legislative Council and as was described by the Peel Commission:<sup>199</sup> "Nobody in Palestine doubted that Parliament had killed the scheme..... inevitably their (the Arabs') old hostility to the Mandate and all it stood for was reinforced. More than that, their old fear that the Mandate might ultimately lead to their subjugation to the Jews became more concrete and more urgent. They were really to be "swamped", it seemed, and that in "no long time". Following the debates, the Colonial Office hesitating and not knowing exactly how to proceed consulted the H.C. as to the alternative possibilities which had been mentioned in Parliament, namely to appoint a Commission of Enquiry or to convene a round table.<sup>200</sup>

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198. For Arab views of the Parliamentary Debates see A. Husseini Haqaiq Op-Cit pp.36-37. Y. Haikal Op-Cit p.102, S. Besisi Op-Cit p.179 R. John and S. Hadaur Op-Cit p.256 and Arab papers of the last week of March 1936.

199. The Peel Report p.92.

200. Thomas to Wauchope 25.3.36 C.O. 733/293/75102.

Wauchope suggested a third way out of the impasse, that of inviting an Arab delegation to visit London believing that this alone could restore a balance of confidence as the Arabs would be able to put their case as the Jews had in London.<sup>201</sup>

The H.C., in his suggestion actually adopted a view put forward by the Husseinis. 'al-Liwa' the organ of the Husseinis "Palestine Arab Party" had been pressing for many months for proper Arab representation in London and following the Commons debate, urged the necessity of the presence of an Arab delegation in London.<sup>202</sup>

On 1.4.36, during an interview requested by him, the Mufti informed the H.C. that the recent debates in Parliament on the Legislative Council and land sales had aroused much angry feeling and suggested that in view of the Jewish propaganda it would be necessary to send Arab representatives to London to present the Arab case, and that he had already suggested it to the S.M.C.<sup>203</sup>

The suggestions of the H.C. together with a Memorandum of the Colonial Office<sup>204</sup> were laid before the Cabinet which agreed to adopt them.<sup>205</sup>

It should be noted that the wording of the Cabinet's decisions denotes clearly that the Council was not thought to be dead and that the Government was ready to negotiate on it.

201. Wauchope to Thomas 28.3.36 Ibid.

202. 'Al-Liwa' 29.3.36. See also in that respect the C.I.D. summary report of No.5/36 of 17.3.36 F.O. 371/20018 according to which the Arabs contemplated sending delegation to London after the Lords debate.

203. See Wauchope's letter to the Colonial Secretary 1.4.36 C.O. 733/307/75439/1.

204. See C.P. 95(36) and C.P. 99(36) March 1936.

205. Cab Con. 25(36) 1.4.36.

Accordingly, on 2.4.36, at a meeting with the 5 party leaders, the H.C. extended an invitation to an Arab delegation to discuss with the Colonial Secretary in London the Legislative Council, as well as to submit to him its views regarding land sales and immigration. After a short discussion, the Arab leadârs informed the H.C. that it was their unanimous wish to accept the invitation.<sup>206</sup>

Arabs on the whole welcomed the invitation<sup>207</sup> and the immediate result was the tension was reduced and there was a considerable improvement in the Arab political atmosphere which had deteriorated as a result of the Commons debate. Soon however, things changed, the leaders who had accepted the invitation were attacked by the extremists<sup>208</sup>. Events moved fast and because of the outbreak of the civil disturbances, the coalition of the five parties, in its regular meeting on 22.4.36, were of the opinion that "although they agree as a matter of principle, to the necessity of sending a delegation to London, it is not in the public interest that such a delegation should go at the present moment in compliance with the expressed desire of the nation and in view of the state of anxiety and disorder which now prevails in the country."<sup>209</sup>

To go back to the subject of the Legislative Council.

On 1.4.36, Ragheb Nashabishi on behalf of his party addressed the H.C. a long letter in which he wrote: "The National Defence Party..... has accepted the scheme of the Legislative Council..... although the Party is aware that this scheme falls short of the aspiration of the country, and of the aims of the Arab people hoping that this scheme will be the first step towards the attainment of the basic demands of the Arab nation, namely full self-government." The party then called on the H.C. to enact the

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206. See Official Communique 2.4.36 "Falastin" 3.4.36. See also C.O.733/307/75438/1.

207. See "Al-Liwa" 3.4.36. See also C.I.D. Report No.8/36 of 11.4.36 F.O. 371/20018.

208. See C.I.D. report Ibid. See also "Falastin" 9.4.36.

209. See letter of 5 leaders to the H.C. 22.4.36 C.O. 733/307/75438/1.

necessary legislative act and to proceed with the election in order that the agitation and the disturbed feelings be pacified".<sup>210</sup>

Actually, Hassan Sidki Dajani, the Party's Secretary, published a day earlier a declaration informing the Arab public that the party had decided to accept the proposals of the Legislative Council as a first step towards self-government.<sup>211</sup>

A few days later, Abdul Latif Salah, on behalf of the National Block of Nablus, informed the H.C. that "the National Block" had resolved to participate in the elections of the Legislative Council..... irrespective of the fact that the scheme.... does not satisfy any of the demands of the nation and on the understanding that our participation..... is actuated by our desire to achieve the objects of the nation."<sup>212</sup>

During an interview granted by the H.C. on 16.4.36 to Ragheb Nashabishi and Jamal Husseini, they explained to him that of the five Arab parties, four were prepared to accept the Legislative Council proposals in the form which they were presented, even if they could not obtain further concessions. The Palestine Arab party held the view that the proposals as presented were unacceptable.<sup>213</sup>

In view of this last sentence, in view of the fact that "his" party refused the scheme as presented, the question presents itself: What was the position of the Mufti vis-a-vis the Legislative Council? Based on all

210. Ragheb Nashabishi to Wauchope 1.4.36. C.O. 733/293/75102 Pt. III  
See also "Falastin" 3.4.36.

211. "Falastin" 31.3.36.

212. See A.L. Salah to the H.C. 10.4.36. C.O. 733/293/75102/Pt. III

213. For a full description of the interview see C.O. 733/307/754381/1. Nashabishi and Jamal wanted to consult the H.C. as to whether, in view of the fact that the Arab party refused the scheme as presented, it should participate in the delegation to London. They then explained the difficulties which were being experienced in arriving at an agreement as to the membership of the delegation and Jamal even went so far as to suggest that the H.C. should nominate the delegates.

his pronouncements which I have tried to bring forth in detail, and on other sources of information which I have mentioned, I think we can reach the definite conclusion that the Mufti - though in return for his support tried to get a "higher price" (namely better provisions for Arabs) as was possible - was ready to accept it.

We have seen that when Wauchope re-initiated the scheme to establish a Legislative Council, in his letters to the Colonial Secretary of 25.8.34, he did it only after an important and long discussions he had on the subject with the Mufti on 20.8.34.

During that discussion, the H.C. expressed his hope that the Mufti would help him in preparing the ground for the acceptance of a Legislative Council with moderate powers by the Arabs to which the Mufti reiterated that the acceptance of a Legislative Council by the Arabs depended on the amount of benefit which they would derive from and the power they would have in the Council. In other words, both sides agreed as to the principle. The bargaining about details remained open.

In early June 1935, it was the Mufti, together with the other Arab leaders who pressed the H.C. for an early start to the discussions. During the interview which he had together with Jamal al Hussein with the H.C. they declared that they were anxious to come to an agreement with General Wauchope as High Commissioner and take part in the proposed Legislative Council, but they objected to its limited powers and to the proportion of Jewish membership. Again - agreement in principle, difference of opinion as to particulars.

And the same was repeated in their second and the Mufti's third meeting with the H.C.

We should also note that when the C.I.D. appreciation summaries reported the Mufti's opposition to the Council, it was either because of the rumours about R. Nashabishi's appointment as its head or as a tactical move in order to achieve for it wider powers, but they never reported on opposition per se.

In a later chapter,<sup>214</sup> we shall see how the fundamental concept of "political struggle" using peaceful and legal means, which was held by the official and recognized Arab leadership, was challenged and finally defeated by the concept of "Armed struggle".

The Legislative Council scheme was perhaps (though nobody apparently knew it at the time) the last chance of the concept of "Political struggle" of which the Mufti - as this study tries to prove - was a faithful follower during the thirties, to repulse the challenge of the "Armed struggle" concept.

As stated, rather simply, by Wauchope: "The establishment of a Legislative Council would have the effect..... by affording the Arabs opportunity to give expression to their opinions without recourse to demonstration and riots".<sup>215</sup>

And re-stated years later by J. Marlow who wrote:<sup>216</sup> The Legislative Council proposals "did have the merit, unrecognized by those who criticized them and who did not recognize how near Palestine was to the edge of serious violence, of giving the Arabs an opportunity which they were apparently prepared to accept, of talking instead of fighting."

The Mufti wanted to talk and not to fight as can be further proved by his advocacy, of despatching the delegation to London and by his behaviour prior to and during the first days of the disturbances.

In conclusion, the Mufti was ready to accept the Legislative Council scheme. The same, however, could not be said about many of his followers in the Palestine Arab Party. The paper "al-Liwa" tried<sup>217</sup> to cover this divergence but it was pointed out by the opposition paper "Falastin",<sup>218</sup> which wrote most specifically "It seems that while His Eminence the Mufti is in favour of the Council, an important section of the Arab party is against it".

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214. See infra Chapter 15.

215. See his letter to Thomas 18.4.36 (the same date on which according to the Arabs, started the disturbances again with no one knowing it at the time) C.O. 733/297/75156 Pt.II.

216. J. Marlow Op-Cit p.136 My Italics.

217. "Al Liwas 8.4.36.

218. "Falastin" 7.4.36.

Chapter 11The 1933 Disturbances

On 13 October 1933 there started in Jerusalem a series of disturbances, lasting until 3 November, which spread to Jaffa, Haifa, Haibus and which recurred again in Jerusalem.

Two main factors which caused these disturbances were (I) the immigration problem and (II) the growing anti-British feeling of the Arab Palestinians. Another two secondary factors were (1) the increasing importance of the extremist youth organization and (II) the will of the Arab Executive to re-assert itself and win back some of its dwindling influence.

The great increase in Jewish immigration from the latter part of 1932,<sup>1</sup> together with the sale of lands to Jews, had resulted in a growing feeling of unrest among the Arabs of Palestine.

Following the publication of the Immigration Bill 1933<sup>2</sup> the provisions of which they considered, would enable further immigration on a bigger and larger scale, Arab politicians and the Arab press directed a campaign against the Jewish immigration, with bitterness and growing intensity.

They complained that the Government was flooding Palestine with Jews with total disregard of their own existence of its promises and the opinions of its best experts. They said that "waves" of immigrants were reaching Palestine regardless of the absorptive capacity of the country, with the object of Judaizing the country, displacing the Arabs from the land and depriving them of their employment, and that they were destined to extermination, expulsion, and complete domination by the Jews. They also stated that the mass immigration of Jews was being allowed and indeed encouraged by the Government.

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1. See Chapter 12.

2. See Palestine Gazette Extraordinary 31.8.1933.

- (a) as a reply to the movement of the Arabs for unity and
- (b) so that when the Legislative Council was introduced the Jews would be in a majority.

On the occasion of the Moslem Festival of Nebi-Kubin on the 4 September, which was organized by the Young Men's Executive led by Y. Glussein, Musa Kazim in a speech<sup>3</sup> against immigration asked the audience not to lose hope, and addressed a telegram to the H.C. demanding the immediate stopping of immigration and protesting against the "British policy which aims at converting Palestine into a Jewish country, and at the annihilation of the original Arab inhabitants".

Public meetings of protest were held in Haifa Jerusalem and Jaffa by the Istiqlal Party, the Young Men's Association and the Moslem - Christian Association.

Two written protests were sent by Amin al Tamimi the acting President of the S.M.C.,<sup>4</sup> and on the occasion of the visit to Nablus of the Officer Administering the Government on the 30 September, Taufic Bahmad and other notables presented him with a petition to be transmitted to the League of Nations.

Material for agitation was not lacking. The Jews, for their own reasons boasted of the resolutions adopted at the 18th Zionist Congress held at Prague in August 1933 calling for opening the gates of Palestine for unrestricted Jewish Immigration. The Jewish Press was filled with reports about immigration of German and other Jews into Palestine. This was published by the Arab Press, which reported daily the arrival of immigrants in large numbers at Haifa and Jaffa. It was even alleged that Zionist bodies contracted for the transfer of 80,000 Jews into Palestine in a period of 3 months.<sup>5</sup>

3. Falastin 5.9.1933

4. On 19.8.1933 and 5.9.1933 C.O. 733/239/17356/1

5. "Falastin" early October. I could not locate the issue.

See Police Summary Report No. 25/33 of 23.10.1933 F.O. 371/16926 and letter from the Secretary of State to the H.C. 1.11.1933 C.O.239/17356/1.

In particular, the tone of the Mufti's paper "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" was strong and betrayed the bitterness and acute vexation which the Arabs felt because of Jewish immigration.

The second factor leading to the 1933 disturbances was the growing Anti-British feeling amongst the Palestinians. Following Macdonald's "black letter" to Weizmann and the manner in which it abolished all the concessions granted to them by the Passfield White paper, this Anti-British feeling manifested itself, and started to spread slowly. It was mainly propagated by those elements, which later formed themselves in the Istiqlal party. On the occasion of a popular meeting, to commemorate the Independence of Syria held in Nablus in 8.3.1931, I. Darwaza and other speakers pointed openly to Britain as the main enemy of the Palestinians.<sup>6</sup> This was also elaborated in an article, called "The Death of Snake"<sup>7</sup> by Ihsan al Jaabari in which he discussed the Prime Minister's letter.

From then onwards, the leaders of the Istiqlal party proceeded with a systematic policy of engendering in the minds of the population hatred of the British mandatory Administration, alleging that besides preventing the Arabs from exercising their right of freedom and independence, Britain was the chief means of Arab subjugation to the Jews. The All-party Grand National Assembly which was held in Jaffa on 26.3.1933 resolved in principle on non-co-operation with the Government<sup>8</sup> and decided to put unto immediate effect the first stage (i.e. to boycott Government as far as receptions and diplomatic acts of courtesy were concerned, to boycott Government committees, and to boycott British and Zionist goods, manufacturers and firms).

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6. 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' 11.3.1931. I. Darwaza mentions also in that respect the speech given by Islaf al Nashashibi on the occasion of the commemoration of the Battle of Bitin when Salan al Din won against the Crusaders, and an Article written by Subhi al Khadra "Britain the source of trouble and the root of evil", and another article written by himself "where are we with regard to our national beliefs and aspirations for independence", both of which appeared in "Al-Jamiah al Arabiyya". See Darwaza Op-Cit pp.102103. 7. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 23.3.1931.

8. See p.

The idea that the British were a kind of disinterested referee, trying to hold even balance between the Arabs and Jews was abandoned. An article entitled<sup>9</sup> "A Government which is openly partial" while discussing the murder of a Jewish guard by the Beduins in Wadi Hawareth, showed the total partiality and identification of the Government with the Jews.

In a discussion between the Colonial Secretary and his chief advisers in the Colonial Office on 1.5.1933<sup>10</sup> he remarked that Arab feeling was more bitter than he had realised, and that it was directed not only against the Jews, but against the Government. He also pointed out that if there should be further outbreaks of Arab hostilities in the future, it would be directed against the Government.

In their annual Report on Palestine for the year 1933 the Administration noted<sup>11</sup> that "the Arab leaders have been more outspoken and less compromising in their hostility; their attitude appears to have crystallized in the concept that the so-called Jewish policy of the Mandatory is but a screen for oppressive imperialism and an excuse for withholding from the people of Palestine their elementary right of independence".

The "Jamiah al Arabiyya" expressed this Anti-British line in 2 strong articles. Celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of Hittin it wrote<sup>12</sup> "Oh you Palestinians, the ancestors of your present rulers occupied your country for 160 years, but were driven out of it, as you know. We want now and we need another battle of Hittin" and following the big demonstration in Jerusalem on 13.10.1933 in an article entitled "Our critical Movement in its new direction"<sup>13</sup> in which it discussed the new anti-British direction

9. Al Jamiah al Islamiyyah" - 28.2.1933

10. See note of Discussion C.O. 733/239/17356

11. Report on Palestine & Trans-Jordan 1933. Colonial Office No.94, London 1934.

12. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 23.8.1933.

13. Ibid 17.10.1933.

it said "Kick this Zionism with your feet, and stand face to face with Great Britain. It is more worthy to struggle against. Zionism is nothing but a criminal enterprise encouraged by Britain and protected by its bayonets, behind which it aims at oppressing the Arabs and bringing them under its direct control".

This anti-British policy was well liked and adopted by the Arab youth, whose participation in and influence on Palestine Arab politics was increasing.<sup>14</sup> Arab youth organizations, the Boy Scouts, the Young Men's Congress and the Young Men's Moslem Association (Y.M.M.A.) all took part in the national activities, in agitation against sale of lands and immigration, in enforcing the boycott, in keeping order and directing the national festivals such as Nebi Musa, Nebi Rubin etc.

They were tired and dissatisfied with what was known as the "policy of political assemblies, futile speeches, and empty petitions and protests", and favoured and advised more drastic and extreme methods of action. They - as well as the Istiqlal party and many others, bitterly attacked the Arab Executive for their apathy and inertia. The Executive, which had been worn out by the passage of time, torn by internal divisions and party friction, blackened by the fact that some of its members were mixed up in land transactions with Jews and practically leaderless because of the advanced age of its president Musa Kazim, lost almost all its influence. Its members from the Istiqlal party<sup>15</sup> withdrew from all activities in it and the crown of national leadership passed from 1929 into the hands of the Mufti.

After a lull of political inactivity which lasted almost a year, the Executive Committee met on 8.10.1933<sup>16</sup> with only 21 out of the 48 members attending the meeting.

14. See chapter 14.

15. Auni Abd Al Hadi, Izzat Darwaza, Muin al Ma'adi, Rashid Haj Ibrahim and Faimi Aboushi. See Darwaza Op-Cit p.112

16. The meeting before that was held on 28.10.1932, see 3797:65 I.S.A.

Several speakers (Omar al Bitar, Alfred Rock and others) proposed that the Executive Committee should dissolve itself<sup>17</sup> thus admitting its bankruptcy. Others hinted that unless the Executive decided on some positive active steps, such as demonstrations etc. it would lose all the remnants of its influence. It was felt that unless the Executive Committee adopted such a decision, the Young Men's Congress (Lugnat Muhtamer al Shabab) supported by the Istiqlal and other extremists would no doubt, advance to assume leadership and organize demonstrations by themselves.

On Jamal Nusseini's proposal, a resolution was passed, to declare a general strike on Friday the 13th October 1933, and to demonstrate on the same day against the Government's policy in the matter of immigration by means of a procession from the Haram el Sharif to the Government Offices. The resolution read thus:<sup>18</sup> "In expression of the wrath of the Palestinian Arab Nation... against the British Government's tampering with the rights of the owners of the country...the Executive Committee has decided to observe a general strike"....and to hold a large demonstration.

Both Musa Kazim<sup>19</sup> and Jamal Nusseini<sup>20</sup> stated that it was not so much that they who wanted the demonstration as forced on them by popular demand. One cannot, however, escape the impression that they, and specially Musa Kazim considered this demonstration, - as a bid to win back for himself the influence he had lost, the more so that the Mufti was outside Palestine<sup>21</sup> and all the credit - if credit it was going to be - would be his and the Arab Executive's.

17. For record of the meeting see 3797:65 I.S.A.

18. "Al Jurnah al Arabiyya" 9.10.1933.

19. "If it were in my power I would try to stop it, but it was the people who decided it" his words to Bathorn Hall the O.A.C. on 9.10.1933 C.O. 733/239/17356/1 Pt.II.

20. "We have been pushed to it by the people themselves. In an interview with the H.C. 25.10.1933. Ibid.

21. He was heading then the delegation of the Islamic Congress to India. See Chapter II.

These, then, were the factors leading to the disturbances. On learning of the intended demonstration, the Government, in accordance with its practice since 1929, and in the interest of public security, decided to prohibit it.

The O.A.G.<sup>22</sup> informed Musa Kazim and Jamal Hussein, each separately, that permission would not be granted for the demonstration, and advised them to abandon the resolution. Musa Kazim, defended vigorously the Executive's resolution and bitterly criticised the Government's immigration policy. Noticing, however, the firm stand by the O.A.G., he agreed to try and reassemble the Executive Committee, and persuade them to send a delegation for further discussions with the O.A.G., but on its meeting of the 12.10.1933 the Committee decided again to hold the demonstration.

The decision to hold the demonstration was received with great satisfaction amongst all classes of the Arab population.

It is safe to assume that the Executive Committee, or at least the moderates within it, were forced, to adopt the decision by public opinion. Had they desired to cancel their previous decision, they would not have been able to do so without having to quit their position and cause their own and the Executive's downfall.

The Government had already warned formally the Arab Executive<sup>23</sup> and published in all papers an official communique<sup>24</sup> warning "the members of the public...that any person who participates in any demonstration or procession, will render himself liable to the penalties of the law".

It also took all the necessary security precautions.

22. One cannot but compare, the strong resolution and firm line, adopted by Mr. Hatorn-Hall in the Autumn of 1933 with the hesitations and delaying tactics of Sir A. Wauchope in April 1936.

23. In a letter to the President Musa Kazim 11.10.1933 C.O. 733/239/17356/1.

24. Official Communique No.38/33 11.10.1933 "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 11.10.1933.

For a few days before the demonstration in Jerusalem, excitement was high, verging on sedition. It was general and pervaded all classes, though perhaps in a lesser form in villages, and the anti-British feeling was extremely strong.

Though the Government took strong precautions, Jews living in mixed quarters moved temporarily.

On the morning of Friday 13 October, the Arabs entering Jerusalem, were deprived of their sticks. Around 12.30 p.m. following the Friday prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque, during which Sheikh Said al Khatib delivered a moderate speech on immigration. The demonstration<sup>25</sup> started, with several thousand people participating<sup>26</sup>.

Only after several clashes with baton charges from the police and the crowd resisting by throwing stones rocks and other "missiles", was it dispersed.

Several points are noteworthy.

The readiness of the majority of members of the Executive to participate in the demonstration, realising that they were likely to be beaten and imprisoned, points perhaps to the force of public opinion in favour of the demonstration. The participation of Musa Kazim, despite his very advanced age was much admired by the Arabs, as well as by the British. An attempt by the District Commissioner to induce him and other leaders to leave the crowd, failed, as they were prevented from doing so on account of the people around them. A later attempt to bring him out of the crowd, however, succeeded.

25. For full description of the demonstration, as well as those which followed see the Murison Report C.O. 733/239/17356/1 pt 4 see also Police Appreciation Summary No.25/33 of 23.10.1933 and No.26/33 of 15.11.1933 F.O. 371/16926.

26. There were different estimates of the number of participants. The Murison report cites the evidence of an eye witness estimating the crowd at the start of the demonstration as between 6-7 thousand people. Other police reports describing the clashes which happened at a later stage estimate the crowd to be 3,000 people. Perhaps the remainder had dispersed in the meantime.

A most active part was played by Jamal Husseini. He was the soul of the agitation at the first stages of the demonstration and of the strike, having supervised the closure of shops in Jerusalem. He himself was lightly wounded. The participation of women, both Moslem and Christians led by the Arab Ladies Association, was conspicuous. They even became troublesome to the police, screaming kicking and waving handkerchiefs at the police, and the clash close to Damascus gate was actually caused by their encouragement of the crowd to stone the police and urging them to further efforts.

Not less conspicuous was the absence of villagers, very few of whom participated, with the crowd consisting almost wholly of townsmen. This perhaps was the result of efforts by Ragheb Nashashibi and Fakhri Nashashibi to dissuade villagers from participating in the demonstration failure of which they tried to bring about. Other leaders of the opposition resented this and themselves participated in the demonstration. Pro-Executive leaders claimed that the small attendance of the villagers was not so much because of the Nashashibis' efforts as a result of the lack of propaganda on their part to induce attendance, of the commencement of the winter sowing, and especially of the efforts of the District Officers to discourage the fellaheen from participating.

Though deprived of sticks and other weapons the demonstrators including certain leaders, desired and were intent on a clash with the Government forces, welcoming any disturbance which might have followed.

In order to emphasize the Anti-British character of the demonstration, the cries were "Down with the English" and "Down with the Colonisers". There were almost no shouts against Jews and Zionism.

By 4 p.m. that day, the situation became normal, though tense, and no incidents of any kind occurred.

No demonstrations were attempted elsewhere, but the strike was complete at Nablus, Jaffa and Ramleh and was partial elsewhere. In Jerusalem the strike included also the means of transport as well.

On the same Friday evening, the Arab Executive met, feeling satisfied that the greatest part of the programme of the demonstration was fulfilled, that the intentions of the Nashashibis had failed, and most of all, that the response and political spirit were most encouraging. With this feeling of elation and contentment in setting an example of "National sacrifice", the Executive, in accordance of its resolution of 8.10 resolved to organize further demonstrations.<sup>27</sup>

This announcement was enthusiastically welcomed by Arab press.

It was suggested that the second demonstration should be held in Haifa either on 31 October, the date upon which the H.C. was going to open officially the Haifa port or on Friday 3 November, following the Balfour Declaration anniversary.<sup>28</sup> But the Haifa leaders were not enthusiastic, and it was decided to hold the demonstration in Jaffa, the second port of entry of Jewish immigrants, on Friday 27 October.<sup>29</sup>

On 24.10.1933 the Jaffa District Commissioner interviewed the Jaffa leaders of the Moslem Christian Association, and of the Arab Youth Congress, informing them that he would not allow a demonstration, but intimating that he would agree to a milder gesture, such as presenting a written protest to himself, after a procession from the Mosque to his Office, which was a shorter route than the one originally intended for the demonstration. This concession by the District Commissioner was in line with a policy laid down by the H.C. in his meeting with the District Commissioners on 23.10.1933 to the effect that every forbearance, consistent with the maintenance of security should be shown to the demonstrators.<sup>30</sup>

27. See "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" and "Falastin" 14.10.1933.

28. C.I.D. report No.26/33 of 15.11.1933 F.O. 371/16926

29. Friday is the favoured day for demonstrations owing to Moslem attendance at Mosques. The date originally fixed for the demonstration was a week earlier, i.e. Friday the 20 October but it happened that the Jaffa Lawn Tennis Tournament, in which the Jaffa leader Edmond Rock was very interested, was fixed for the same date, so the demonstration was delayed for a week. See the Murison Report p.10. C.O.733/239/17356/1 Pt.4. See also report by the Jaffa District Commissioner 7.11.1933 C.O.733/239/17356/1 Pt.3.

30. Ibid.

The High Commissioner who had returned in the meantime to Palestine asked the Arab Executive Office,<sup>31</sup> to see him on 25 October. He spoke sternly to them and told them that the demonstration of 27.10 in Jaffa would not be allowed suggesting to them to hold the protest meeting at the Mosque with the protest text to be presented by the leaders to the District Commissioner in his office directly afterwards.

Musa Kazim emphasized that the Arabs aimed at a peaceful demonstration, saying "witness the fact that in our demonstration in Jerusalem (i.e. on 13 October) we carried nothing in our hands, but had simply something in our hearts that we felt bound to express".

Much more aggressive in his words was J. Husseini who criticized the "pro-Jewish activity of the H.C." which had not been equalled since the days of Sir H. Samuel who himself was a Zionist. Speaking of the demonstration he said that it was to the benefit of the country as it enabled the people to give vent to their feelings. "If demonstrations are not permitted" he said "I fear there will finally be an explosion". With an indication of things to come he continued "We, as leaders, confess that we have not done our duty in the past, to the people, because we have never adopted other than peaceful means.<sup>32</sup>

Auni Abd al Hadi described the situation of the Arabs in face of the growing flow of immigrants and continual sale of lands thus "we are like a sick man whose doctors tell him that he is dying. In these circumstances we are asked to do nothing". And Musa Kazim continued "you tell us to do nothing, to wait as we have waited in the past, to wait to be slaughtered".

The Arab leaders<sup>33</sup> begged the H.C. to allow the demonstration. They beseeched him and entreated him. One gets the impression that they felt as if all their problems would be solved, if the demonstration would be allowed

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31. Musa Kazim the President, Y. Farraj, the Vice-President, and the three joint secretaries, J. Hussein, Auni Abd al Hadi and Mughannam Mughannam C.O. 733/239/17356/1 Pt.2.

32. My Italics.

33. Specially Musa Kazim and Y. Farraj less so the others, Jamal Husseini nor at all.

The H.C. repeating his conviction that such demonstrations were much more likely to stir up feeling and to lead to trouble, made it clear that he would not allow it.

The Jaffa moderate leaders led by Omar Bitar, were inclined to accept the District Commissioner's compromise proposal. Eventually, Musa Kazim stated that he accepted it as well, and the extremists who opposed it were silenced, but when the rest of the Executive Committee's members reached Jaffa on the morning of 27.10.1933 it turned out that the majority amongst them and specially Jamal Husseini opposed it, and actually until the leaders entered the Mosque for prayers no decision had been reached.

A little earlier, a deputation of ladies arrived from Jerusalem and Mrs. Mughannam made a speech which excited the public.

Before the congregation left the Mosque, an appeal which was made by Sheikh Fawzi Imam for the crowd to disperse peacefully, met with angry cries.

It was rumoured that the moderates wished to take the shorter route, and eye witnesses stated that Musa Kazim appeared to be trying to take it, but it was blocked by a human hedge and he was carried by the surrounding crowd towards the longer one, which meant clashed with the police, and clashes did occur.<sup>34</sup> The police claimed that shots were fired at them, and that they fired only when the situation became threatening and dangerous, the Arabs counter-claim that only the police fired. The result however was, that by the end of the day or rather by the end of the riot which was over by 13.00 p.m., there were 15 killed including a Palestinian constable, and 39 seriously wounded by gunshot.

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34. For a full report of the disturbances in Jaffa see C.I.D. summary report No.26/33 of 15.11.1933 F.O. 371/16926. Report of the Jaffa District Commissioner 8.11.1933 C.O. 733/239/17356/1 PT. 3. The Murison Report pp. 9-24. Ibid Pt.4

One thing is clear. The demonstration was much more violent than the previous one in Jerusalem. In that case also the desire to clash with the Government forces was evident. Eye witnesses describing the riots said that the view of the armed body of the procession, consisting of many thousands<sup>35</sup> with above them a "perfect forest of sticks" and iron bars, advancing at a rapid pace towards the police, shouting, waving and threatening with their clubs, cursing other religion and shouting "Alleihum", (at them) was frightening and terrifying.

As in the demonstration of Jerusalem, the majority of the demonstrators were town people, but the percentage of villagers was much higher. They also participated more actively in the clashes with the police as shown by the proportionally high number of villagers among the killed and wounded. The accepted idea at the time, that the boatmen, as a class, formed the backbone of the rioters was unjustified.<sup>36</sup> It is significant that although the Arab Women came from Jerusalem to Jaffa they did not take part in the procession, perhaps because they knew of it's violent nature. As in Jerusalem, Musa Kazem was hurried by police unto a nearby building and he thus escaped harm.

The military units remained in reserve. Armoured cars, however, did useful patrol work.

After the riots were over, the Jaffa District Commissioner asked, and obtained authority from the H.C., for the police to raid the offices of the Moslem-Christian Association. This was done at about 14.30 and Jamal Musseini, Izzat Darvaza, Sheikh Muzaffar, Yaaqub Ghusein, Edmond Rock and other leaders who were in the act of drafting orders for a further demonstration to be held in Nablus on 10 November, were arrested. Auni Abd Al hadi and Salim Abd al Rahman were arrested also.

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35. Estimates vary between 4 to 10 thousand. See Murison Report Ibid.

36. See report of the Jaffa District Commissioner. C.O.733/239/17356/1 Pt.3.

A curfew was imposed in Jaffa from 18.00 to 05.00.

During the afternoon, the Jaffa news began to reach the population of Haifa and when at 19.15 the train arrived, bringing with it persons who had been in Jaffa during the demonstration, they were taken to the Haifa Mosque, where their exaggerated accounts of the Jaffa riots, greatly excited the people who left the Mosque and attacked the Haifa main police station with stones, obliging the police to open fire.

The Haifa District Commissioner had at midnight on 27 October a meeting with the Muslim notables of Haifa, who assured him that they disassociated themselves from the disturbances and promised him that they would do their utmost to prevent further demonstration the following day.

However, the following morning a second attack was directed against the main Police Station and the adjacent Railway Station. The Police had again to open fire in order to restore order.

No further troubles occurred in Haifa, and a curfew was enforced between the hours of 18.00 p.m. and 05.00 a.m.

No demonstration took place in Acre, this was a result of the efforts of the District Officer who was assisted by the influence of Sheikh As'ad Saugairi.

At Haibus too, when the news arrived of the Jaffa demonstration, riots broke on the afternoon of 27 October. A police unit which was attacked with stones at the Post Office at the centre of the town, opened fire. Reinforcements arrived and order was established.

There was a second wave of disturbances in Jerusalem on the afternoon of 27 October, and on the following morning.

In the meantime the strike continued all over the country, but no more serious incidents occurred. Odd shots were fired in different places, mainly in Jerusalem, on the Government Offices, and the Police Training Depot at Mount Scopus. Roads in Jerusalem were strewn with nails, and telegraph and telephone wires were cut between Jerusalem and Bethlehem and between Tulkarm

and Kalkilia. There were rumours of demonstrations in several Arab towns, and of intended attacks on Jewish settlements, but none materialized.

The anniversary of the Balfour Declaration on 2 November, passed on the whole quietly, but precautions were taken in Gaza following rumours of a threatened big demonstration, and a large number of the "Arab al Hawareth" proceeding towards Tulkarm to demonstrate, were stopped by the District Officer who with assistance from a low flying R.A.F. plane, convinced them to return.

The remaining members of the Arab Executive met on the morning of 28 October and decided to protest to the Government over the Police action, and also to arrange relief measures for the Arab casualties.

A deputation<sup>37</sup> of the Executive asked to see and was received by the H.C. and submitted to him a written memorandum.

Rashid Haj Ibrahim, who spoke on behalf of the deputation said that "in the events of the last 2 days, there was no intention of crime or riot. It was only intended to express the feeling of the people against the Government's policy". He emphasized that the events were not organized or prepared, but were a genuine expression of feeling, and if in the past the leaders had been able to appease the people, they could not do it any more, as they had lost their influence, and the Arab Executive was no longer able to persuade the people to be patient.

Musa Kazim claimed that actually the procession was going to take the short route as agreed with Crosbie, the Jaffa District Commissioner, but that the Police had attacked them from behind and it was then that disorders started.

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37. Only the President Musa Kazim attended also the previous interview of 25th October. The deputation included besides him, Sheikh Mahmoud Dajani, Rashid Haj Ibrahim, Zaki Nuseiba, Dr. Freij and Dr. Izzat Tannus. Ibid.

He also insisted on his view that it was the British who had opened fire first, maintaining that the Arabs had no firearms in the demonstration. The deputation also showed a great<sup>38</sup> interest in the prisoners at Acre.

The H.C. expressed his sorrow at what had happened and said that such disturbance might delay the progress towards a Legislative Council in which theyaall were so very interested.

Much more outspoken was a deputation<sup>39</sup> of Arab ladies who were granted an interview with the H.C. on 30 October. Specially the Christian ladies among them, Mrs. Moghannam and Miss Sakakini, who expressed their feelings in a strong language which none of their male compatriots had ever used in speaking with the H.C. They accused the police of committing murder<sup>40</sup>. Reminding him that a deputation of ladies called on the H.C. after the riots of 1929 they said "Now again we call upon your Excellency because the circumstances are similar to 1929".

Knowing how sensitive was the H.C. to the situation and hardships of the fellahen, and wishing perhaps to hurt him personally, Mrs. Moghannam said "Your Excellency says that you are the friend of the people and of the fellah. But your Excellency should know what people have been saying. They say that you go about the country and you meet the fellah and give him ten shillings here and a pound there, but you come back to your office and give decisions and issue proclamations and laws of such a kind that you take away with one hand what you give with the other". Miss Abd al Hadi said "We have never loved the Jews. Now reluctantly we are driven to feel hatred towards the English. Every Arab feels the same".

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38. Crosbie, the Jaffa District Commissioner writing in his report about the deputation which visited him, commented dryly "though attempting to put questions of policy in the foreground, the deputation was clearly most interested in the prisoners at Acre". Ibid. The same could be said of other deputations as well.

39. For record of the interview, see C.O. 733/239/17356/1 Pt.2

40. In the memorandum which they presented him they wrote: "our men and our boys who are being murdered in cold blood by irresponsible Police, under the pretence of self defence". Ibid.

There too, most of the ladies<sup>41</sup> were asking for the prisoners' release. The H.C. assured them that each case would be fairly investigated and if nothing was proved the prisoner would be released, and he begged them to use their powerful influence towards the restoration of peace and good order in Palestine.

On 30 October, emergency regulations were published under Defence Order in Council, in order to vest the H.C. with the necessary additional powers.

Owing to censorship imposed by these regulations, the Arab newspapers went on strike, and were not published.

The Arab Executive Committee met on 2 November at the house of Musa Kazim to discuss the continuation of the strike. A small majority was in favour of calling it off, and it was decided to publish the decision the following day.

This information, however leaked out, several shops were opened immediately, but they were forced to close again by young men.

On 3 November all the shops were opened. The strike, from 27 October to 3 November was longer than any previous one held in Palestine.

It should be noted that the manifesto<sup>42</sup> issued by the Arab Executive on 3 November, after praising the people for observing the strike, ordered its cessation "for an interval until further notice of demonstrations and strike".

41. Mrs. Moghannam however said: "Our object is not to beg you to set free those in prison. That is only a minor question". But she was the exception.

42. "Al Jamia al Arabiyya" 3.11.1933.

With the end of the strike the authorities removed also the curfew restrictions on Haifa and Jaffa.

Altogether the casualties<sup>43</sup> were 27 killed including 1 Arab policeman, with 56 police injured, 13 of them seriously, and 187 civilians injured, 33 of whom seriously wounded. All the civilians were killed, as well as 73 injured as result of gunfire. None of the police were hurt by gunfire.

On 6 November, the representatives of the Arab Press<sup>44</sup> were summoned to meet the H.C. He spoke with them about the responsibility of the press, explaining that he enforced censorship because a number of untrue statements had been made which misled the people in a dangerous way and in a dangerous direction. They claimed the right of the public to know the facts, and their duty to print and publish these news which the public should know. They presented the Arab point of view, with regard to the disturbances in general, and theirs as pressmen in particular. A suggestion to appoint a Committee of enquiry "in order to set criticism at rest and in order that Government might be able to gain experience from these troubles in dealing with any future troubles" was put by Daud al Issa of "Falastin".

Amin al Tamimi, the acting President of the Supreme Moslem Council had also approached the H.C. and asked for the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission to enquire into the disturbances and unto the "just demands of the Arabs",<sup>45</sup> The H.C. supported the idea of having an enquiry specially in order to clear the police from "malicious charges or illinformed criticism",

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43. See the Murison Report p.36. These figures give credence to Arab claims that the Arabs did not have firearms, during the demonstrations in Jerusalem and Jaffa.

44. Munif al Hussein-Al Jamiah al Arabiyya, Daud al Issa-Falastin, Issa al Bandak - Saut al Shaab, Najib Nassar-al Carmel, Ajjaj Nuwayhid-al Arab, and Dr. Abu al Afia. For record of the meeting, see C.O.733/239/17356/1Pt.3

45. Ibid. Pt.4. It seems that at the time the Arabs - as well as the Jews - were putting pressure for summoning an extraordinary session of the P.M.C. in order to consider the situation. See letter by Eric Drummond to the Foreign Secretary, Sir J.Simon dated 13.12.1933, on his talk with Marquis Theodoli, the President of the P.M.C. of the League of Nations. C.O. 733/248/17688.

R. Nashashibi also raised the question of granting a greater measure of self-government. The other major factor was the exaggerated idea of the importance and the extent of the disturbances that the time had arrived for the Government to consider its obligations and because - presumably - it would have not been possible to limit the task of such a commission to establishing facts and sequence of events.

It was therefore decided to have a Judicial Commission consisting of Sir William Marison, who was formerly the Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements, as Chairman, and H. Trusted, the Attorney General as a member, with the following terms of reference<sup>46</sup> "to enquire into, and report on the events immediately preceding the disturbances which took place in Palestine between the 13th October and the 3rd November 1933, the sequence and nature of events within that period, and the resultant casualties and damage to property".

To inform the public of the appointment of this commission of Enquiry, the H.C. used as his channel of communication a deputation of

six leading Arab Mayors<sup>47</sup> representing all the Arab Mayors of the country, who were granted at their request, an interview with the H.C. on 13.11.1933.

These Mayors had exercised a restraining influence during the riots and he thought it well to do it in this manner, in order to increase their prestige.

Accordingly only one Arab - a Jew from these countries with the Government of the Services - gave evidence.

After handing the H.C. a memorandum, Raghob Nashashibi spoke on behalf of the deputation, and said that they wished to see him, because they feared lest the riots which by themselves were very serious, might be the prelude to something more serious still. He mentioned to the H.C. their previous assurances of willingness to work and co-operate with the Government, and he expressed the hope that once the Government granted the Arab's requests they would be found useful and good friends to the British.

46. Palestine Gazette 16th November 1933.

47. Raghob Nashashibi-Jerusalem, Assen Said - Jaffa, Hassan Shukri-Haifa, Suliman Toukan - Nablus, Sheikh Mustafa al Kheiri-Ramle and Nicola Shahin-Bethlehem. For the record of the interview see Official Communique No. 62/33 13.11.1933 "Falastin" 14.11.1933.

R. Nashashibi also raised the question of granting a greater measure of self-government. The other mayors spoke too, Hasan Shukri remarking that the time had arrived for the Government to consider its obligation to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, as fulfilled, and that therefore, further immigration should be stopped. The H.C. in his answer, assured them that he would do all that he could, so that the Arabs and British would remain good friends. Discussing the immigration problem he gave them definite assurances on 2 points: (1) that when assessing the numbers for the labour Schedule he would consider the future as well as the immediate situation, and (2)<sup>48</sup> that he would also consider among other factors, the factor of unemployment, whether among Arabs or Jews. He also told them of further measures to prevent illicit immigration and informed them of the appointment of the Commission of enquiry.

When the full particulars of the interview were published, the Mayors were severely attacked and criticized for the moderation of their attitude, and their apparent willingness to work with the Government<sup>49</sup>. Sensing that the public and the press were still in an extremist mood the Arab Executive decided on 9 December to boycott the Murison Commission. Accordingly only one Arab<sup>50</sup> - apart from those connected with the Government or the Services - gave evidence.

48. The H.C. wrote to the S. of S. for the colonies in his letter of 23.11.1933 that when making this assurance he had in mind the terms of the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizman. The Jews later protested with some justice it seems, that these concessions went against these terms. See paper written in the Colonial Office. 4.12.1933. C.O. 733/236/17313 Pt. 4.

49. See "Al Jamiak al Araibyya" 14.11.1933 "Saut al Shaeb" 15.11.1933.

50 I could not find who this Arab was.  
C.O. 733/236/17313/1.

51 They alleged that they were roughly treated by the police. An insert in the case of T. Chugala is true, as he was admittedly beaten by a superior British Officer. See cable from the H.C. to the Colonial Secretary 2.11.1933. C.O. 733/236/17313/1 Pt. 1.

The Commission, stuck to their limited terms of appointment. Their report <sup>51</sup> presented on 4.1.1934 reads as a chronology of the events, nothing more, nothing less. Indeed, with the exception of the following remark "It is clear that an Arab crowd in Palestine is mercurial and excitable and when excited, dangerous" I could not find in the whole report one sentence which could be considered a comment of a more general nature.

In the meantime the 18 leaders arrested, following the Jaffa riots were released on bail one week after their arrest<sup>52</sup>. There had been some difference amongst them as to the plea to be made at the trials. Jamal al Hussein and Izzat Darwaza were opposed to any defence and prepared to expound their political views and receive punishment, while others, prominent among whom were Yaaqub Ghussain and Edmond Rock, appeared frightened. After considerable internal discussions the pleas entered were "Not Guilty". On 19.3.1934 they were sentenced to different periods of imprisonment, the longest of which was 10 months. Eventually on 3.7.1934 the court offered them the alternative of going to jail or accept release on promise of good behaviour, not entailing, however, prohibition from taking part in any legal political activities for a period of three years, which they agreed to do, with the exception of Sheikh Muzaffar who defied the Government and went to Jail for six months.

The opposition papers described them as deserters who had disowned responsibility for the 1933 national demonstrations and who had so easily complied with the court's demand to refrain from political activities.

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51. Report of the Commission appointed by His Excellency the High Commissioner for Palestine by notification No. 1561 published in the Palestine Gazette dated 16 November 1933. Both the H.C. and the Colonial Office commented favourably on the report. See file C.O. 733/239/17356/1.

52 They alleged that they were roughly treated by the police. At least in the case of Y. Ghussein it was true, as he was admittedly beaten by a superior British Officer. See cable from the H.C. to the Colonial Secretary 2.11.1933. C.O. 733/239/17356/1 PT.2.

I Darwaza, who himself signed the undertaking, criticised years later,<sup>53</sup> this decision to sign, stating that the movement which led to their trial was a revolutionary one, challenging the Government with the full support of the people. Giving their promise to abstain from participation in politics reduced the movement's ideals and weakened the people's enthusiasm, however, he goes on to attack the opposition, saying that its stand in this affair, in which they were encouraged by the British, was aimed at weakening further the national movement.

The news of the riots in Palestine caused excitement and reactions in the Arab and Moslem countries. Inflammatory articles were published in the press and demonstrations were held in all important cities.<sup>54</sup>

Once again, as in 1929, full moral support, but with very little financial support, was given to the Palestinian Arabs.

53. In his book the Palestine Problem. Op-Cit p.116. It must be stated, however, that one leader, who though signing the undertaking, still came out, much respected for his stand during the disturbances and the trial, was Jamal al Nusseini. Even Judge Bodilly the Chief Magistrate of Jaffa wrote in his judgment: "I would comment most favourably on the truth of this defendant when giving evidence... If he has made mistakes they had been honest mistakes...I entirely accept that (his claims) is his genuine belief". Page 7 of Judgment given in the Chief Magistrate's Court Jaffa 29.3.1934. C.O. 733/258/37357. Commenting on the relative strength of the Nusseinis and the Istiqlalists the Police report said: It is declared that "Jamal al Nusseini, by his demeanour at the demonstrations and firm stand during the trial has raised his prestige and dealt a blow to the Istiqlal"... C.I.D. periodical Appreciation Summary No.3/34 of 30.1.1934. F.O.371/17878. Being sure of his stand and position Jamal al Nusseini gave a proud statement in connection with the judgment against him which he concluded: "Hence, I wait imprisonment with quietude". "Al Jamial al Arabiyya" 18.12.1933.

54. For reactions in Syria see letter from Consul Mackereth to the Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon 9.11.1933, for reactions in Egypt - see letter from the H.C. in Cairo Percy Loraine to the H.C. in Jerusalem 9.11.1933 together with the memorandum "Egyptian reactions to the recent Palestine disturbances" C.O. 733/239/17356/1 Pt.3. For reactions in India see telegram from Viceroy to the S. of S. for India 15.11.1933. See also different protests from Iraq, Morocco etc. C.O. 733/231/17250. For reactions in Trans-Jordan see letter from Emir Abdallah to the H.C. 18.11.1933 C.O. 733/239/17356/1 Pt.2.

These outside reactions, but mainly the events in Palestine had their accumulative effect on the views of important people in the Palestinian and British administrations.

The H.C., in addition to the two points which he promised the Arab Mayors, was considering issuing instructions<sup>55</sup> putting a limit to the number of persons entering under the category of capitalists (i.e. people coming in with £1,000 or more) which up to then was not limited. He also cut down later the half-yearly Jewish Agency's estimate of labour certificates from 20,100 to 5,600. More than that. Knowing the views of the S. of S. for the Colonies, and perhaps not being sure himself, he did not go so far as to propose a forward straight change of policy. Still sentences such as <sup>56</sup> "unless we were to declare that in view of the changed conditions of to-day with those of 1923, the present form of the Balfour Declaration should be reconsidered"... and "it does not seem possible to me that the present hostility and widening breach between the Arabs and the British rulers can remain as they are to-day, either we find means to bring ruler and ruled more in sympathy".... show quite clearly that he contemplated such a change. This links up with his many references to the Arab National feeling<sup>57</sup> as the root of the riots.

At approximately that time he also proposed to restrain land sales to Jews.<sup>58</sup>

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55. See his private letter to the S. of S. for the Colonies 23.11.1933. C.O. 733/236/17313 Pt.4.

56. See his letter to the S. of S. for the Colonies dated 18.12.1933 which was circulated later as part of Cabinet Paper. C.P. 2(24) Jan. 1934 C.O. 733/248/17700. Similar ideas were expressed in others of his letters at the time.

57. See his telegram to the Colonial Secretary 6.1.1934. C.O./733/239/17356/1 Pt.3.

58. See supra p. 219.

It seems<sup>58</sup> that similar orders were given by the Arab leaders, that much more direct was A.R.C. Parkinson, the Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office, who on 12 December 1933<sup>59</sup> after he had a visit to Palestine where he had had several discussions with the H.C. and various other Government Officers, stated indirectly that it should be allowed to proceed unimpeded by the Arabs. The Jewish press he agreed with the Arabs' assumption that the two obligations in the Mandate were irreconcilable, and, indeed, in fact, to issue what amounted

to a statement as to the interpretation of the Mandate, saying that His Majesty's Government hold that under the Mandate, the second obligation

(i.e. that the rights and position of the Arabs) conditions the first (i.e. the measures facilitating the establishment of the Jewish National Home).

Who knows how things would have developed<sup>60</sup> if not for the Colonial Secretary with his strong views who poured cold water on this idea with his remark "I would deprecate now any explanatory declaration unless absolutely

necessary".<sup>61</sup>

Several times in this chapter I have emphasized the anti-British character of the riots. But the fact is noteworthy that throughout the disorders no attack was made on Jews with the sole exception of Haifa where 10 people only 3 of whom were hospital cases, were injured when their lorry had stopped, owing to a puncture.

Even in that case, it should be noted that some Arabs came to the assistance of the occupants of the lorry and took them to a place of safety.<sup>62</sup>

54. The District Commissioners in their reports to the H.C. The H.C. in his 59. See his long minute 12.12.1933 Ibid. My Italics. and the Hurison report.

60. Several possible "solutions" were "aired at the time at the Colonial Office for the solution of the Palestine problem. See file "Cantonizing" of Palestine between Jews and Arabs". C.O.733/248/17688.

61. Minute by S. of S. of 13.12.1933. Ibid.

62. See Hurison report p.27 Ibid Pt.4.

It seems<sup>63</sup> that definite orders were given by the Arab leaders, that Jews were not to be attacked. The Arabs were so intent on this point that when it was rumoured that Revisionist extremist Jews would organise a demonstration, instructions were sent that if this demonstration took place, it should be allowed to proceed unmolested by the Arabs. The Jewish press on its side was careful, not unduly to provoke the Arabs.

Before finishing this chapter, we should examine the role played by the Mufti in the 1933 riots.

All responsible officials<sup>64</sup> when summing up, agree that the religious cry was not raised in the 1933 Autumn riots. All were also speculating, what situation might be created if, to the secular political and economic grievances, the Mufti would have added the influence of a powerful religious issue. The Mufti himself, left Palestine several months<sup>65</sup> earlier for a fund-raising trip to India Iraq and other Islamic states.

Still, Ch. Sykes<sup>66</sup> and to a lesser degree J. Marlowe<sup>67</sup> and other British writers, consider the Mufti as the main initiator, directly responsible for the 1933 riots.

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63. See C.I.D. Summary Report No.26/33 of 15.11.1933 FO/371/16926. There could be two explanations to this policy. The most probable one according to M. Sharett of the Jewish Agency, was that Arab leaders wanted to present their national movement to the world public opinion as a sincere one, fighting the Government for political reasons, and not as a mob intent on pogroms. Another possible reason given by Spicer, the Police Commandant, was that the Arabs recognized that the strength of the Jews had increased since the disturbances of 1929, and that they would defend themselves more effectively. See The History Book of the Hagana (Sefer Tuldut Hahagana). Tel-Aviv 1959 Vol.2 p.459.
64. The District Commissioners in their reports to the H.C. The H.C. in his letters and despatched to the Colonial Secretary, and the Murison report.
65. See *Supra* p. 178
66. Ch. Sykes *Op-Cit* pp.175-6.
67. J. Marlow Rebellion *Op-Cit* p.133.

As shown above, his henchman Jamal Hussein<sup>68</sup> played a most active role during all the riots, "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya", his paper, also supported strongly the extreme line. An entry in a C.I.D. report says:<sup>69</sup> "There is considerable evidence to show that the Supreme Moslem Council, of which the Mufti is the President, has had a great deal to do with stimulating anti-British feeling during the recent disorders".

On the other hand, already in his first letter in which he summed up the riots of 13 October the H.C. wrote<sup>70</sup>: "Thanks mainly to our good relations with the Mufti the Supreme Moslem Council gave no encouragement to the demonstration of the 13 October"...

He repeated this theme in other communications and in his letter<sup>71</sup> which was later circulated as a part of a Cabinet paper on "the situation in Palestine", commenting on the fact that the religious issue did not play a role in the 1933 riots the H.C. wrote: "This is an extremely important step in advance, because riots would double both, in number and in intensity were they backed by religious leaders and supported in the mind of the fellahen, by the belief that their religion was threatened. This satisfactory position is due mainly to the agreement Government made last year with the Supreme Moslem Council<sup>72</sup> and to my own (at present) most happy relations with the Mufti and other members of the Supreme Moslem Council".

68. As well as the rest of the Husseinis led by Musa Kazim

69. C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation Summary No.26/33 of 15.11.1933  
F.O. 371/16926.

70 See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 23.10.1933 C.O.733/239/  
17356/1. My Italics.

71. Letter to the Colonial Secretary 18.12.1933, annexed to Cabinet Paper  
"The situation in Palestine" C.P.2 (34) January 1934.

72 See Infra p.

I shall not go so far as to accept the H.C.'s view when he wrote: "I told him" (i.e. the Mufti) "I felt sure had he been in Palestine he would have been able to stop the people from being so foolish as to attempt to defy the Government"<sup>73</sup>". However, in this argument about the role of the Mufti in the 1933 riots, I am inclined to accept the view that his share in the riots was, if at all, small and indirect, and that on the whole, he would have used his influence, on the side of moderation, had he been in Palestine at the time.

There is enough circumstantial evidence, in my opinion, to make this clear.

The fact admitted by C.I.D. reports, that the speech, of Sheikh Said al Khatib, a Mufti follower and employee, at al-Aqsa Mosque just before the start of the 13 October Jerusalem demonstration, was a moderate one, and that Sheikh Fawazi Iman, another Mufti follower and employee, made, in the Jaffa Mosque before the start of the 27 October Jaffa demonstration, an appeal to the crowd to disperse peacefully.

The fact that it was Amin al Tanini, who during the Mufti's absence acted as the President of the S.M.C. who, as a conciliatory measure, asked for the appointment of the Commission of Enquiry, which was later boycotted by the Arab Executive.

The Mufti's subsequent behaviour after his return and his further co-operation with the H.C. during the demonstration of Id al Fitr on 16.1.1934.<sup>74</sup>

The fact that at the time, the general trend of his policy was still directed against the Jews and not against the Government.

His statement<sup>75</sup> that "apart from any question of right and wrong, he knew active opposition against Government was hopeless" was in line with his general appreciation of the then prevailing situation, and would have guarded him from embarking on an active anti-Government policy.

~~72. See Infra.~~

73. In an interview on 20.11.1933. See H.C.'s letter to Colonial Secretary 23.11.1933 C.O. 733/236/17313/Pt.4.

74. See the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 5.1.1934 annexed to Cabinet Paper. "The Situation in Palestine" C.P.7(34) 75. To the H.C. during their interview on 20.11.1933. See H.C.'s letter to Col.Secretary 23.11.1933. C.O. 733/236/17313 Pt.4

And more important of all, both Jewish sources<sup>76</sup> and mainly Arab sources<sup>77</sup>, discussing the 1933 riots emphasize the role played by the Arab Executive and do not mention the Mufti and the S.M.C.

Furthermore, the Opposition papers criticised the Mufti directly and strongly for not protesting against British Police cruelties during the riots of 1933, and for not visiting the wounded in hospital, after his return from India, as such a visit might appear to be "unfriendly" to the British, and for his "negative" stand towards the 1933 national demonstrations in general<sup>78</sup>

However, I do agree that on the basis of the available evidence, no final conclusion can be reached. Indeed, the head of the C.I.D. in an important report written shortly before the outbreak of the riots, pointed to the different shades and expressions of the Mufti's "personal" policy as against the policy of the "Mufti's faction" when he wrote: "If taken according to their political divisions, one finds that the Mufti Faction is definitely, despite manifestations and the Mufti's efforts to placate Government in order to preserve his chair against Government. "Al Jaziah Arabiah" the mouthpiece of the Mufti is the best proof of this attitude." <sup>79</sup>

It could be, therefore, concluded that the Mufti's position with regard to the 1933 riots was an additional case of the two-faced policy, with the Mufti appearing to play the pro-Government role, and his party, definitely playing the anti-Government one.

76. The Hagana History Book O.Cit pp. 458-9 Assaf O.Cit p.128.

77. I. Darwaza O.Cit pp.112-117. H.Sadaqa O.Cit pp. 166-7.

78. "Palastin" 26.4.1935.

79. See report of H.P. Rico to the Chief Secretary on "Appreciation of Arab feeling as affecting Palestine. 8.9.1933 C.O. 733/257/37355/1.

## Chapter 14

A few months after the 1933 riots, Musa Kazim, the President of the Arab Executive died <sup>80</sup> in March 1934. With his death, the formal leadership of the Arab National Movement in Palestine fell on the Mufti as well. The de facto leadership had already been in his hands following the 1929 disturbances.

<sup>80</sup> Arabs allege that the death was caused by the rough treatment he got from the police during the demonstrations in Jaffa and Jerusalem. This most probably is not so. The authorities took all possible steps and precautions to shelter him. Anyway, he was over 80 at the time of his death.

But the Mufti will have then a certain body of Muslim opinion, which though not considerable in numbers, was nevertheless influential, was ready to cooperate with the Government should it exercise its normal law powers and influence.

The decisive factor was however the Government's legislation.

During August 1933, Mr. A. Hillis, who was acting as Chief Secretary to Palestine, came to visit London. During talks in the Colonial Office,<sup>1</sup> he suggested that the Government should give up reducing the Mufti's prestige and influence as soon as possible, as he was the principal obstacle to any compromise or rapprochement between Jews and Arabs. Another important point which Mr. Hillis made was that there was urgent need for a reform of the then prevailing very unsatisfactory arrangements in regard to the Charitable Council and the administration of Waqf Funds.

The line which the Government had taken until then, was that if the law had practically made the S.M.C. self-governing, the only way in which reforms could be introduced would be by action from within. But this had proved impracticable.

1. See Chapter 9.

2. Though not completely so, in the 28th October 1933 the paper "al Sirat al Mustaqim" came out with a strong attack against the Mufti for misappropriating certain sums of money belonging to the "United Committee of Benefactors" and demanded the accounts of the Fund for repairs of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, should be published.

3. See also "Letters of the Government to the Courts & Waqf Funds." G.O. 733/190/77384.

## Chapter 14

The Mufti's Relations with the British

We have examined already<sup>1</sup> the continuous opposition campaign against the Mufti, deprecating his appointment as President of the S.M.C. for life, demanding the removal of the Sharia Courts from the influence of the S.M.C. and pressing for Government's supervision of the Council's expenditure of the Awqaf funds.

The 1929 disturbances reduced a little, and for a while, the inter-Arab conflict, at least on the surface.<sup>2</sup>

But the Mufti well knew that a certain body of Moslem opinion, which though not considerable in numbers, was nevertheless influential, was ready to co-operate with the Government should it resolve to curtail his powers and influence.

The decisive factor was therefore the Government's intentions.

During August 1930, Mr. E. Mills, who was acting as Chief Secretary in Palestine, came on sick leave to London. During talks in the Colonial Office,<sup>3</sup> he suggested that the Government should aim at reducing the Mufti's prestige and influence as soon as possible, as he was the principal obstacle to any compromise or rapprochement between Jews and Arabs. Another important point which Mr. Mills made was that there was urgent need for a reform of the then prevailing very unsatisfactory arrangements in regard to the Sharia Courts and the administration of Waqf funds.

The line which the Government had taken until then, was that as the law had practically made the S.M.C self-governing, the only way in which reforms could be introduced would be by action from within.. But this had proved impracticable.

1. See Chapter 4.
2. Though not completely, on the 28th October 1929 the paper "al Sirat al Mustakim" came out with a strong attack against the Mufti for misappropriating certain sums of money belonging to the "Relief Committee of Sufferers" and demanded the accounts of the Fund for repairs of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, should be published.
3. See file "Reform of Administration Sharia Courts & Waqf Funds. C.O. 733/193/77364.

Mr. Mills therefore suggested to take advantage of a request that had been made to the H.C. to grant pensions to the Sharia Court's Judges, in order to remove the Sharia Court from the control of the S.M.C. and subordinate them to the Chief Justice. He also suggested that the administration of the Waqf funds should be made into a Government Department, consisting - if necessary - entirely of Moslem members. The H.C., Sir J. Chancellor, who was then in London, was also consulted on this subject and he generally agreed with Mr. Mills' proposals, as he himself considered already and prepared notes on how the reforms of the Sharia Courts and the administration of the Waqf, might be instituted.

Accordingly, a telegram,<sup>4</sup> termed "important", was sent to Sir. S. Davis, the O.A.G. on 30.8.30, telling him of the discussions in the C.O. and asking him to submit detailed proposals with regard to the two suggestions of Mr. Mills, "The High Commissioner considers" the telegram said "that quite apart from any political advantages which might result from the restriction of the powers remaining in hands of the Mufti, action on these lines could be justified in general interests of Moslem community. It is possible that such restriction might facilitate acceptance by Arabs of Wailing Wall decisions, and that it might render local political atmosphere less impropitious for reception by Arabs of general policy of H.M. Government when announced".<sup>5</sup>

Sir S. Davis answered on 4.9.30 in a telegram<sup>6</sup> saying that though in agreement that early reforms - which would be in general interest of Moslem Community - were certainly needed, he was "however convinced that any declarations of intention by H.M. Government at present, will be opposed as being designed to place Moslem community in invidious position

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4. Ibid.

5. The Passfield White Paper which was published on 20.10.30.

6. Ibid.

in regard to management of its affairs as compared with other communities and will only strengthen popular allegiance to the Mufti".

It was agreed that the "question of reforms"<sup>7</sup> should wait the return of the H.C. to Palestine and the issue was delayed.

When Said Shawa, one of the strongest supporters of the Mufti in the S.M.C. died, the H.C. used the opportunity and appointed, on 28.10.30 Sheikh Muhi Al Din Abd al Shafi as a member of the S.M.C. in his place.<sup>8</sup> Sheikh Muhi al Din Shafi was recommended to the H.C. by Ragheb Nashashibi and thereafter he headed the opposition to the Mufti within the S.M.C.

On 30th December 1931, the Colonial Secretary asked to be informed, what the position was with regard to the proposed revision of the constitution of the Supreme Moslem Council<sup>9</sup> and of the reform of the Shari Courts and administration of Waqf funds.<sup>10</sup>

Sir A. Wauchope answered<sup>11</sup> that since his arrival in Palestine, he had given these matters continuous and careful thought. He then directed to draft the necessary instruments for effecting changes in the existing legislation in two directions.

- (I) the placing of the administration of Awqaf funds under strict financial control and audit; and
- (II) the removal of the Sharia Courts from the control of the Supreme Moslem Council.

The Mufti, well knowing the role he played in the 1929 disturbances, was presumably expecting such developments and was thinking of measures to prevent, or at least to minimize their effects. In line with his policy towards the authorities, which I shall describe as vacillating in between

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7. Which in the jargon of the C.O. meant curtailing the Mufti's powers.

8. Palestine 29.10.30.

9. C.O. 733/211/87405.

10. C.O. 733/193/77364.

11. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary 12.3.32. C.O. 733/222/97208 Pt. I.

the extreme one - as long as he thought he could get away with it - to the moderate one, when he felt that the Government might react strongly, he felt that the time had come for him to be "sensible and moderate", and make himself, occasionally, useful to the authorities.

At this stage, it would be appropriate to examine the considerations of the Mufti in his dealings with the British.

Britain in the early thirties was the strongest - or at least among the 2-3 strongest countries in the world, and certainly the dominant one in the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin.

Other European powers with interests in the M.E., such as France or Italy were weaker than Britain and could not serve - even if they wanted to - as a support against the British. Besides, their record vis a vis the Arabs was much worse than the British one.

As for Germany, her activities in the M.E. and her support for the Palestinian Arabs started only a few years later.<sup>12</sup>

The Mufti knew that Britain intended to stay in Palestine<sup>13</sup> formally because of its obligation under the Mandate, actually because of its interests.

He further knew that even if the Palestinian Arabs would achieve their independence, the British influence would continue to be decisive for a long time to come.<sup>14</sup>

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12. See Hirszowicz L. "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Partition Plan" in The Middle Eastern Studies Vol. I October 1964. Pt.I.
  13. Officials in the C.O. envisaged that Britain would stay in Palestine permanently. See Minuta by Williams. "So far as it is possible to foresee, the likelihood of H.M.G. giving up its control of Palestine seems so remote as to be almost negligible". 23.9.33. C.O. 733/248/17627. See also note by Parkinson Ibid. So indeed thought - or at least said - some Zionist leaders. See Evidence of H. Sacher before the Shaw Commission. The Shaw Evidence Vol. 2 p.789.
  14. Hourani describes the practical meaning of the term "independence" at the time by saying: "They (i.e. the nationalists) had no choice between being dominated and being truly independent; they only had a choice between different degrees and kinds of domination. See Hourani Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939 Oxford 1970 p.345.

Any movement, and especially any leader whom the British would really oppose and fight, had, in the long run - no chance of success. In order to exist as a national leader one had to be - at least - bearable to the British.

An all-out opposition against the British was therefore impracticable. This did not, however, exclude the possibility of an all-out opposition against a certain aspect of British policy, namely its commitment to support the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. On this the Mufti did not wish to compromise because of his nationalist convictions and also because his belief that any such compromise would weaken his status as a popular national leader.

And what better way for neutralising and counter-balancing the embarrassment and anxiety which his intense anti-Zionist influence caused to the Government, than by volunteering his co-operation in other matters?

This co-operation with the British was made easier for the Mufti because of another two reasons:

1. His strong and sincere belief in what he termed "British Justice" and
2. His assumption that because of the wide-spread British interests in the Arab and Moslem worlds they would never sacrifice them for the good-will of a handful of Jews in Palestine.

He repeatedly stated<sup>15</sup> those beliefs and there is no reason for us to doubt that at the time he really and sincerely believed in them, as did most of the Arabs.<sup>16</sup> Added to that was the impression and expectation so

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15. During an interview with the H.C. on 28.1.30. C.O. 733/179/77013 or in a speech in a Committee Room at the House of Commons on 26.4.30 Documents of Palestine Arab Resistance (Wataek al Mukawama al Palestiniyya al Arabiyya) Beirut 1968 p.168, etc.

16. As stated by Musa al Alami, Palestine is my Country Op-Cit p.116.

well described by A. Hourani<sup>17</sup> that the "true" Britain would sooner or later reassert itself and understand that its interests were in harmony with those of the Arabs.

Much more important perhaps were two practical considerations which dictated to the Mufti this policy of co-operation:

1. The need to thwart the intentions and efforts, described above, to curtail his powers and influence or even to remove him from his office, and
2. The acute financial crisis of the S.M.C. during the early thirties.<sup>18</sup>

The financial position of the Supreme Moslem Council in the early thirties was critical. The Council derived its revenue from two main sources - tithes which were collected by the Government on behalf of the Waqf administration, and rentals from properties.

However, the economic situation of the Fellahin in 1930 was very bad. In addition to very difficult agricultural conditions there was a dumping of foreign wheat and flour and the prices of local wheat fell from LP. 16 per ton in 1929 to LP. 6-7 in 1930. The Government, in order to assist the fellahin declared a remission of tithes for 1930 and again for 1931, and as a result the S.M.C. had a loss of LP. 30,000.

As regards to the rents, they too were 40%-50% lower than previous years, and in consequence the whole revenue of the S.M.C. was reduced by something like half.

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17. Hourani: "Arabic Thought" Op-Cit p.293.

18. Things were so bad that officials did not receive their salaries and it was therefore rumoured that some of them including Ahmed Hilmi, Ajaj Nuwayhid and even Jamal Husseini were going to resign. See Police summary report of 6.9.30. C.O. 733/193/77364.

Then the S.M.C. had the additional expenditure of LP.15,000 on the repairs of Waqf properties and mosques damaged by the earthquake in 1927, and on top of everything else the S.M.C. was involved in the bankruptcy of the Palace Hotel in Jerusalem where, instead of having profits on its investment, and receiving LP. 7,300 a year in rent, the Council lost LP. 12,000 owed to it by the bankrupt firm . The net result of this was that at 31st December 1931, the deficit of the Supreme Moslem Council was LP. 69,099, of which the overdraft on the Government had increased to approximately LP. 17,000.<sup>19</sup>

The Council therefore had been obliged to reduce expenditure in every possible direction, including salaries. The members of the Council had given up 40% of their salaries and likewise the salaries of all other officials had been reduced.

Now if the President of the S.M.C. wanted to keep the loyalty and allegiance of its officials spread all over Palestine, including the remote villages, who constituted his "army" and were actually the basis of his power, he had to do something urgent to repair the financial position of the Council. This the Mufti tried to achieve by negotiating a new financial agreement with the Government. The goodwill of the Government towards him, was therefore very important and the Mufti was ready to pay for it by co-operating.

These, I think were the considerations which directed the Mufti's policy towards the British. Accordingly, and using a phrase similar to the one coined by Ben-Gurion,<sup>20</sup> it could be summarised thus:

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19. C.O. 733/213/97033

20. The original phrase describing the Zionist policy during the Second World War was:

"We shall fight Germany and assist the British War effort as if there was no White Book (the 1939 White Book) and we shall fight the British White book as if there was no war against Germany".

- (I) To fight the Balfour declaration and the national home, as if they were not a part of British policy and
- (II) to co-operate with the British as if they did not support the national home.

This formula may sound nice, but in real practice it was almost impossible to implement. However, the understanding which developed eventually between the H.C. Sir A. Wauchope and the Mufti, made this formula almost "operative" for a few years, at least on the surface, but about this later.

To resume. Following the publication of the "1926 Committee" report and proposals in June 1929, Jamal Husseini was despatched by the Mufti to London to negotiate with the Government about them.<sup>21</sup> However, it seems that because he was occupied in preparing the visit of the Arab Delegation to London, and eventually because of his membership of it, and the propaganda campaign which he directed successfully in Britain<sup>22</sup> this subject was not raised by him on that journey.

About a year later, having learnt no doubt of the discussions held in the C.O. with Mills and Chancellor and the exchange of telegrams with Sir S. David, the Mufti despatched Jamal Husseini again. This visit was accompanied by a Husseini campaign aimed at assuring the British of the Arab good will.

During the visit to Palestine of the Pro-Arab M.P. Capt. Gordon-Canning in November 1929 the Mufti said<sup>23</sup> in his welcome speech "We are making him the messenger of our people to his people, and we shall make this visit a cause to renew the friendship between our two nations, that friendship which every Arab in this country desires with all his heart. The Arab nations

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21. See the H.C.'s letter to the C.O. of 5.11.29 that J. Hussein left for London "probably on behalf of the Mufti and future regulations regarding the Supreme Moslem Council". C.O. 733/178/67500.

22. See Supra pp. 87 - 88

23. See Al Jamiah al Arabiyya, 7.11.29. See also Darwezc op cit p.63-4

desire sincerely to strengthen the friendship and fraternity with the British based on common interests and friendship and not on might and dominance."

On 2.1.30 at the farewell party to Mr. Stoker, and Mr. Silly, the two British advocates who represented the Arabs before the Shaw Commission, the Mufti said<sup>24</sup> "We strongly desire to live in friendship with the British people. We, on our side endeavour to cultivate this friendship and we hope that the British will do the same and will consider our case with justice and righteousness". To which Stoker replied "I am sure that 1930 would be the year in which Britain would change its present policy. The Shaw Commission saw the justice of your cause".

On 1st January 1930, in its new year's English version<sup>25</sup> issue the "Falestin" published a long article proposing to the British, Arab friendship and full co-operation in maintaining and safeguarding British imperial interests in the M.E. Such co-operation would be much more valuable than that of the Jews as "in the imperialist context the Jews are like invalids".

This campaign was continued by Jamal Husseinii during his visit to London and by the Mufti and other members of the Arab delegation and all through the year until J. Husseinii's second voyage to London to conduct negotiations about the draft Ordinance.<sup>26</sup> The result of these negotiations was, apparently a bargain according to which the Government decided not to interfere with the prevailing arrangements of the S.M.C. in return for a comparatively peaceful Arab reception of the Prime Minister's letter.<sup>27</sup>

24. Al Jamiah al Arabiyya 3.1.30.

25. It should be noted that though in its Arabic version the "Falestin" on the whole, co-operated with the opposition elements, in its English version it presented the "national view" thus expressing, to a large extent, the views of the Mufti. Falestin 1.1.30.

26. See Chancellor's letter to Williams 22.10.30. C.O. 733/183/77050. See also Chancellor's letter to his son 26.11.30. Chancellor's papers 16/3.

27. See private letter from Chancellor to Passfield of 13.2.31 in which he attributed the Arab inactivity to Jamal Husseinii's moderating speeches after his return from London. C.O. 733/193/87050.

This Government's decision was based on the fact that the Mufti's influence over Arab public opinion in Palestine, following the 1929 disturbances was very strong. Ragheb Nashashibi himself told the H.C. Sir A. Wanchope that was the Government to hold elections for the S.M.C. during 1932, the Mufti's party would win every seat on it.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand it enabled the Mufti to strengthen his position further as the supreme leader of the Arab community and as its intermediary with the Government, the more so as he had succeeded to establish a certain understanding with the new H.C. Sir A. Wanchope.

Wanchope, perhaps more than any other British H.C. in Palestine impressed his personal stamp on the policy and developments in the country, and therefore a grasp of his complex personality is essential for understanding later events.

He combined the contradictory qualities of flexibility and single-mindedness and political shrewdness and idealism. He also had the gift of making friends easily.<sup>29</sup> Having the full backing and support of his superiors in Whitehall,<sup>30</sup> he felt free to initiate policies, which on the whole, were accepted by them. His philosophy<sup>31</sup> of the Palestine problem could be summarized thus: This was a problem in which right contended with right. Neither the Jews nor the Arabs had a just historical claim to exclusive rights over the whole country, but morally both people have the strongest claims to be considered in the fate of the country. The solution

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28. See the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 3.11.36. C.O. 733/287/75023.
29. For a full description of Wanchope's personality see G. Sheffer op. Cit. 124-5.
30. Specially of Sir. P. Cunliffe-Lister the S. of S. for the Colonies 1931-35.
31. This brief summary is based on various sources, mainly letters, official and private, in the C.O. files, evidence before the H.C. and his article "Palestine and Trans-jordan" in Islam Today edited by A.J. Arberry and Rom Landau, London 1942 pp. 69-88. The two most important letters in this respect are his official letter to the Col. Sec. 16.9.32. C.O. 733/219/97105/2 and his private letter to Parkinson 8.9.36. C.O. 733/215/75528/55 Pt.I.

lay in the double obligation of the Mandate in which he was firm believer. He believed that with foresight, good will, and some breadth of vision on either side, a measure of satisfaction could be given to each, so as to enable both to live in peace and security within the framework of a multi-national state.<sup>32</sup> This multi-national state should strive towards inter-communal equilibrium and assimilation.<sup>33</sup>

Hence his support for Jewish immigration as a slow and gradual process towards numerical equation of the two communities and his efforts to persuade Jewish Leaders to cease their policy of separation (such as Jewish exclusive labour etc.).

The better to achieve the inter-communal equilibrium each community has to have its own internal equilibrium, and therefore Wanchope departed from the policy of his predecessor who did not intervene in the internal affairs of the communities.<sup>34</sup> In his policy towards the communities whose loyalties he endeavoured to win, Wanchope followed what Hourani describes as the Politics of Notables,<sup>35</sup> namely using the traditional accepted leaders as intermediaries and channels of communication between the authorities and the people.

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32. For the British principle of multi-national state see W.K. Hancock. Problems of Nationality 1918-1936. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs Oxford 1937 pp.466-9, 472-3, 483-5. In this he differed basically from his predecessor Chancellor who envisaged Palestine as an Arab State with a Jewish minority.
33. 'Hitherto I have thought the solution could be found through assimilation: not in the sense of assimilation as opposed to Zionism... but in the sense I laboured, towards assimilation and against separation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine.' From his letter to the Colonial Secretary 24.6.36 C.O. 733/297/75156. During a Cabinet discussion of the Palestine rebellion in September 1936, the Minister of War, Duff Cooper, commented thus on his policy: "Wanchope's theory that the two races could be made to live peacefully side by side in approximately equal numbers was in his view, one impracticable dream". See Cab Con. 56(36) 2.9.36.
34. See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 12.4.34. C.O. 733/255/37313/4.
35. A. Hourani "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables" in W.R. Polk and R.L. Chambers (eds) Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East. Chicago 1968 pp.45-46.

His intermediary to the Jewish Community was the Jewish Agency.<sup>36</sup> As his key intermediary to the Arab Community, the H.C. after some hesitations, and to a lesser degree than with the Jewish Agency in the case of the Jews, had chosen the Mufti. As for the internal problems of the Arab Community, his main aim was to prevent the eviction and to improve the conditions of the fellahin.<sup>37</sup> He also tried to tackle the problem of Arab unemployment in towns. He viewed those problems not only as social but as political problems as well, and considered the steps intended to solve them, as preventive measures against creation of a focus for political discontent based on economic hardships.

In the political sphere, he aimed towards establishing close ties with Arab leaders who would serve as intermediaries - in both directions - and as channel of influence of the Arab community. Foremost among these leaders was the Mufti.

Wanchope considered - and rightly so - that Arab politics in Palestine were based on personal, clan and internal political animosities and friendships, rather than on strong ideological affiliations or nationalistic feelings. He noted the growth of the "ideological non-clannish parties", such as the Istiqlal and the Executive of the Arab Young Mens' Congress<sup>38</sup> which tended to be more extreme and anti-British. In comparison with them the Mufti, with reason, could have been regarded as a moderate nationalist. He emerged as the most prominent Palestinian Arab leader. He belonged to the Husseinis, one of the most influential families in Arab Palestine. He had bargained with the Government before and rendered services. In return

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36. His relations with Arlosoroff, the head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency were close, friendly and marked by mutual respect. After Arlosoroff's murder he had contacts with Shertok (Sharett) and Ben-Gurion.

37. His deep personal interest in the welfare of the fellahin was well known and widely appreciated. He even contributed big sums of his personal money for projects to benefit them.

38. See Infra, pp.

for the post of Mufti, there were no disturbances in and around Jerusalem in 1921 and in return for no Government interference in the affairs of the S.M.C. following the publication of the draft ordinances, a comparative moderate Arab reception of the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann. And with the financial crisis of the S.M.C., and with the growing campaign of all his combined enemies to remove him from his office it would not be too difficult to tempt him again with a bargain.

That is how the Mufti and the H.C. each because of his own considerations, were drawn towards one another, in order to reach an understanding, which though disturbed at times, lasted until early 1936, and even when it terminated, it was not so much by the Mufti's wish as because of developments over which he had no control.

This tacit understanding, however, did not prevent the Mufti from following - as described before - as extreme policy as possible as long as he thought he would get away with it. Neither did it prevent the H.C. from passing through the motions of trying to hold fresh elections to the S.M.C. in order to keep the Mufti in the reins.

It could be well asked "Why did not Wanchope choose the Neshashibis as his key intermediary to the Arab Community?" A common but incorrect description of the relations between the H.C. and the Neshashibis actually accepts them as such. The truth is that he took care not to alienate them because many senior positions in the administration were occupied by their supporters, because of their growing affinity with the Amir Abdallah, and because he wanted to keep them contented in view of the growing strength of the Mufti. But basically, he did not sympathize with them<sup>39</sup>. The H.C. and the Government did not believe in the sincerity of the Nashashibis "moderation" and kept in mind the possibility that once they obtained political predominance they would develop a hostile attitude to the Government<sup>40</sup>. They were also aware of the fact that in order to

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39. See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 21.12.34 C.O. 733/257/37356/2  
See also his letter dated 14.7.37 to the Col. Secretary C.O. 733/332/ 75156

40. See minute by Williams 4.12.31 C.O. 733/193/77364.

achieve the removal of Haj Amin from his offices the Nashashibis were ready to follow extreme policies and form a coalition with the Istiqlal party as in the case of the intended non-co-operation Arab policy in early 1933<sup>41</sup>.

However, he also used the Nashashibis as his intermediary when it suited him, though in many cases they were not useful, as they were totally identified as Government supporters, thus in the eyes of the Arabs they became tools and not intermediaries.

These facts, or more exactly these considerations, were certainly not known at the time, some of them actually appeared only later. So, towards the end of 1931<sup>42</sup> the Nashashibis and their followers started their biggest campaign to discredit the Mufti, weaken his position, and perhaps, even to achieve his removal from his posts.

We have seen already<sup>43</sup> how the press campaign against the Mufti, following the publication of the draft ordinances, did not develop because of the outbreak of the 1929 disturbances. Following the disturbances the Nashashibis were disturbed by the growing prestige and influence of the Mufti and his emergence as the supreme Palestinian Arab leader. If they had any hidden hopes that the Government would "punish" him for his role in the disturbances, or that the discussions in the Colonial Office in August 1930, rumours of which must have reached them, would result in any action against him, they were disappointed. They, on the contrary, saw that he was going to convene a big Moslem Congress which would further enhance his

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41. See C.I.D. reports No. 9/33 of 15.3.33 and No. 11/33 1.4.33 F.O. 371/16926.

42. Some opposition elements tried to organise themselves into political parties even earlier. See the efforts of Omar Saleh al Barguthi to establish a party in Jerusalem during January 1930 - see "Falastin and Miraat al Sharq" of January 1930, the efforts of Hasan Bidqi Dajani to form a political party in Jerusalem during March 1930 - see "Miraat al Sharq" March 1930, and finally the more successful but not important, establishment of the Liberal Party in Haifa in October 1930. See "Falastin" 11.10.30. See also footnote no. 55 p.

43. See Supra p. 276

prestige in the Arab and Moslem Worlds outside Palestine as well, so they launched their attack. Its timing was important too. The H.C. was new and a show of strength by the opposition might have impressed him, and secondly, the campaign was intended to embarrass and discredit the Mufti before a representative gathering of Arabs and Moslems attending the Moslem Congress. We have seen already<sup>44</sup> the efforts of Fahri Nashashibi and the opposition papers to sabotage the Moslem Congress, but the campaign against the Mufti reached its peak when the "Congress of the Palestine Moslem Nation" (a name proposed by Omar Salah al Barguhti) was held by the opposition party on the 11th December 1931, in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. The 'Umma' Congress<sup>45</sup> was attended by well over a 1000 delegates, including Ulama, notables, political leaders, Sheikhs and representatives of towns and villages, and was quite representative of a considerable body of the Palestine Moslems. Its resolutions were far reaching and I shall quote them here in full:

"The Government shall be asked to audit the accounts of the S.M.C. from the date of its establishment.

The Congress demands of the Government that, in order to safeguard Moslem interests, the Sharia Courts should be separated from the Supreme Council.

The Government shall be asked to promulgate the draft constitution of the Supreme Moslem Council as amended by the opposition, that the elections to the Council be carried out forthwith and, in order that the elections should be held in an unbiased atmosphere, to demand that the present council, including the President, be dissolved and its administration to be temporarily entrusted, pending the completion of the elections, to an independent Moslem body.

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44. See Supra 171-2

45. For description and resolutions of the Congress see "Falastin" 12.12.31.

The Congress withdraws confidence from the President of the S.M.C. whom they consider to be alone responsible for bringing the administration of this Moslem Institution into such a defective state. The congress further refuses to recognize him as President of the Moslem Congress, since Palestine has not participated in the congress and since, in issuing invitations, he has behaved in a personal and partisan manner".

And in order to divert attention from the partisan character of the resolutions the congress passed several other resolutions of a more general national and religious character such as support for the demands of the Palestine Delegation to London "which demands would help the nation to attain its national aspirations and avert the Zionist peril", a call for holding a General Islamic Congress in an Islamic country, and a resolution to endeavour to safeguard the Moslem Holy Places which had been lost or altered, to their former state.

The opposition, and specially Fahri Nashashibi who "directed" the congress, put a lot of effort into it and really achieved considerable success in organising public opinion. It could be said that the congress commanded considerable support among the Moslems of moderate political views.

The Mufti's supporters held their reactions as long as the Moslem Congress lasted, not wishing to exhibit the deep divisions, or rather, wishing to prove that the blame for these divisions lay with the opposition, (which they did partly), but once the Moslem Congress was over, the Mufti's paper attacked the "Umma" Congress describing it with all the worst adjectives it could find such as "ugly, hideous, repulsive, scandalous" etc.<sup>46</sup> It also stated that the Umma Congress was financed by the Jews.

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46. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" late December 1931, January 1932. For nationalist Arab views of the "Umma" Congress see Darwaza op cit. pp. 80-82 N. Alush op cit. p.71-72.

The Umma Congress informed the Government of its resolutions<sup>47</sup> and on the 2nd January 1932, a deputation<sup>48</sup> came to see the H.C. in order to lay before him the resolutions, which he promised would receive his serious consideration.

During all this period the propaganda war between the two camps continued with intensity and bitterness.

Also at the time, several suits against the Mufti were brought before the Courts. The first<sup>49</sup> by Sheikh Ansari, the guardian of Al-Aqsa Mosque, for being downgraded illegally, another two<sup>50</sup> by Ragheb Nashashibi representing the Umma Congress claiming (I) that the S.M.C. was not publishing its financial accounts as it should do, since 1922 and (II) that as Haj Amin received a salary as a Mufti, he could not serve also as the President of the S.M.C., and the fourth one<sup>51</sup> was brought by 10 persons representing a body of people from Hebron claiming that the Mufti misapplied the income of "the Sidna Khalil" Waqf (the Patriarch Abraham) in Hebron by spending it elsewhere and not appropriating a suitable share of it for the needs of the local people of Hebron.

In all these cases the verdict was in favour of the Mufti. About that period, Abd al Rahman al Taji, for unclear reasons, arising perhaps from his weariness with all these intrigues, resigned from his membership of the S.M.C., but the H.C. refused his resignation<sup>52</sup> and he continued to serve.

47. In two letters "Falastin" 16.11.31, 17.11.31.

48. Consisting of: Ragheb Nashashibi, Haj Shafi Abd el Hadi, Haj Nimr Nabulsi, Omar al Ritar, Fahmi al Hussein and Sheikh Said abu Gosh. For description of the interview see the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 30.1.32, C.O. 733/222/97203 Pt.I.

49. "Falastin" 15.3.32.

50. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 23.3.32.

51. "Falastin", 10.5.32. The Hebron people, were represented by - among others - Asaad al Shukeiri.

52. "Mir'at al Sharq" 11.4.32.

Of special interest is a long article published in the opposition paper "Mir'at al Sharq" on 20.2.32<sup>53</sup> under the heading: "Who are the Pack Animals of Imperialism and the Props of the Mandate?" After discussing the unlawful methods by which the Mufti made the S.M.C. a "family and party order" (Takiyah A'iliyya wa Hizbiyya) the article accused G. Antonius - the special adviser of the Mufti - of being a British spy, and the Mufti of being a tool in the hands of British Imperialism.

As a matter of fact Antonius left for London on the 30.5.32 presumably to discuss with the C.O. the question of the elections to the S.M.C.<sup>54</sup>

He met Parkinson at least twice, and on 20.7.32 Parkinson wrote him "The Government has under consideration the holding of an election" (i.e. to the S.M.C.) "but no decision has been taken".<sup>55</sup>

But already on its 464th meeting held on 11th April 1932, the Executive Council discussed the problem of the S.M.C. and decided as follows:<sup>56</sup>

- "(I) It was desirable and expedient to hold fresh elections for the S.M.C. as soon as possible;
- (II) that representative Moslem opinion would be consulted as to the form and machinery of such elections.
- (III) that representative Moslems should be informed of Government's decision to secure a proper financial control of Waqf funds and to be made to understand that to that extent the powers granted to the Supreme Moslem Council by the order of 1921 would be limited and

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53. Antonius later complained, and Bolous Seheada, the editor of "Mirat al Sharq" apologised in court. From among all the anti-Mufti articles written by Arabs during the period 1918-1933, this article, in my opinion, was the strongest one. See "Mirat al Sharq" 20.2.32.

54. "Falastin" 23.6.32 basing itself on reports in the Jewish daily "Davar". "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" reported it on 24.6.32 with a kind of a refutation.

55. G. Antonius file no.00133 I.S.A. My Italics.

56. C.O. 814/23.

(IV) It was, however, agreed that since the Council would in future be elected, there was no present necessity of removing Sharia affairs from the control of such a council, since the Council would be subject to the control of the Moslem Community itself".

It should be noted that by taking these decisions, the Government accepted, to quite an extent, the position held by the Mufti, and that the major point of difference was the measure of Government's control over the Waqf funds. It should further be noted that the Government's promise of 1928 to consult representative Moslem opinion as to the formal machinery of the elections to the S.M.C. which at the time was intended to reassure the opposition became with time a tool in the hands of the Mufti in making it more difficult for the Government to hold such an election.<sup>57</sup>

Notwithstanding that, on 7th May, 1932, the H.C. apparently not having reached a final decision and being affected - up to a point - by the campaign against the Mufti, and the need for reforming the S.M.C., cabled<sup>58</sup> to the Colonial Secretary proposing to revise the regulations so as to enable fresh elections to be held. He also proposed to let it be known that the Government contemplated having the administration of Waqf funds under financial control and audit.

In his telegrams of the 13th May and 18th May<sup>59</sup> the Colonial Secretary informed the H.C. that he entirely concurred with his views, nevertheless, as "the revision of the constitution of the S.M.C. appears to raise issues of such magnitude" he suggested to study the subject further and to explain to Moslem leaders the Government's intentions.

57. Simply for the reason that no machinery existed by which this representative Moslem opinion could be consulted.

58. C.O. 733/222/97208 Pt. I.

59. Ibid.

Accordingly, the H.C. met separately each of Musa Kazim - whom he described as "Chief of my "moderate" friends", Ragheb Nashashibi and the Mufti, and explained to them confidentially that before establishing a Legislative Council, the Government would introduce a local self-government act, which would regulate the administration of municipalities, local councils etc., but that the reform which he really considered to be urgent was the election to a new S.M.C. The three of them welcomed what they called "an election long overdue". Both Musa Kazim and Ragheb Nashashibi emphasized the necessity for the Government to take action before the election as to the Control of the Waqf funds and Sharia Courts.<sup>60</sup>

R. Nashashibi, apparently leaked this information. "Mira'at al Sharq"<sup>61</sup> observed that the elections to the S.M.C. would be held shortly and thereafter Municipal elections and finally elections to the Legislative Council. The paper said that "these elections will undoubtedly change the political atmosphere of the country and will involve such struggles among the parties as have never been seen before. But that nevertheless Palestine is in a need of a radical political change and if the H.C. is able to settle the problem of the Supreme Moslem Council and to establish the Legislative Council he will have rendered a true service to Palestine". The paper then called on the "Umma party" to prepare itself and prepare the people for these elections.

On the same date the pro-Mufti paper "Saut al Shaab"<sup>62</sup> announced that the forthcoming elections to the S.M.C. would be confined to the members and that the presidency would be excluded "since the presidency of the S.M.C. is regarded as permanent and settled". This announcement was based on information given by the Attorney-General to certain Arab leaders.

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60. For record of these meetings see the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary, 4.6.32 Ibid Pt.II.

61. "Mira'at al Sharq" 4.6.32.

62. "Saut al Shaab" 4.6.32.

What were the views of the Attorney-General we can learn from what he wrote to the legal adviser of the Colonial Office.<sup>63</sup> "My personal opinion is that we should be wise to avoid as far as possible any tampering with the 1921 Order" (i.e. the elections not to include the President).

All through the period June-July, the proposal to hold new elections for the S.M.C. was the main topic of discussion amongst political leaders and in the press.<sup>64</sup>

It was clear that both parties would spare no effort to obtain a decisive majority on the new council. Encouraged by the clear demonstration of their superior strength at the Nebi Musa celebrations that year<sup>65</sup>, some of his followers urged the Mufti to support new elections which perhaps would rid them of the opposition members and specially of Sheikh Mohi al Din Abd al-Shafi who made things difficult for the Mufti and opposed him.<sup>66</sup>

The Mufti himself was undecided. Though he was sure of his victory, he feared that new elections would involve him in considerable expenses and he also feared at the same time, that the selection of candidates would cause dissension amongst his own followers. Another reason which bothered him, and of which the H.C. thought as well<sup>67</sup> was that if the Nashashibis would realize that his supporters would probably win the election they would cry out (which the Nashashibis actually did<sup>68</sup>) for the immediate election of a Legislative Council claiming that the elections to the S.M.C.

63. Mr. Trusted to Mr. Bushe 1.6.32. C.O. 733/222/97203/2.

64. See C.I.D. Summary reports nos.22/32 of 8.6.32, no.23/32 of 17.6.32 and no.26/32 of 15.8.32 Ibid.

65. In 1932 the Nebi Musa festival fell on 24th-25th April. The celebrations were on the whole quiet, with each party trying to show its strength. The Husseinis commanded by far the biggest crowd. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 26.4.32 see also the article "The Internal Enemy". Ibid. 4.5.32.

66. See interview between the Mufti and the H.C. 1.10.32. C.O. 733/219/97113.

67. See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 4.6.32. C.O. 733/222/97203/2.

68. See 'Mira'at al Sharq'. 20.6.32.

were nothing but a Government manoeuvre to divert the people from demanding a Legislative Council.

It was therefore rumoured<sup>69</sup> that the Mufti's followers were even thinking of the following possibilities:

- (I) endeavouring to induce the Government to defer the election  
or
- (II) reaching an agreement with the opposition that if the election were held, each side would nominate two members or
- (III) to try to obtain from the Arab Executive a decision to boycott the election, on such pretext as the safeguarding of the national aspirations and to avoid a division in the national ranks."

As would be seen, they succeeded as the Government did defer the elections. On 23.5.32 the administrative Council of the "Umma" Party held a meeting in Nablus, its stronghold, and decided - among other things - "to take action in regard to the rumoured elections for the Moslem Supreme Council".<sup>70</sup>

And on 27th June 1932 they sent to the H.C. a memorandum signed by Ragheb Nashashibi in which they demanded that the forthcoming elections to the S.M.C. should include the office of the President as the council as well, and after repeating all their claims and complaints they stated that "should Government reject these representations and insist upon the exemption of the President from the elections, the Congress of the Palestine Moslem Nation with all its members and adherents in all parts of Palestine will be compelled to completely boycott the elections and refrain from participating in any act of co-operation with Government in the future and will not recognize any council which may be elected on

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69. C.I.D. summary reports no.22/32 of 8.6.32 and no.23/32 of 17.6.32  
F.O. 371/

70. Faletin 29.5.32.

such basis".<sup>71</sup>

The reason why the "Umma" party assumed such a sharp stand was because they perhaps felt that the H.C. and the Mufti were finding a common language.

Already in his letter of 4.6.32 reporting on his meeting with the 3 leaders, one could detect that the H.C. tended to accept the Mufti's views writing, "The Mufti definitely told me that he would agree to some form of control or examination of accounts after the election had been held".<sup>72</sup>

In his letter of 23.7.32 the H.C. wrote that the Attorney-General was preparing with his approval a draft Ordinance with only a minor change from the 1926 Ordinance and that he was going to show this draft to two or three Moslem leaders. He repeated his belief that for good or evil, the Mufti's party was the strongest at the time and that this was R. Nashashibi's opinion as well. And he concluded "It is also of great advantage that I work with the co-operation of the Mufti. It may be, in future, that this advantage has to be purchased at too high a price, but that is not so at present".<sup>73</sup>

71. C.O. 733/222/97203/2. The H.C. answered R. Nashashibi on the 2nd July 1932 telling him that he viewed this threat as "ill considered and would entail results which I hardly think you can fully thought out" to which Nashashibi on the same day, in a very fast retreat and proving once again his lack of political courage, answered that the memorandum was "dictated" to him by the Administrative Board of the party, and assured the H.C. "of the good intentions and clear aims of the party to co-operate with the Palestine Government in all affairs" excluding the elections for the S.M.C. in case the President was not included in them. Ibid.
72. Though he goes on to say "but promises, I admit, are not the same as actual performances". Ibid.
73. ~~No~~ Mr. Parkinson. Ibid. My Italics. Parkinson wrote him on 18.5.32 that the Zionist leader Rutenberg told him during an interview on 16.4.32 that the Nashashibis command the support of the majority of the Arab population.

On 19.8.32 the H.C. wrote<sup>74</sup> "I am delaying the S.M.C. elections, for Johnson (the Government's Treasurer) is steadily working with Haj Amin, and I am hopeful that Haj Amin may voluntarily agree to some form of Government Control of Waqf funds.....The Mufti and I are on excellent terms, as indeed I am with his opponents".

On 16th March, 1933 the H.C. informed the Colonial Secretary<sup>75</sup> that a marked improvement had taken place in the relations of the S.M.C. with the Government, and also in the working of the S.M.C. and that financial organisation of the Council was being carried out with the Treasurer's advice. He further suggested that unless a change for the worse occurred - expressing at the same time his view and hope that no such change would occur - "the election for a new council should be postponed". An opportunity for the establishment of an elected Supreme Moslem Council might more suitably arise, he added, after the setting up of a Legislative Council. In his answer of 26th April 1933 the Colonial Secretary<sup>76</sup> agreed with the conclusion of the High Commissioner that the election of a new Council might be postponed.

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74. Ibid. My Italics. The Jews must have known of these developments. Sir J. Chancellor reporting to the Colonial Office on a talk he had with B. Agronsky, the editor of the "Palestine Post" on 16.8.32, that is 3 days before the H.C.'s letter, wrote the following: "Mr. Agronsky told me that Mr. George Antonius was now in London intriguing on behalf of the Mufti of Jerusalem. He added that the Mufti had greatly strengthened his position of late, and was now regarded by the Colonial Office as a person of such international importance in the Moslem world that, in view of the present critical situation in India, it had been decided that no stops should be taken at present to interfere with him in any way, whether by curtailing his tenure of the appointment of President of the Supreme Moslem Council or by removing the Sharia Courts from his control or by establishing an audit of the Waqf Fund accounts." C.O. 733/215/97054.

75. C.O. 733/339/17356 My Italics.

76. Ibid.

Only in May 1936 after the outbreak of the Arab rebellion in April 1936 was the question of curtailing the Mufti's powers raised again.<sup>77</sup>

The Peel Commission<sup>78</sup> thought it "unfortunate that since that date" (June 1929) "the administration of Palestine should have taken no action to endeavour to regulate the whole question of elections for the Supreme Moslem Council and the position of the president of that body". It goes on to say, however, that because of Lord Plumer's 1928 pledge "nothing will or can be done to reform the Supreme Moslem Council if such reform would have the effect of diminishing the power and position of the Mufti. The administration of Palestine is, in fact, in a vicious circle, which will have to be broken sooner rather than later".

On 30th September, 1937 under Emergency Regulations, Haj Amin al Husseini was removed from his offices.<sup>79</sup>

Five years earlier however, this possibility seemed remote. The record of an interview between the H.C. and the Mufti on 1st October, 1932 reads<sup>80</sup> as a consultation between 2 allies seeking measures to give satisfaction to Arab grievances in order to - among other things - diminish the increase in strength of the extreme Independence party about which neither was happy.

The establishment of the Istiqlal party in 1932,<sup>81</sup> constituted the second important schism in Palestine Arab politics. But while the first one between the Husseinis and the Nashashibis was based on family rivalries, this one was mainly based on matters of principle. The "Istiqlal" party was the first and only Palestinian Arab party organised upon an ideological platform. Its general outlook was Pan Arabic but in Palestine - and that is

77. See file: Disturbances. Treatment of Leaders. C.O. 733/311/75528/6.

78. The Peel Report pp. 180-181.

79. See *Infra* p. 457

80. For record of the interview see C.O. 733/219/97113.

81. The party was formed on 4.8.32 by Auni Abd al Hadi, Akram Zuaiter, Subhi al Khadra, M. Izzat Darwaza, Muin al Maadi, Rashid Haj Ibrahim, and Ajaj Nuwayhid. See Darwaza *Op-Cit.* pp. 103 & 111 for the Constitution and Charter of the party see *Ibid* pp. 309-310. See also M. Assaf, the Arab Movement *Op-Cit* pp. 44-47. See also *Supra* pp. and *Infra* pp. 332-3 and Arab Documents *Op-Cit.*, 279, 284, 299.

where it differed from the Husseinis - it maintained that the national struggle should be directed against the British and the Jews simultaneously with more emphasis against the British.

Now, when the H.C. mentioned in his letter to the Colonial Secretary of 19.8.32 that "Johnson is steadily working with Haj Amin" as the main reason for his decision to delay the S.M.C. elections, he referred to the financial discussions between the Government and the S.M.C. These discussions had rather a long history.

I had already mentioned<sup>83</sup> that one of the decisions of the November 1920 conference of Mufti's principal Ulama and Moslem notables was "that the Government should continue the collection of Waqf tithes, debiting the Waqf account with the expenses of collection". The revenues were placed at the disposal of the Waqf administration in order to enable it to fulfil certain obligations (education, maintenance of orphanages, Moslem establishments etc.).

During 1925, the Palestine Government asked and received from the Colonial Secretary his agreement<sup>84</sup> to open and conduct negotiations with the S.M.C. about the commutation of all Waqf tithes to a fixed annual payment.

Accordingly the then Chief Secretary, Sir S. Symes wrote to the President of the S.M.C. on 11.12.25 proposing to enter into negotiations about the possibility of commutation of all the Waqf tithes to a fixed annual payment.

82. See supra p. 298

83. See supra p. 31

84. See letter from H.C. to the Colonial Secretary 29.5.25. C.O. 733/159 / 25830.  
and letter from the C.S. to the Colonial Secretary 3.7.25. C.O. 733/ 31959.  
and the answer from the Colonial Secretary to H.C. 14.11.25. Ibid.

The Council had postponed their answer because they had sent one of their members to Constantinople. The report of the Supreme Moslem Council for the year 1931 says: "The efforts of Amin Bey Tamimi, members of the Supreme Moslem Council, were crowned with success at Constantinople. He obtained five hundred copies of documents and Waqfiahs in respect of valuable properties without which the Waqfiah of these properties could not be established.

The treasury of the Government of Palestine has delegated an officer to examine these documents for the purpose of their registration with the Government. The examination of the documents has not yet been completed. Upon admission by Government of the Waqfiah of these many properties, a new and considerable source of revenue will be secured to the Awqaf".

On 22nd July 1931, Haj Amin answered<sup>85</sup> on behalf of the S.M.C. that it agreed to negotiations on the following bases:

- (I) that the amount which will be agreed upon should represent the right of the Waqf in lands and property, the Waqfiah of which has already been proved and admitted by the Government.
- (II) That every 7 years the fixed amount would be reconsidered and
- (III) that separate agreements should be made from time to time, additional to the original agreement, in respect of any land or property which would be proved to be Waqf.

In view of the financial crisis of the S.M.C. the Mufti requested that the monthly advances by the Government might not be less than LP 1.750.

But apparently, the tacit understanding was not yet achieved between the H.C. and the Mufti.

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85. C.O. 733/213/97033/Pt. I.

On 14.5.32 the H.C. informed<sup>86</sup> the Colonial Secretary that in view of the opinion expressed by his Legal Advisers that it was doubtful whether the then existing nominated Supreme Moslem Council had sufficient powers to make any agreement for the commutation of Waqf tithes, he had decided not to proceed with negotiations with it but to wait until an elected council would come into being. He further informed the Colonial Secretary, that he had decided to reduce the monthly advances to the S.M.C. to LP. 750 (as against LP. 1750 asked by the Council in their letter of 22.7.31 mentioned above).

This last decision made the financial position of the S.M.C. unbearable. The Mufti wrote on 25.5.32 a memorandum<sup>87</sup> to the H.C. explaining in full the reasons for the crisis and requesting urgent assistance, and on the next day the 26.5.32 all the members of the council came for an interview with the H.C.<sup>88</sup> Haj Amin again summarised the financial position of the council and repeated his request for assistance suggesting that "the Government might adopt a generous attitude towards the Council in their present difficulties". The H.C. promised to increase at once the monthly advance from LP. 750 to LP. 1000 and to see what he could do further.

On 19.7.32, the H.C. met again the President and the members of the S.M.C. The Mufti opened by thanking the H.C. for stopping the work on the proposed sewer through the Mamilah Cemetery in a matter which affected the religious feelings of all Moslems, and said that the H.C.'s instruction was highly appreciated. Again the financial position was discussed and the Mufti asked urgently for some funds. The H.C. promised to study the

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86. Ibid.

87. Ibid Pt. 2.

88. Haj Amin Husseini, Amin Tamimi, Abd al Rahman Taji, Amin Abd el Hadi and Sheikh Muhi el Din Abd el Shafi. For full description of the interview see Ibid.

possibility of increasing the monthly advance to LP. 1500 or LP 2000.<sup>89</sup>

By now, it seems, the understanding between the two sides was achieved.

On 17th September 1932, the H.C. sent the Colonial Secretary a long and very interesting letter<sup>90</sup> informing him that at the personal request of the Mufti he had instructed the Treasurer to carry out a thorough investigation into the accounts of the S.M.C. The results of this investigation had revealed an extremely serious state of affairs which called for an immediate and abundant measure of direct and continued Government financial aid, if "the most important institution of the preponderating majority of the population of this country is to be preserved from defaulting in the adequate and economical performance of the duties entrusted to it under the Order dated 20th December 1921, constituting the Supreme Moslem Sharia Council".

After praising the spirit of good-will and the co-operation shown by the Mufti in facilitating the Treasurer's examination, and after presenting in detail the causes which brought the S.M.C. into its financial crisis, the H.C. recommended<sup>91</sup> to grant the Council LP. 30.000 for the

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89. See C.S. file K. 178.33 "Commutation of Waqf tithes" I.S.A. The Mamilah Cemetery belonged to the Dajani family. The proposed sewer was to serve the Palace Hotel which was built for the S.M.C. The opposition accused the Mufti that the sewer was dug with his knowledge and agreement. "Mir'at al Sharq", 9.8.32, 12.8.32. This, apparently was true. See version by B. Katinka the Jewish architect whose firm constructed the Palace Hotel, who confirmed that the Mufti agreed that the sewage, after purification, would be conveyed to a sewer passing through the cemetery. Katinka Op-cit p.259. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" in its issue of 13.8.32 denied it all and blamed the Government. Following the protests by the Dajanis the H.C. instructed the work to be stopped.
90. C.O. 733/213/97033/PT.I.
91. The S.M.C. formally claimed that this sum is to make good the loss of revenue from tithe collections in 1930 and 1931. The Government, however, did not accept this claim (see letter from Young to Williams, 25.6.32 Ibid) considering it as a grant in aid.

settlement of commitments (which amounted to approximately LP. 32.000 LP. 15.000 being arrears of salaries taxes etc. and LP. 17.000 for the repayment of Government advances) and (II) with effect from 1st January 1932, to make to the Council an annual grant of LP. 23.000 in lieu of paying over the receipts from the Waqf tithes.

The H.C. informed the Colonial Secretary that in return for this assistance he should naturally expect the Council to reform its financial and accounting system in accordance with the Government method, to limit expenditure and augment revenue in all practicable ways, and generally to make such dispositions of its estimates and accounts as will place Government in full and prompt possession of all necessary information as to its financial position from time to time. He gladly reported that "the Council has agreed to meet my chief requirements in this respect".

We can easily assume what were the other requirements which the H.C. naturally expected and which the Council, no doubt, agreed to meet.

The H.C. enclosed with his letter a memorandum by the Council setting forth the points of its agreement with the Government.<sup>92</sup>

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92. These points were:

1. Limitation of Annual Expenditure (to the amount of the estimated annual revenue for the year, exclusive of revenues from specific endowments, but in any case not to exceed LP. 44.500).
2. Audit of Council's Accounts (and forwarding a copy of the audited accounts to the Government)
3. Accounting system and Financial Procedure (The Council agreed to adopt the financial regulations and accounting system of the Government)
4. Submission of Annual Estimates to High Commissioner for information.
5. Sharia Courts (The council will endeavour to balance the estimates of revenue and expenditure of the Sharia Courts by increasing the fees and reducing expenditure)
6. Claims of Additional Assigned Waqf Tithes.
7. Payment in lieu of Waqf Tithes (As recommended above by the H.C.)
8. Revision of Annual Amount (each five years). See Ibid.

Referring to the doubts - of which he wrote in his letter of 14th May - as to the powers of a nominated Council to make any agreement for the commutation of Waqf tithes, the H.C. wrote: "I am satisfied that the concurrence of the Council in my proposals will not be seriously challenged by the Moslem Community when they have been fully implemented and properly appreciated".

A hint as to the arguments put forward - successfully as the results showed - by the Mufti in his endeavour to keep the S.M.C. as independent as possible, we have in the following lines of the H.C.

"The Council will be subjected to much criticism by Moslems for entering into the pact with Government and, in the circumstances, I think that, from its point of view, it has yielded to Government as far as was practicable and politic having regard to the impending elections of a new Council and to Moslem opinion generally. From the point of view of Government, I am satisfied that what has been secured are the utmost concessions which it is proper to seek from the Council at the present juncture as the price of Government support. It is, in my opinion, neither necessary nor expedient that Government should attempt to take advantage of the financial embarrassment of the Council so as to obtain some direct control of its finances or some power of interference in its internal affairs.

It would be injudicious on the part of Government to tamper with the right of the Council to manage its own domestic concerns as set out in Article 8 of the Order dated 20th December 1921. I consider it a sufficient quid pro quo that, in consideration of the Government assistance received, the Council accepts a measure of Government control which does not infringe upon its rights under the Order".

And the H.C. concludes: "If you give your approval to this agreement, in order to give it a fair chance to prove itself, I have decided to postpone the elections for the Supreme Moslem Council for several months".

In its letter of 20th October 1932, signed by the President Haj Amin, the Supreme Moslem Council informed the Government of its acceptance of the agreement as described above.<sup>93</sup>

It is interesting to note that both the agreement and the discussions preceding it were kept secret in Palestine and London<sup>94</sup> and the Arab press did not mention them.

Because of the growing affinity between the H.C. and the Mufti, the Colonial Office even took care to defend the Mufti outside Palestine. When Mr. Graves of the London "Times" informed Williams of the Colonial Office that the "Times" considered publishing an article about the Mufti "of a nearly libelous character" Williams did his best, and succeeded, in preventing it.<sup>95</sup>

Shortly afterwards during February and March 1933, when the Istiqlal party proposed to adopt extreme measures of non-co-operation, and were supported - obviously for party manœuvres, by the Nashashibis, the Mufti and his followers refused to accept this proposal.<sup>96</sup>

And when the 1933 Anti-British riots broke out the H.C. wrote<sup>97</sup> with satisfaction "Thanks mainly to our good relations with the Mufti, the Supreme Moslem Council gave no encouragement to the demonstration". And more specifically when he explained the lack of religious undertones in the riots, as "due mainly to the agreement Government made last year with the Supreme Moslem Council (in regard to the Waqf funds) and to my own (at

93. Ibid.

94. See Hamilton's evasive and vague answer to a question in the Commons 30.6.32, Hansard, Vol. 267, cols. 2017-8.

95. See Minute by Williams 10.8.32. C.O. 733/222/97208/2.

96. See C.I.D. Summary Reports No.8/33 of 10.3.33, No.9/33 of 15.3.33, No.10/33 of 25.3.33 and No.11/33 of 1.4.33, F.O. 371/16926. See also the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 1.4.33, C.O. 733/234/17272. See also Assaf Op.cit p.128.

97. To the Colonial Secretary, 23.10.33, C.O. 733/239/17356/1 Pt.I.

present) most happy relations with the Mufti and other members of the Supreme Moslem Council!"<sup>98</sup>

On their interview on 20.11.33, the Mufti promised the H.C.<sup>99</sup> that he would do his best to calm the people. Earlier he had promised it to the British H.C. in Iraq when he was on his way back to Palestine.<sup>100</sup> On the whole he tried to keep his promise.<sup>101</sup>

During their interview on 2nd January 1934, the H.C. and the Mufti discussed the demonstrations/processions which the Arabs intended to hold at the Moslem feast Eid al Fitr, at the end of Ramadan, in pursuance of the Arab Executive decision of 8th October 1933 "to hold demonstrations until the Arabs are granted their requests".<sup>102</sup> Apparently they reached an understanding, and what might have developed into a repetition - perhaps on a bigger scale - of the autumn riots of 1933, turned, as a result, to be a series of quiet and peaceful processions.

The Mufti persuaded the H.C. to allow the processions, in contrast to the established practice since 1929 to prohibit them. For the record, it must be mentioned, that Musa Kazim, whose role in influencing the H.C. in that respect was as important, and also the high ranking Arab officials, Ruhi Abd al Hadi and Musa Alami, as well as other considerations, contributed to the permit being given. There is no doubt however, that the Mufti's request, accompanied by his assurance of assistance in keeping and maintaining the peace during the processions, played as important a role as any. In return, the Mufti suggested that in order to prevent disturbances he would be willing to select a number of respected people

98. In his letter to the Colonial Secretary 18.12.33, C.P. 2(34). January 1934.

99. See H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 23.11.33, C.O. 733/236/17313 Pt. 4.

100. See Humphrys to F.O. 16.11.33 F.O. 371/16932.

101. See C.I.D. Summary Reports No.2/34 of 15.1.34 and No.3/34 of 30.1.34 F.O. 371/17873.

102. See Supra p. 250

whom he could trust, to walk with the crowd on leaving the Mosque, who would act as a steadying influence on the crowd. He also promised the H.C. that he would give definite instructions to all preachers in the various mosques of Palestine, to use all their influence in their sermons on the feast and on the preceding Friday and advise the crowd to behave in an orderly manner.

The Mufti had then a long talk with Jamal Husseini, who eventually agreed with him that it would be wiser not to act in defiance of Government orders. Jamal Husseini subsequently met the leaders of the Arab Executive,<sup>103</sup> and against the opposition of the young leaders, persuaded the Executive to follow a moderate line with regard to the demonstrations. Formal applications to hold a demonstration in Jerusalem was made on 8th January 1934<sup>104</sup> by the three secretaries of the Arab Executive, and once it became known that this would be favourably received, similar applications were made all over the country. Permission was granted after the different District Commissioners and Officers, agreed with the demonstrations organisers in each place, which route the demonstration would follow. This was welcomed and commented favourably in the Arab press.<sup>105</sup>

On 17th January 1934, the day of the feast, processions took place in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Nablus, Hebron, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, Lydda, Ramle, Gaza, Majdal Khan Yunis, Beersheba, Safad, Tiberias, Jenin, Beisan, Tulkarem and Qalkiliya. In all these places the processions were in strict conformity with the Government's conditions and passed off quite peacefully. The number of demonstrators in each place was much smaller

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103. "Falastin" 8.1.34. The fact that Jamal Husseini who was the Chief agitator during the 1933 riots appeared in the role of a moderator was commented on by the H.C. who said "so swiftly and unexpectedly do things sometime change in Palestine". See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 5.2.34. C.O. 733/258/37357.

104. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 8.1.32.

105. Ibid 9.1.32, 12.1.32, 15.1.32, Falastin 10.1.32, 15.1.32.

than during the 1933 demonstrations. (In Jerusalem 1000-1200 persons as against 7000 in 13.10.33 and in Jaffa 2000 as against 7500 on 27.10.33).

Again the numbers of fellahin was small and many leaders did not participate in the demonstrations.<sup>106</sup>

The tone of the statements and speeches delivered, was peaceful and ordinary<sup>107</sup> and contained nothing new. Jamal Husseini in Jerusalem only promising that the Arab Executive was going to launch a new propaganda campaign and a new plan of activity.

There were several reasons for the moderate character of the January 1934 demonstrations.

The fresh memory of the Government's firm stand during the Autumn 1933 riots.<sup>108</sup>

The growing feeling among the fellahin that the Government and the H.C. personally realised their state of distress and was taking steps to relieve it.

The unwillingness and lack of enthusiasm among Arab business circles to intensify the struggle against the Governments or the Jews.<sup>109</sup>

106. As for Musa Kazim, it was decided that he would not participate. About Auni Abdal Hadi the H.C. wrote: "In January Auni Bey played no part. His friends say he was discreet, his enemies drunk. I know not. Possibly both". In a letter to the Colonial Secretary 5.2.34 C.O. 733/253/37357.
107. For full text of the speeches see Jamal al Husseini - Jerusalem Dr. Mustafa Bushnaq - Nablus Omar Saleh - Ramalleh and Bireh, "Falastin" 20.1.34 Said Khalil - Jaffa and Sheikh Sabri Abdin - Hebron, Ibrahim al Alami - Gaza "Falastin", 21.1.34.
108. And perhaps the personal recollections of several leaders of the uncomfortable - even harsh - treatment they got while in police detention.
109. See C.I.D. summary reports No.27/33, 19.12.33, F.O. 371/16926 and No.1/34, 5.1.34, F.O. 371/17878.

The reserved position of the Christians,<sup>110</sup> and of the opposition party.<sup>111</sup>

But perhaps the most important reason was the moderate position adopted by the Mufti, position which was also supported by Musa Kazim and the other Husseinis.

On 23rd December 1933, the H.C. sent the Colonial Secretary a secret despatch containing his views and appreciation of the situation in Palestine and which later was circulated as a Cabinet paper. It contained also 4 enclosures. A memorandum by Wing Commander Russel and Air Vice Marshal Freeman, Air Officer commanding Palestine and T. Jordan, dated 9.9.33 and a second memorandum by Air Commodore Peirse, who had replaced Freeman as Air Officer Commanding Palestine and Trans-Jordan, dated 8.12.33.<sup>112</sup>

A third memorandum by Musa al Alami, his adviser on Arab affairs, of whose integrity, and of his knowledge of the state of Arab opinion in Palestine he had the highest opinion, and a note of an interview held with the Mufti on 3.12.33.<sup>113</sup> The record of this interview marks perhaps and symbolises more than everything else the understanding which was achieved between the H.C. and the Mufti. Reading the record one gets the impression

110. See hints by Jamal al Hussein to the Jerusalem District Commissioner at the latter's meeting with Musa Kazim at Jericho on 4.1.34. C.O. 733/258/37357.
111. The H.C. wrote to the Colonial Secretary: "The Mayors of Jerusalem (R. Nashashibi) and other Chief towns were all definitely, but not very openly, on the side of moderation," 5.2.34 Ibid.
112. These 2 memorandums elicited the following comment from Downie of the C.O. "These do not add anything valuable as regards the main issue". 31.3.34, C.O. 733/257/37356/2.
113. This was actually initiated by the Mufti who during his meeting with the H.C. on 20.11.33 suggested that in a future talk they might discuss in what way Government could meet legitimate grievances. See source f.n. 99.

not of 2 opponents or even 2 persons representing 2 differing bodies but of 2 persons, on the same side of the fence, trying to solve a common problem. This, however, by no means weakened the national "spirit" of the Mufti's words.

After referring to the conditions of unrest and lack of confidence between the Arabs and the Government, the H.C. asked the Mufti whether he could advise him as "what should be done with a view to (a) pacifying the bitter feelings of the Arabs and winning back their confidence in Government; and (b) laying the foundation for a permanent peace in the future".

The Mufti answered that there was nothing more he would wish to work for, with all his power, than these two objects.

Notwithstanding his rejection of the Mandate, the Mufti stated that conditions were so serious and necessitated an immediate remedy, which should and could be found even within the Mandate. The obligation of His Majesty's Government to favour the "establishment" of the Jewish National Home implied that, at some time, there must be an end to the process of establishment. The criterion for determining this end, the Mufti continued, is the "prejudice caused to the Arabs as a result of the continuous process of establishment". This point had already been reached.

Not enthusiastically, because of Arab disappointments from commissions in the past, the Mufti proposed a Royal Commission to carry an economic survey of Palestine, in order to settle the question "Did the process of the Establishment of the Jewish National Home reach its end?" Pending that, immigration and transfer of land to Jews, should be stopped.

These steps would have the effect of winning back the lost confidence. And if the Government would carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, which he was confident would be on the Arabs side, the foundations of permanent peace in the country would be laid.

The Mufti then proposed to the H.C. that the Palestine Government would (a) compensate the families of those killed during the disturbances by paying some form of "diyet" (blood money) and (b) to help the Arabs in reclaiming the lands which were in danger of passing over to the Jews. The Mufti mentioned also that the S.M.C. intended to spend all the money, owed to them by the Government for their claims - which at the time were under consideration - and which he estimated to be a sum between 100 to 150 thousand pounds, on land reclamation. The payment of this sum to the S.M.C. would have not only the double effect mentioned above, but by providing land for the landless class, would remove from the influence of communist propaganda a people in despair, who were a potential danger to public security.

Incidentally, this last remark, of being a bulwark against the spread of communism amongst Arabs and Moslems in Palestine, was another indirect argument used by the Mufti in his claim for Government support, an argument which was generally accepted by the Government. <sup>114</sup>

The Mufti then spoke of the duty of the Arab leaders of pacifying the feelings of their followers and said that as far as he was concerned, he had already embarked on a campaign of propagating the advice of the late King Feisal to the Arabs which was that they should never break touch with the British, and that they should work hand in hand with them.

The H.C. in his answer touched upon all the points raised by the Mufti. Referring to the claims of the Supreme Moslem Council the H.C. said he hoped that the Council and the Treasurer would agree as soon as possible about the Waqf claims to certain tithes and that the Government would be glad to pay all claims to tithe and arrears to which the Council had a right.

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114. See Minute by Williams, that in any loss of prestige by the Mufti, there is also the risk of Communist influence amongst the Arabs gaining ground at the expense of both the Husseinis and the Nashashibis.  
4.12.31. C.O. 733/193/77364.

Actually at that time, the second stage of the financial discussions between the Government and the S.M.C. was already held.

I have mentioned<sup>115</sup> that one principle on basis of which the S.M.C. agreed to negotiate with the Government on the commutation of the Waqf tithes was: That separate agreements should be made from time to time, additional to the original agreement, in respect of any land or property which would be proved to be Waqf.

Amin Tamimi, the member of S.M.C. brought with him back from Constantinople more than 500 documents and Waqfiyahs for additional assigned Waqfs.

Judge Webb<sup>116</sup> was appointed to enquire into the new claims based on these documents, and towards the end of 1933 he submitted his report. The Webb committee admitted most of the claims of the S.M.C. and recommended that the S.M.C. should be paid the revenue collected in respect of the claims admitted as from the 22nd July 1931, being the date on which the Council was first ready to submit its claim. In addition to that the Webb Committee recommended that a lump sum should be granted to the S.M.C. to meet the cost of repairs of the Dome of the Rock and al Aqsa Mosques. This lump sum was proposed because the Government feared that the S.M.C. might claim the arrears of the additional assigned Waqfs since the Occupation or since 1921, the date of the constitution of the S.M.C. These arrears amounted to approximately LP. 100,000.

However, after negotiations which lasted several months, an agreement was signed by the Treasurer, on behalf of the Government, and by the President of the Supreme Moslem Council on 8th April 1934<sup>117</sup> according to

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115. Supra p. 304

116. He was assisted by Mr. Gress, Senior Assistant Treasurer, and Mitri Hanna, Lands Officer. See letter of H.C. to Colonial Secretary, 27.1.34. C.O. 733/250/27223.

117. See H.C.'s cable to Colonial Secretary 9.4.34 and letter 13.4.34 Ibid.

which the S.M.C. received from the Government the lump sum of LP. 43.690 for extraordinary repairs of the Dome of the Rock, the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Mosque of Hebron, and the sum of the annual payment was increased from LP. 23.000 to LP. 36.000. The LP. 7000 being the annual payment in respect of the tithes revenues from the additional Waqfs admitted by the Webb Committee.

As a result of the 1934 agreement the annual expenditure, which had been limited to LP. 44.500 under the 1932 agreement was increased to LP. 49.500 for the two years 1934/35 and 1935/36 and to LP. 51.500 thereafter, exclusive of expenditure out of the revenues from specific endowments.

The S.M.C. also took on itself to appropriate and carry to a special repairs fund a sum of LP. 5000 annually for the two years 1934/5 and 1935/36 and LP. 7000 annually thereafter, until the total amount expended from the fund on the stipulated repairs had reached a total of LP. 43.690, the amount of the lump sum granted by the Government.

On 28th May 1934, the Sharia Court of Jerusalem authorised the S.M.C. to conclude the agreement with the Government which was equivalent to ratification.<sup>118</sup> The H.C. authorised the Treasurer to pay during June, the sum of approximately LP. 59.440.

Addressing his colleagues in the Cabinet, the Colonial Secretary, Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister, in a memorandum about Palestine wrote<sup>119</sup> the following with regard to this agreement: "Fortunately, the High Commissioner has acquired considerable influence with the Mufti of Jerusalem, who is unquestionably the most influential Moslem in Palestine today. If he were to throw in his lot with the extremists, I should regard the position as much more serious. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the High

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118. Ibid.

119. C.P. 95(34) April 1934.

Commissioner should maintain his influence with and ascendancy over the Mufti. In this connection it is very desirable to get a settlement as soon as possible of the Moslem claims to Waqf funds. The High Commissioner has come to a provisional agreement with the Mufti as regards this, which I hope will have been approved and settled by the time this paper reaches my colleagues".

And summarising his opinion about the influence of the agreement on Arab-British relations in Palestine the H.C. wrote<sup>120</sup> "This last agreement as to the Waqf funds was almost of equal importance as the former agreement with the Supreme Moslem Council.... At one time, the Mufti's suspicions of our fair dealing were thoroughly aroused; but after it had been signed he came spontaneously to thank me personally for an agreement which he rightly said will prove of definite advantage to the Supreme Moslem Council, Government and general goodwill. The agreement will be of definite help towards lessening the Arab mistrust of British Government, though that mistrust can never be dissipated so long as we continue to facilitate the formation of the National Home, a policy which, as you know, I loyally and openly carry out".

In this last sentence the H.C. laid his finger on the main limitation of the possibility of even closer co-operation between himself and the Mufti. As long as the H.C., or to be more exact, as long as the Government (because as was proven by the case of Chancellor, it is the Government's policy which counts in the long run) carried loyally the policy of facilitating the formation of the National Home there could be no full, long-range co-operation. The maximum which could be hoped for, and actually achieved,

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120. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary 14.4.34 C.O. 733/250/37223. The Istiqlalist Izzat Darwaza had this to say about it: "The H.C. agreed to pay the S.M.C. part of the money owed to it for the tithes, and won by that the gratitude of the Council's supporters who constituted the majority of our national movement and its leaders. Darwaza op.cit. p.91

was co-operation lasting a few years, and based - as described earlier by the H.C. - on the principle of quid for quo.

In the meantime the co-operation continued. At the beginning of 1934, describing the situation following the January demonstrations the H.C. wrote:<sup>121</sup> "The Mufti exercised his great authority over the fellahin to stop them heeding the extremists". At the end of the year he wrote to the Colonial Secretary: "The Mufti has been a good deal criticised for his silence and inactivity both as to Huleh and the disturbances at Jebel Canaan. He was helpful to us (and to the Supreme Moslem Council) over the drainage of Birket Ramadan; and has now promised me his aid in a small scheme I have for irrigation near Samakh."<sup>122</sup>

Before finishing this subject, it should be again emphasised that the second big schism in Palestine Arab politics, when a strong element of mainly young nationalists seceded from the Pro-Mufti party and established the Istiqlal party, originated from differences of opinion with regard to the problem of relations with Britain. While the Istiqlalists maintained that the enemy was Britain and that the political struggle should be directed against it, the Mufti, for the considerations mentioned above, was adamant for concentrating all the national efforts against the Jews.<sup>123</sup>

The Husseinis view of this problem was explained very clearly by Jamal al Hussein, perhaps the closest and most trusted of the Mufti's advisers. In an interview published in March 1931 in "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya"<sup>124</sup> when he was asked: "Do you not consider that we should aim all our efforts (Juhud) directly against British Imperialism?" He answered: "The Palestine

121. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary 5.2.34 C.O. 733/258/37357.

122. The Hulah concession which was given to the Jews, and conflict about ownership of land in Safad sub-district. These two cases brought on Arab protests and complaints. C.O. 733/257/37356/2

123. See Darwaza Op-cit. pp. 109-110. See also N. Alush Op-Cit. pp. 77-78.

124. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 2.3.31.

problem differs from the problem of its sister countries in that here we face two enemies. The Jewish danger is an immediate one and a permanent one and it concerns only Palestine, and no compromise is possible with it, absolutely. The Imperialist danger, on the other hand, is a more general one, as it concerns all the Arabs. It is also of a temporary nature, because the Imperialists claim that according to the Mandate system they are in our part of the world only for a limited period of time. We, therefore should aim all our efforts against the immediate and permanent danger which faces us only. That does not mean that we should forget the danger of imperialism. When we shall overcome the Zionist danger, we, together with our Arab sister countries, will fight for the termination of the Mandates".

Jamal Husseini was also asked in the same interview about his views with regard to two problems which engaged then the Arab's attention:

- (I) The Arab Union (or Treaty - "al Hilf al Arabi) as initiated by Nuri Said and the Iraqi Government and
- (II) The imperialist railway line between Baghdad and Haifa.

Two projects, which as was then well known, were supported by Britain as serving its interests in the Middle East. In both cases his answers were that he favoured the plans as being useful to the Arabs.

Early in April 1931 "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" published a long article (in two parts)<sup>125</sup> by its editor Munif al Husseini, "Why do we fear the Arab Union?" in which after mentioning the fact that the nationalist opposition in Iraq considered the project as a "British" union and not an Arab one, he went on to say "prove to us that it is a real Arab project and not one intended to guard the Baghdad railway and the imperial means of communication in the Middle East and we shall support it".

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125. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 1.-2.4.31.

The project of the Arab Union was very warmly defended by Emir Shakib Arslan who published two articles<sup>126</sup> and again criticised by Munif al Kasseini who answered him.<sup>127</sup> The paper then sent its reporter to interview the Mufti about his views of the projected "Arab Union and published his following answer:<sup>128</sup> "The Arab Union, and indeed a full Arab unity, is the dream of every sincere Arab, and Palestine wants it and needs it more than any other Arab country. It is therefore, the duty of the Palestinians to support it and co-operate with the other Arab countries towards its achievement. I do not think that there are people who oppose the "Union" as such, but there are some who oppose it because they fear the intrigues around it. I do think that we have to be cautious, but that does not mean that we have to cease all work and freeze all efforts towards it, for fear that we may be wrong. We have to continue to struggle cautiously but energetically towards the fulfilment of our aims. I, therefore agree with the views of Shakib Arslan. I believe strongly in his judgement, and if he agrees to the Union we should believe in it and support it as well".

The opposition papers blamed the Mufti all along, and were only too happy to do that, with the same criticism directed usually against them, with not less justice, namely that he followed a moderate policy which served British interests. I shall cite only a few examples. In September 1930 "Falastin" published<sup>129</sup> reports of "The British influence over the Mufti".

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126. Ibid, 17.4.31 and 19.4.31.

127. Ibid, 22.4.31.

128. Ibid, 26.4.31.

129. "Falastin" 19.9.30. The paper used on this occasion the well-known and accepted strategem of Arab press in its inter-party conflicts namely that of quoting from the Hebrew press, so that their readers could read what they wanted to be published and known, while at the same time, they could not be blamed for this information.

At the time of the Moslem Congress, the "Mir'at al Sharq" commenting on the fact that in his opening speech at the inaugurating ceremony the Mufti did not mention the British even once, wrote<sup>130</sup> "Does this not prove once again that the Mufti is directed and made to "dance" (move) by the Government?" and the same criticism was made once again<sup>131</sup> - with many similar ones in between - in April 1935 that the Mufti speaking at a national meeting in Jaffa, did not mention the British even once, thus showing who were his masters.

Using his vulnerability to that charge the Anti-Mufti papers, both the Istiqlalists and the traditional opposition (Muraeda) papers used to criticise him for not following a more aggressive policy against Britain. That did not, however, prevent them from accusing the Mufti of being involved in intrigues with Italy. In April 1935, 2 opposition papers published a photostat of a letter<sup>132</sup> written by Amir S. Arslan to the Mufti. In the letter, Arslan advised the Mufti against relying on the British, warning him that continuance of his Pro-British policy might lose him his influence over the Palestinian and other Arabs. Arslan referred to negotiations which he had had with the Italians on the Arab question and encouraged the Mufti to start a pro-Italian propaganda in the Arab world.

130. "Mir'at al Sharq" 21.12.31.

131. Falestin, 16.4.35. Few days later the "Falestin" even charged the Mufti with requesting the Wafd party not to welcome Lord Brentford the British Home Secretary who intended to visit Egypt. "Falestin" 3.5.35. Jamal Husseini admitted it explaining that Lord Brentford was none other than Joynston Hicks a well-know Arab supporter. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya", 5.5.35.

132. The letter was dated 20.2.35. For a full text see "Falastin" and "al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 19.4.35. Arslan himself denied vehemently everywriting this letter and accused Fahri Nashashibi of fabricating the whole story. See Ahmad Sharabasi. Shakib Arslan Cairo n.d. pp.33-34

The publication of the letter aroused violent arguments in the Arab press accompanied by mutual recriminations and accusations, and both reflected and expressed the acute differences between the two main parties following their formal constitution a short period before that.

At this stage, I shall review in short the subject of the establishment of Arab political parties in Palestine. As stated earlier<sup>133</sup> the central division around which evolved the inter-Arab conflict was that between the Majlesiyyun (the Husseinis) and the Mu'aridum (The opposition headed by the Nashashibis). As a result, however, of an understanding reached at the 7th Arab Congress in June 1923, the Arab Executive Committee - comprising representatives of both camps - was elected to supervise and direct the national movement. Though the power and influence were passing gradually to the hands of the Mufti following the 1920 disturbances, the formal leadership of the national movement was in the hands of the Arab Executive Secretariat headed by Musa Kazim.

The Secretariat opposed the organization of separate parties and was supported in this by the Mufti who preferred to appear as a national leader rather than to be identified with one faction only. This the Executive opposed in 1930, the tentative unsuccessful efforts of some of the opposition elements to form themselves into political parties.<sup>134</sup> Despite all its inner rivalries, the Executive was kept together by the important unifying influence of its President Musa Kazim. In March 1934, however, Musa Kazim died, and the Executive, unable to elect a new President, and torn by bitter inter-factional conflict, was virtually dissolved after passing a resolution calling for the formation of political parties and convening the 8th Congress after 6 months.<sup>135</sup>

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133. See supra p. 50 For a full study of the subject see the Chapter "Political parties" in my wider work Op-Cit.

134. See footnote 42. For the Executive's opposition, see the letters by the President Musa Kazim "Falastin" 12.3.30 and by the Vice-President Y Farraj Ibid 13.3.30.

135. See Falastin 13.8.34.

The "Istiqlal" party formed themselves as a political party already in August 1932.<sup>136</sup> The second group to organise themselves were the Nashashibi Macaridin elements of the previous decade which constituted themselves on 2nd December 1934 as "The National Defence Party" (Hizb al Difa al Watani). Their immediate aim was to destroy the Mufti's influence and power among the Arabs and to discredit him with the Government. The party had no influence over the youth and was never strong in numbers, but it was influential as it was mainly composed of rich Arabs, important land-owners, notables, most of the Arab Mayors and many high-ranking officials in the administration. The majority of the Arab Christians strongly supported and influenced the party.<sup>137</sup>

In its relation with the Government, the National Defence party followed - on the whole - a moderate policy. On several occasions, however, and mainly for tactical reasons, wishing to embarrass the Mufti for his co-operation with the British, it advocated an extreme line.

The Husseinis, as a counterstep had, therefore, to organize themselves too, and on 24.4.35, they constituted themselves into "The Palestine Arab Party" (al Hizb al Arabi al Falastini).<sup>138</sup> The titular head of the party was Jamal al Hussein. It was, however, dominated by the Mufti.

136. See footnote 81.

137. The party's President was Ragheb Nashashibi and Fahri Nashashibi as his righthand man. Y. Farraj - the former Vice-President of the Arab Executive - as the Vice-President, and Hasan Sidhi Dajani and Mugannam Mugannam, one of the three former secretaries of the Arab Executive - as secretaries. The central Committee of the party included also Suliman Bey Toukan the Mayor of Nablus, Ajsem Said, the Mayor of Jaffa, Qaar al Bitaz and Issa al Issa the editor of "Falastin" which became the party's organ. See "Falastin" 5.12.34. See also Darwaza Op-Cit. p.118, Aref al Aref Op-Cit. p.413, Esco Op-Cit. pp. 477-78, Assaf The Arab Movement Op-Cit. p.42. See also the memorandum of the Party to the H.C. 21.7.37. C.O. 733/351/75718/6.

138. For the description of the opening ceremony, the oath of party allegiance and the constitution of the party see "al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 25.4.35. See also Darwaza Op-Cit. p.118. Aref al Aref Op-Cit. p.413 Esco Op-Cit. 475-77. M. Assaf the Arab Movement Op-Cit. p.40-42. See also file "The Palestine Arab Party". I.S.A.

The party's objectives were the achievement of Arab independence in Palestine and resistance to the establishment of the Jewish National Home. The party was the most influential in the country and its leader claimed that 70% of the Palestinian Arabs are behind it.<sup>139</sup> It should be noted that the Vice-President of the party was the Roman Catholic Alfred Rock and that the party tried to strengthen its position among the Christian Communities. This was done in order to demonstrate Arab Moslem-Christian solidarity, and to show that the Husseinis were not Moslem fanatics and that not all Christians supported the opposition. The Mufti, in general, tried to court the friendship and co-operation of the Christians. He simply had to do that as he aspired to become the leader of all Palestinian Arabs and not only of the Moslems. Furthermore, as he was regarded, on the whole, as the leader of Moslems in particular, and as he was the President of the S.M.C., a body engaged directly and indirectly in activities such as raising funds for specific Islamic institutes, anti-missionary campaigns etc., he took special care not to be identified with anything savouring of "Anti-Christian" about it. From amongst the numerous incidents between Moslems and Christians during the years until 1937, no one - as far as I could find out - was, or could be linked, with the Mufti. On the contrary, he always sought to cultivate the Christian's goodwill.

On 18th June 1935, "The Reform Party" (Hizb al Islah) was formed around Dr. Hussain Khalidi, who from being hitherto in opposition to the Mufti, changed sides and in the 1934 mayoralty elections in Jerusalem, and assisted by the Jewish vote, defeated R. Nashashibi causing him the most severe setback of the latter's whole career. The party was a family affair of the

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139. See Wanchope's letter to Macdonald 25.7.35, C.O. 377/275/75102. See also Assaf Op-Cit. p.39.

wealthy Khalidi clan of Jerusalem supported by some mayors, notables and Government employees.<sup>140</sup>

Another unimportant party was the "Congress Executive of Arab Youth (Lugnat Muutamar al Shabab al Arabi)"<sup>141</sup> which was established in 1932 as a non-political organisation at the service of the Arab Executive. However, after the establishment of the other political parties, it was reduced in numbers and became a personally financed instrument of its leader Yacoub Ghussein the son of (perhaps) the richest Arab in Palestine. Its policy was opportunist, following at one time the Mufti, at another Nashashibi, according to the whims of its leader.

Even less important was "The Nationalist Bloc" (Hizb al Kutla al Wataniyya) established in 4th October 1935 by Abdul Latif Bey Salah, a former member of the S.M.C. The party's function was to give expression to the local parochial spirit of Nablus and to give a national standing to its President.<sup>142</sup>

The Palestine Communist party (P.C.P) had almost no Arab members,<sup>143</sup> but with its extreme anti-Zionist and anti-British line it influenced the spread of the extreme ideas and views in Arab society.<sup>144</sup>

Now the organization of these parties (except the P.C.P) was rather loose and was based on the family ties and as for their platforms there really was no essential difference between the declared objectives of the parties except for the extreme anti-British policy of the Istiqlal party, which boycotted the negotiations concerning the question of the Legislative

140. See "Fahstin" 19.6.35. See also Darwaza Op-Cit. p.118 Esco Op-Cit. p.480. Assaf Op-Cit. pp. 43-44. See also the Memorandum of the Party to the H.C. 20.10.35 and file no.3661 "The Reform Party" I.S.A.

141. See Darwaza Op-Cit. p.118. Esco Op-Cit. p.780. Assaf Op-Cit. p.47

142. See sources of footnote 141.

143. Though, in accordance to a decision of the 7th Congress of the Comintern, the majority of its central committee were Arabs. See Esco Op-Cit. p.781.

144. Mainly through the left wing part of the Istiqlal party headed by Hami al Hussein. See infra p. 348

Council.

The Mufti, on the other hand, championed these talks all through 1934 and 1935 and continued consistently to develop his special relationship with Wanchope.

Towards early 1936, however, conditions changed, pressures grew and the Arab rebellion was approaching. The co-operation between the H.C. and the Mufti had to give way and come to an end.

Chapter 15The concept of "Armed Struggle" and the problem of Jewish Arms.

The political struggle of the Palestinian Arabs was marked from its beginning by a violent undertone which found its expression in the riots in 1920 and 1921 and to a larger extent in the disturbances of 1929. In years to come, following the rebellion of 1936, it was described as the "Armed Struggle". Its ideology - so far as it had one - was very simple and basically echoed the old slogan "The Religion of Muhammad - by the Sword" (Din Muhammad bil Saif). The idea was that exerting pressure on Britain, by using violent means would be the best and most useful method of making her change her Zionist policy. It also reflected the traditional supremacy - in Moslem and Arab societies - of the sword over the pen and other means of persuasion. Its champions were people whose basic profession was violence and who were outside the traditional circles of those who constituted the recognised national movement and its leaders, who repeatedly emphasized that the struggle of the Palestinian Arabs was of a political character, a peaceful one, and using only legal means. The view that "sovereignty is acquired by force and power and by violence" may have seemed too abstract to the majority of the "Armed Struggle" champions, but one lesson which they - together with all Palestine - derived from the 1929 disturbances, was that violence pays. The disturbances brought the Arabs some "dividends", they reasoned, so why not continue to use the same methods in order to get more results. The result of this line of thought was that all over the country rumours were prevalent that armed bands would be formed to continue the national struggle, and the question of organizing such bands was discussed widely. The first one to be formed was the "Safad Gang"<sup>1</sup> which operated in Upper Galilee mainly around Safad.

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1. The information is based on a despatch of the High Commissioner Sir J. Chancellor to the Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield on 22.3.1930 - see File "Safad Gangs" C.O. 733/190/77171.

Later it came to be known as the "Green Hand Gang". The idea of its organisers was that once this gang and its operations proved successful, a number of other bands might be formed in the Nablus area and in the area lying across the Jerusalem-Jaffa road and the Jerusalem-Jericho road and around Hebron. The band started to operate in the inaccessible parts of Upper Galilee where the country is broken and rocky and facilitated its movement and concealment, while hampering the operation of the organized forces.

Its hard core consisted of 27 persons who had already participated in the disturbances in Safad and fled the town. Their leader was Ahmad Tafesh (who fled to Transjordan where he was arrested on 27 January 1930, extradited and sentenced for life.) Later they were joined by a number of outlawed Druze, from Syria who had participated in the Druze rebellion. The band continued to grow until at one time it was as much as 80 strong though the police estimated it at not more than 25 armed men. The gang sent messengers to Jaffa to collect funds and to assist in organizing more bands. These messengers were caught, however, by the police and on information received from them, the gang was eventually broken up. It operated from September 1929 until February 1930 and had some small successful skirmishes. Still, only combined operations by the Army, the Transjordan Frontier Force, the Police and some assistance from French troops who patrolled the Syrian frontier, succeeded in breaking it up.

The Jews described its members as brigands. In the eyes of the law they were escaped criminals, fugitives from justice. There is no doubt that many among them - if not the majority - were absconded offenders, bad characters and riff-raff of the villages in the area in which the band had operated who attached themselves to the band in order to spoil and pillage or to settle private accounts, or even to be able to enjoy the hospitality - many times perhaps an enforced one - of the villages.

Be that as it may, the criterion for a national act is whether the

people and their opponents consider it to be so, which in this case they did. Whether the doer is moved by sincere noble ideas or by base selfish motives is of secondary importance in the context of our study.

Even the Government did not consider them as primarily highway robbers and described them thus : "They have nothing to hope for and little to lose and they have been used as tools by disaffected politicians in order to create a state of anarchy in the belief that any change which might arise out of it would be better than the existing state of affairs".<sup>2</sup>

There is no direct evidence to link any of the known important Arab leaders with the activities of the gang. Rumours, however, circulated among the Jews<sup>3</sup> that both Subhial Khadra (who himself was from Safad and was active there during the 1929 disturbances) and Rashid Haj Ibrahim<sup>4</sup> assisted them. The Arab press praised and encouraged them indirectly and the villagers in the area in which the band was operating were sympathetic towards them though it should be added that if sympathy was lacking, intimidation was successfully resorted to. Their aim was to create an atmosphere of unrest in order to encourage the extreme Arab nationalists, frighten the Jews and discredit the authorities. Another more immediate aim was to intimidate the prosecution witnesses in the series of trials of the riot offenders, many of whom were committed on capital charges.

The success, though limited, of the Green Hand Gang could serve as an example and perhaps as an omen for the future. In case of a future renewal of disturbances this method of fighting the Government would be resorted to on a considerable scale.

2. Ibid

3. The Jewish daily "Doar Hayom" 28.8.1930.

4. Subhial Khadra was one of the Mufti's chief assistants in the 1929 disturbances. Later he and Rashid Haj Ibrahim were from among the 7 founders of the Istiglal party. For biographical note see file "Who is Who" in Arab Palestine. C.O. 733/248/17693. See also biographical note May 1946 8/8 The H.A.

No other big bands were formed at the time, but individuals and small groups were active in armed violence. On the night of 23 September 1929 a Jewish guard was killed in an attack on Kfar Yeladim and on 7 November 1929 all the males at Kvutzat Muzra were stolen. An atmosphere of unrest spread all over Palestine.

These small groups were mainly organized in Haifa, centered around the Young Men's Moslem Association (Y.M.M.A.) which also had branches in the neighbouring villages. The dedicated members from these groups, who were found suitable, joined then a secret terrorist organization called the "Blackhand". The leader and the moving spirit of the organization was a political refugee from Syria named Sheikh Izzat Din al Kassam, an extreme Arab nationalist who enjoyed a wide reputation as a preacher and religious leader.

From evidence given years later in court<sup>5</sup>, we learn that the members were initiated to the secret organization through the Y.M.M.A. after a ceremony in which they had to take the following oath: "I swear by the Holy Koran that I shall not betray the organization or disclose its secrets to anyone, I swear that I shall submit to all its orders of my own free will". Each member was addressed as Sheikh and grew a beard. During their meetings they discussed the revolt and killing of Jews mentioning the saying "The religion of Muhammad by the sword". Their activities, however, started only later.

Another aspect of the problem which engaged the attention of the Arab National Movement in Palestine during the early thirties was the problem of the arming of the Jews. A self-evident fact of the disturbances of 1929 was that it was possible for the Arabs to get easy victories in places where the Jews were not armed such as Hebron and Safad. The lesson

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5. By the witness Taha Ahmed in the Nahalal murder case. Haaretz 28-29.9.1933. For more particulars on the Kassam organization at its earliest stage see History of Hagana Op Cit.451 and see also Darwaza 29 Op Cit p.119-120 and M. Subhi Yassin The Great Arab Rebellion (al Thawara al Arabiyya al kubra) no date. Egypt p. 12.

to the Jews was that they should try and arm themselves; the lesson to the Arabs was that they should try and prevent this.

Jewish endeavours to arm<sup>6</sup> themselves proceeded both legally, namely by getting arms from the Government, and through illegal channels.

Already on 7.11.29, 3 months after the disturbances, the French authorities in Beirut arrested two Jews and confiscated a large quantity of firearms which they had tried to smuggle into Palestine.<sup>7</sup>

Again, on 15.3.1930, the Department of Customs in Haifa confiscated a quantity of smuggled arms for the Jews.<sup>8</sup>

All Arab papers reacted immediately. "Miraat al Sharq" wrote an editorial "as against the arming of the Jews we have to arm ourselves".

"Falastin" asked in its editorial<sup>10</sup> "Are we to ignore the Jewish Arming, if two cases were discovered how many such Jewish attempts passed undetected?". The paper demanded that the Government should stop all arming by the Jews. And in another article<sup>11</sup> it asked: "Are the Jews preparing another wave of disturbances as in 1929"?

The press campaign was accompanied by a stream of protests to the H.C. and the Government expressing the Arabs' apprehension that "the Jews have been, and still are, actually engaged in smuggling firearms to Palestine with a view to the arming of Jewish youth and forming semi-military organizations".

6. This subject is described thoroughly in the "History of the Hagana" Op-Cit chapter 30. "The supply of arms to the Hagana through the early thirties pp. 531-548.

7. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 10.11.1929. The "History of the Hagana" p.531.

8. "Falastin" 17.3.1930. The arms included about 150 guns and a large quantity of ammunition. For full story see "History of the Hagana" Op Cit p. 535.

9. "Miraat al Sharq" 26.3.1930. At the time, the paper was edited by Abram Zuaiter and followed a more extreme line than usual.

10. "Falastin" 20.3.1930.

11. Ibid 28.3.1930.

As against this, the protests usually emphasized the Arabs' will for peace. For example, "the Arab Women's Executive takes leave to assure you that their only object is to see peace and order maintained in this country and to ensure that no blood be shed in future".<sup>12</sup>

But at the same time, those other extreme Arab elements continued their preparations and employment of violence so that Arab activities in this respect took place on two levels. The recognized Arab leadership, Arab politicians and organizations and the press concentrated their efforts mainly against the arming of the Jews and preaching and calling abstractly on Arab youth to regain the spirit of heroism and sacrifice, while the extreme elements, whom I shall describe hence forward as "terrorist groups", continued their illegal underground activities. If there was any connection between the two, it was well hidden.

On 4.1.1930, a painted black hand was found in Tel-Aviv with unreadable Arab script<sup>13</sup>. Jewish papers of early January 1930 expressed their fear of continued Arab arming and preparations for attacking the Jews<sup>14</sup>.

Towards the end of the month, a Jewish farm was attacked by Arabs in Upper Galilee, 2 Jewish drivers were beaten in Nablus, and 3 Arabs from the village Colonia near Jerusalem attacked and beat a Jew from Motza, a witness in the Maklef murder case (a cruel murder of a Jewish family in Motza by Arabs from the neighbouring Arab village of Colonia during the 1929 disturbances).

In early February, Arab labourers working on a construction site in the centre of the Jewish part of Jerusalem were heard singing for several days

12. See for example the protest by the Moslem Society in Haifa - "al Jamiah al Arabiyya 20.3.1930. The protest of the Executive Committee of Palestine Arab Women's Congress Ibid. Also see M. Mugannam "The Arab Women" Op Cit p. 80.

13. "Doar Hayom" 5.1.1930.

14. Ibid 6.1.1930. 10.1.1930. "Haaretz" 9.1.1930.

"As long as the Mufti lives we shall not fear evil, let us collect our guns, f- the Jewish girls and slaughter all Zionists"<sup>15</sup>.

In May, when the news reached Palestine that the Arab Delegation to London had broken its discussions with the British Government<sup>16</sup>, tension rose. The H.C. issued instructions for the troops and police to take special precautions in order to prevent demonstrations on 16 May<sup>17</sup> and asked the Colonial Secretary if there was any public announcement that could be made on behalf of the Government that would ease the situation<sup>18</sup>.

Towards June 1930, French intelligence sources reported to the British that the Arabs contemplated further disturbances and that large bands of Arabs were advancing from Transjordan to attack the Jewish Colonies. Similar reports were received from the Jewish Agency<sup>19</sup>. Tension rose sharply after the execution of the 3 martyrs in Acre prison on 17.6.1930.<sup>20</sup>

Jewish sources considered<sup>21</sup>, however, that as long as the Arabs thought that they were winning on the political front they would refrain from using terror and violence. The H.C. also informed the Colonial Secretary that the members of the Arab Delegation who returned from London visited him on 27.6.1930 and assured him that the rumours about further disturbances by the Arabs were absolutely unfounded and expressed their strong desire to cooperate with the British Government.<sup>22</sup>

'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' commenting on this meeting<sup>23</sup> said that when the H.C. informed the Arab leaders of the rumours about impending Arab disturbances

15. "Doar Hayom" 8.2.1930.

16. See supra p. 92.

17. Which was declared "The Palestine Day" by the India Moslems. The Arab Delegation to London cabled the Executive bureau in Jerusalem to hold on in demonstrations all over Palestine. Ibid.

18. In a cable 14.5.1930. C.O. 733/188/77120/A.

19. Ibid.

20. Following the 1929 disturbances, 16 Arabs were sentenced to death. After an impressive Arab effort, the death sentences of 13 Arabs were commuted to life. 3 however were hung. From their death cell they sent their legacy saying that the struggle for freedom and independence of Palestine should continue until victory, and counselling the Arab people not to have faith in foreigners and their policies. "al Jamiah al Arabiyya". 2.7.1930.

21. The History of the Hagana Op Cit p. 451.

22. See supra p. 95

23. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 5.7.1930.

it came to them as a total surprise. "These rumours must be Jewish devices to cover up their own preparations for new disturbances".

The Arab press meanwhile was sounding the alarm against the increase of Jewish armed strength.

"Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" published an article<sup>24</sup> on the growing numbers of Jews in the police force where they all received military training. Another article was published in "Falastin" on "Brit Trumpeldor and the secret Jewish army" of the extreme Revisionist Jews".<sup>25</sup> And, summing up in its enlarged version of the New Year issue<sup>26</sup>, the seven most important developments during the year 1930 "Falastin" counted the arming of the Jews as one of them.

About the middle of March 1931, as a result of the Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann<sup>27</sup>, it was reported that the "Arab Nationalist Terrorist Committee" had been revived and had started to send threatening letters to both Jews and Arabs who were considered to favour an Arab-Jewish rapprochement, and to Arabs who failed to carry out the Executive's appeal for a boycott.

On 20.3. 1931, the Colonial Secretary, on the basis of information received from a certain Jew<sup>28</sup>, advised the H.C. of the possibility of disturbances which might arise at Easter.

24. Ibid 10.2.1930.
25. "Falastin" 30.8.1930.
26. "Falastin" 30.12.1930.
27. See note prepared on the situation in Palestine in the light of information received from secret sources. June 1931. CO. 733/204/87156.
28. Captain Alex Aaranson, who had served in British Intelligence during the first World War, who informed his 2 M.P. friends that "massacres on a large and terrible scale are being prepared" both against Jews and British. It seems that he was not thought highly of either by the Jewish Agency or by the H.C. still the H.C. took all necessary precautions during the Nabi Musa festival, Ibid.

On the night of 3.4.1931, a group of Jews travelling in a cart on their way back to their settlement at Yajour, was attacked by armed persons, 3 were killed and 4 were seriously injured.

In a very interesting memorandum dated 9 May 1931, Mr. Barker<sup>29</sup>, analysing the murder, reached the conclusion "that the killers were determined men intent on the business of killing Jews, who belonged to a gang acting under the direction of a political organization as did the Green Hand Gang which - as has been definitely established - was organized by political extremists."<sup>30</sup> Barker went on to write "Three killed and four wounded ... these casualties were inflicted by rifle fire from about eight rounds, probably not more than nine, fired at point blank range. This fact not only illustrates the intensity of the hatred in the minds of the firers, but the calm, skillful handling of the weapons. Not a single shot hit the animals or the cart. Were not the weapons then in the hands of persons trained in the use of arms? ..." From which we may learn something about the motives and the training of the killers.

Barker was convinced that the heads of the Y.M.M.A. (Young Men's Moslem Association) in Haifa had definite detailed information concerning the crime and he asked for authority to give a large financial reward to a certain<sup>31</sup> informer who would give (1) full details of the political murder gangs organized by the Y.M.M.A. Haifa and (2) full details of the political murder gangs organized throughout the country. The murderers, however, were not found.

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29. Mr. Barker was the Deputy District Superintendent of Police C.I.D. For the Memorandum see C.O. 733/204/87156.
30. Hypothesis which was accepted by Mr. Young the O.A.G., see his letter to the Colonial Secretary 30.5.1931. Ibid
31. He had in mind Ramsi Amr, the Executive Leader of Y.M.M.A. Haifa, who apparently was ready to cooperate with the C.I.D. Ibid.

In a well balanced appreciation of the political situation in Palestine, prepared in the Colonial Office, it was noted that a more or less organized campaign of incitement to violence against the Jews and the Palestine Government started during the summer of 1929, which had taken the form of (1) inflammatory journalism (2) public speeches (3) attempts at demonstrations and (4) strikes.

The paper stated that Nablus, which had always been a centre of extreme Arab nationalism had become a focal point for concentrated expressions of Arab discontent and hostility to British rule. The paper concluded that there were indications that the initiative - political and other - was passing from the hands of the Arab "moderates" who so far had controlled the Arab Executive, into those of the extremists who, for attaining the same ends, advocated the use of other means such as relying on agitation and threats of violence (possibly on the actual preparation for violent measures) rather than on argument, deputations, appeals to the League of Nations etc.<sup>32</sup>

The paper also mentioned the many rumours as to the organization, by both Arabs and Jews, of secret caches of illicit arms and the Jewish complaints against the Government permit for the Nablus Congress and similar gatherings.

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32. The paper was written by Williams 3.9.1931 C.O. 733/204/87156/1. One cannot help being impressed by this paper especially in comparison with one other Intelligence appreciation paper dated 21.5.1931 and titled, "The Pan Islamic Arab Revolutionary Movement" in the same file. This paper, misreading perhaps the preparations for the Moslem Congress, discussed - with all seriousness - a plan by Amir Shakib Arslaan, together with the Mufti, Shaukat Ali and other Arab leaders, to deliver the Arabs and Moslems from European rule, by a general revolt in which all Arabs would participate and which would be assisted by the Turks Afghans, the Amir of Muscat, Egypt etc. Ibid.

This Nablus Congress was called to protest against the Government's arming of the Jews and against sealed armouries in the Jewish Colonies. One of the recommendations of Sir H. Dowbiggin<sup>33</sup> was that the Government should maintain in the Jewish Colonies sealed armouries to be opened only in cases of direct attacks against these colonies.

The Congress was preceded by some of the most extreme articles in the press. The Istiqlalist paper 'Al Hayat' came out with a long editorial<sup>34</sup>, "Oh Arabs. Your enemies are arming themselves. What are you waiting for?", to be followed by the Husseinite paper, 'Al Jamiah al Arabiyya' in its article<sup>35</sup> "the Sealed Armouries", which was of such inflammatory character that the paper was suspended for a month and his editor Munif al Hussein was cautioned personally by the Chief Secretary, Mr. M. Young. However, in its first issue after its re-appearance, it published an article<sup>36</sup> "The Nablus Congress and the arms for the Jewish Colonies" in which it praised the Congress for "tackling this most dangerous

33. Sir H. Dowbiggin was appointed by the Colonial Secretary early in 1930 to carry out an inquiry into the reorganization of the Palestine Police as was recommended by the Shaw Commission. His excellent report served as the basis of the working of the Palestine Police during the thirties. For his inquiry and report see file C.O. 733/180/77015. The armouries contained only "Gruners" defensive shotguns with effective range of about 100 yards only. The problem of getting these guns turned out to be a complicated one. Supply from Britain would have taken a long time and the Palestinian authorities, needing them urgently, requested them from Egyptian Government. Negotiations had to be secret and delicate in view of the sympathy of the Egyptian public to the Palestinian Arabs. See file "Jewish Colonies Armouries" C.O. 733/209/87353.

34. "Al Hayat" - 29.6.1931.

35. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 3.7.1931.

36. Ibid 2.8.1931.

problem", which should have been tackled by the Arab Executive "this body in an advanced stage of dissolution which does nothing besides sending petitions and protests to the Government".

The Congress was held at Nablus<sup>37</sup> on 31.7.1931 attended by about 300 delegates from every part of Palestine mostly young Arab politicians, supporters of the Husseinis and the Istiqlal party. It was opened by Jalal Kassem from Nablus, who set the tone in a very exciting speech, in which he pointed to the British Government as the "chief enemy of the Arabs" and stated that "the nation expects us to act and not to talk". Sheikh Muzaffar proposed non-payment of taxes. Fashmi Aboushi from Jenin, who was elected as the Chairman of the Congress proclaimed, "either we should be ready to sacrifice everything for our country or we should leave it" (Ama al tadhiyya fi sabil al Bilad ou al rahil an al bilad).

One delegate from Hebron, apparently Sheikh Sabri Abdin, proposed to form armed gangs to fight both the Jews and the British.<sup>38</sup>

A heated argument started as to whether to send or not to send a delegation to complain and protest to the H.S on the arming of the Jewish colonies. Sheikh Muzaffar and Munif al Husseini, the editor of "al Jamiah al Arabiyya" were in favour, while Jamil Kassem and Akram Zuaitar, who had the upper hand, were against. The main resolution passed at the Congress was to hold demonstrations all over Palestine on 15.8.1931 against the arming of the Jewish Colonies.

However, another important resolution to form a committee, composed of Jamal Kassem, Dr. Sidki Milham and Wasef Kamel, in order to buy arms for the Arabs, was not published.

37. For a full description of the Congress and its resolutions see Ibid.

38. The History of the Hagana Op Cit p.448

The significance of the Nablus Congress lay in its extreme radical nature. It was dominated by the young ("shabab") who from that time started gradually to gain a growing share in the direction of the Arab national movement in Palestine. It affected to a considerable measure the tone and character of the discussions and resolutions of both the Arab Executive meeting of 17.8.1931 and the Nablus assembly of 20.9.31 which followed it. Furthermore, it basically challenged the fundamental concept of the "political struggle" as held by the official recognised leadership, and secretly advocated the idea of "Armed struggle",

The resolutions of the Congress were repeated in the Arab and Jewish press thus intensifying the apprehension of the public who feared a prolonged strike which might result in disturbances. The Government issued on 6.8.1931 an official communique<sup>39</sup> with a view of counteracting the effects of distorted descriptions of the Government action as regards the "sealed armories".

On 5.8.1931 the Chief Secretary met the Arab editors and cautioned them against publication of material which was likely to lead to breaches of the peace<sup>40</sup>. The Arab papers, protesting that they were prevented from publishing news which were of interest to the public, decided to strike and not to appear during the period 10 - 18.8.1931.

The Government also did not permit the proposed demonstration on 15.8.1931 and on the whole the strike was peaceful.<sup>41</sup>

The Nablus Congress caused a lot of excitement in Arab circles. It was supported by the Husseini's paper 'al Jamiah al Arabiyya' and by the Istiqlalist's paper 'al Hayat'. But 'Falastin' and the other opposition papers were

39. Official Communique 6.8.1931. "Falastin" 7.8.1931.

40. "Falastin" 6.8.1931.

41. See cable from H.C. to Colonial Secretary 17.8.1931 C.O. 733/209/87353.

against it.<sup>42</sup> It had, as mentioned above, a strong impact on the discussions of the Arab Executive Committee's meetings of 16.8.1931 and 17.8.1931 to which it sent two representatives.<sup>43</sup> The Executive resented the fact that it was pushed by the Nablus Congress, but pushed it was, and this was reflected by the extreme decisions it resolved. It published<sup>44</sup> a manifesto to the Arab people calling on them to hold a general strike and to demonstrate on 23.8.1931 in order to convey to the Government the nation's indignation at the arming of the Jewish Colonies.

The demonstration on 23.8.1931 was not permitted either.<sup>45</sup> In Jerusalem, the members of the Arab Executive Committee met and marched in a demonstration to the Government's Office<sup>46</sup>. They were stopped by armed police and after exchange of heated words mainly between Jamal Husseini and the Police Officer a delegation of 10 members headed by Musa Kasim were allowed to proceed and present their protest while the rest of the members waited for them in the street. In Nablus there were attempts to defy the Government's prohibition. The people marched shouting "down with the Mandate, Long live Arab independence". The police, assisted by troops, promptly suppressed the demonstrations and 3 people were arrested.<sup>47</sup>

In the rest of the country the day passed off without any serious incident. "Al Hayat" in its long editorial<sup>48</sup> "Why do we strike" explained that the strike

42. 'Miraat al Sharq' even used the regional and local aspect of Palestine politics by stating that Nablus made with this Congress a bid to transfer the centre of the national movement from Jerusalem to itself. "Falastin" wrote that none of the first class Arab leaders attended the Nablus Congress and that important national decisions should be resolved in the Arab Executive. "Falastin" 2.8.1931.
43. For the discussions and resolutions of these meetings see Supra pp. 197-199
44. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 20.3.1931.
45. Though a delegation of the Arab Executive met the H.C. on 22.8.1931 in an effort to get a permit. Ibid. 22.8.1931.
46. For a full description of the demonstration see Ibid 25.8.1931. See also 3797:65 I.S.A.
47. Jamal Kasem, one of the Nablus Congress organizers, Dr. Sidqi Milham, who during the revolt 1936-39 became famous as the doctor of the rebels and Sheikh Abdin from Hebron. For a biography of Dr. Sidqi Milham see file 580 The H.A.
48. "Al Hayat" 23.8.1931.

symbolized the nation's resolve to fight until it would achieve its freedom and independence.

The members of the Arab Executive bureau travelled on 26.8.1931 to Nablus "to demonstrate their appreciation for the noble and leading stand it took with regard to the problem of the arming of the Jews and to identify themselves with the courageous people of Nablus and the detainees".<sup>49</sup>

Another resolution of the Arab Executive Committee meeting of 17.8.1931 was that a general assembly should be held at Nablus on 20.9.1931. Accordingly, on the appointed date, the assembly, attended by about 200 persons, was opened under the presidency of Musa Kazem at 11.0 a.m. and concluded at 2 p.m.<sup>50</sup> The opposition elements abstained from participating in the assembly. They, anyway, were not wanted there and only a very small number of tickets was issued to them. There was a thorough check of the cards and the uninvited and suspect persons were turned out.<sup>51</sup> Izzat Darwaza welcomed the delegations in the name of Nablus. A 2 minutes silence was observed in memory of Omar al Mukhtar, the Tripolitanian national leader executed by the Italians. Sheikh Muzaffar in his speech referred to the Arab national movement in Palestine as moving between the ebb and the flow. When the 1929 events took place, the cause of the country was revived, but the tide abated and "energy fell in sound sleep" until Nablus woke it up by its great

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49. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 26.8.1931.

50. For a full description of the Nablus assembly, its discussions and resolutions see Ibid. 21.9.1931.

51. It seems that the organizers tried and succeeded partly - a very unusual thing in Arab Palestine - to keep the discussions secret. Mr. Barker, the Deputy Commandant of the C.I.D. finished his report on the Congress thus: "it is reported that secret deliberations took place between the leaders during lunch, but great secrecy is being observed in this regard. Efforts to obtain details are being made". See Police Daily Intelligence summary No. 221 of 21.9.1931 F.O. 371/15333.

example of sacrifice. He finished by declaring "let them (i.e. the imperialists) put to death whomever they wish, nevertheless the Arab nation wants to live" and by calling for strong leadership. The central speech of the assembly was given by Jamal Husseini. In it, he summarized the political situation in Palestine since the British occupation and sharply criticized British policy, which ignored the pro-Arab recommendations of all its own commissions.

He then urged the members of the assembly to adopt one of the following two ways. "Either to follow theoretically a passive and practically a positive policy, as the one adopted by Egypt; or, to follow a negative policy theoretically and practically as the one adopted by India".

He was followed by Rashid Haj Ibrahim who referred to Jamal al Husseini's motion and pointed out that the Government had never fulfilled any of their demands. Colonizing powers could only be moved to action when compelled to do so. 'The rulers were strong and the subjugated nations weak, forceful opposition was not therefore possible. He suggested the example of India and Ghandi, and the boycott of foreign goods. Protests were unavailing.

Jamal Husseini proposed the resolutions and after long discussions and modifications they were unanimously approved. The first resolution was :

" (a) So long as the British Government governs the country in a direct manner every Arab effort to cooperation with Government is bound to fail. This has been proved during the past 13 years. The Arab Executive and other representative bodies should not negotiate with Government except on the basis of independence within an Arab unity or on matters, whether economic or political, which are likely to lead to this independence."

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52. The other resolutions were :-

(b) About half of the revenues of Government are derived from Customs

dues. The boycott of all goods imported through Customs is therefore necessary. The people should further be called upon to boycott, where possible, whatever gives revenue to Government such as tobacco, to abstain from the use of telegraphs for congratulatory or other messages, and, as far as possible, to abstain from the use of telephones. By this means, Jewish merchandise and European goods can be boycotted and local industries encouraged. A Committee to lay down a programme should be elected. (It is understood that a great deal of difference arose over the selection of the members for the Committee).

(c) In view of the repeated declarations of Zionists respecting their desire to come to an understanding with the Arabs, the latter once more declare that so long as the Zionists persist in following a policy, which is not in accord with the Arab national and political aspirations, no understanding between these two parties is possible.

(d) The assembly calls upon young men to hold a conference for the purpose of organizing their ranks and carrying out these resolutions. The young men should realize that this is a trust placed in their hands.

Ladies should be appealed to to abstain from wearing European dresses.

(e) The Arabs should in future direct all their propaganda to the East and the Arab world. As guardians of the Holy Places, the Arabs can find no better supporter than the Islamic world.

(f) To declare disgust at the treatment of prisoners and of the press, to work for Arab unity and the formation of a committee under Haj Amin for this purpose, to form a company for the purchase of lands, to greet Arab prisoners etc.

The members present took then the following oath :-

"We swear by God to support the National Fund and work for its success, to boycott commission agents, traitors and spies with all our power and not to sell our lands to the Jews".

The assembly also elected a special group of the following persons who gave an oath as to their fidelity in serving the national cause : Adel Zueitar, Jamal al Hussein, Auni abd al Hadi, Fahmi al Abboushi, Sheikh Muzaffar. What was not published in the papers was that this group met during lunch and after the assembly was closed, they had a short secret meeting at which they decided to continue the mission given to Dr. Sidky Malhas, Jamal Kasem and Wasef Kamal which they could not complete as the first two were arrested. This mission was to buy arms for the Arabs.<sup>53</sup>

The O.A.G. M.A. Young, reporting on the assembly to the Colonial Secretary wrote : "It is not anticipated that the Nablus resolutions will have any practical effect other than to create discussion amongst the Arab leaders".<sup>54</sup>

As far as practical effects were concerned, he was perhaps right. But the Nablus assembly resolutions were important in the sense that while the Nablus Congress (of 31.7) resolutions - on which they were based - were passed by a congress dominated by the young (Shabab) these were passed by an assembly attended by the majority of the recognized official leadership of Arab-Palestine. By passing these resolutions (including the secret ones), this leadership endorsed also the concept of "the armed struggle".

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53. Ibid. See also Report of Acting District Commissioner of Samaria. 21.9. Ibid.

54. Young to Thomas 26.9.1931. Ibid.

The competing concept of "the political struggle" was, by and large, still the supreme one but it was not any more the only one as far as the political thinking of the whole national movement as against the marginal extremists was concerned. But for the time being the "discussion" was increased. The opposition papers described the assembly as a party assembly aimed at serving the interests of a party and not the national interests as a whole.<sup>55</sup> "Sirat al Mustakim" published a violent article by Hamdi al Hussein<sup>56</sup> against the Nablus assembly claiming that it was intended to obstruct the national aims of the Nablus Congress (of 31.7.31). It criticized the assembly's resolution for not going far enough. "Our slogan should be", he wrote, "No talks before evacuation". (La Mufawada ila baad al Jala). Referring to the fact that many sincere nationalists were not invited to participate in the assembly, he criticized the politics of "personalities" and wrote that the Arabs should follow the proverb, "Do not consider who said, consider what was said". (La tanzur ila minkala unzur ila ma kila). "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya"<sup>57</sup> answered these articles and said that the best proof that the Nablus assembly was a national one, was that it was opposed by the Nashashibi opposition, by the Communists and by the Jews who were going also to oppose the intended Moslem Congress.

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55. "Falastin" 22.9.1931.

56. It is interesting to note that the very radical Hamdi Hussein wrote regularly in the moderate opposition paper "Sirat al Mustakim". (The Istiqlalist Abram Zuaiter wrote also, and actually even edited for a while the "Miraat al Sharq"). I could not find the issue of the paper in which this article was written, probably it was written between the 15-28.10.1931. I know of its context through the answer to it written as an editorial of "Jamiah al Arabiyya" 29.10.1931.

57. Ibid.

During the following 18 months acts of violence were committed :-

On 31.6.1931 a bomb exploded in the Geula Jewish quarter of Haifa and five Jews were wounded.

On 5.1.1932 3 bombs exploded in Jewish places in and around Haifa.

On 16.1.1931 a Jewish farmer was murdered in Balfouria in the Valley of Jesrael.

On 5.3.1932 a Jew was killed in Kfar Hasidim not far from Haifa.

On 30.4.1932 2 Jews from Kfar Yecheskel in Jesrael Valley were attacked and wounded.

On 22.12.32 a Jewish farmer and his young son from Nahalal were murdered in what became known as the 'Nahalal murder case'.

All these cases were committed by people who were connected with the Haifa secret organization<sup>58</sup>, and there is no doubt as to the political motivation which caused them. The Arab lawyer defending the killers in the Nahalal case said in his defence speech, "This murder is the result of the bad policy of the Palestinian Government. It is a calamity that the accused used illegal means because of their opposition to the Government's policy .... They wrongfully thought that their religion ordered them to do so."<sup>59</sup>

During the same period, the following cases also took place :-

On 28.6.1931 a young Jew and Jewess were killed on the seashore in what became known as "the Zohar and Stahl murder case". The discovery of their bodies was followed by an attempt by 2 Jews to murder an Arab in the same area.

58. As came to light in the trial of the two murderers of the Nahalal crime who were sentenced to death. "Haaretz" 7.12.1933. See also the Report about the Kassamian organization &/3 The H.A. Following the trial Sheikh el Kassam and his secret organization ceased their activities temporarily.

59. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya". 4.12.1933.

On 3rd and 4th April 1932, in a period of 24 hours, a Jew and an Arab were killed in Jerusalem. The Arab, Azmi-al Aref (the cousin of Aref al Aref) received a "national burial". In its obituary "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" wrote<sup>60</sup> "we mourn the pure blood of the martyr (Sha'id)" and finished the article by repeating three times the phrase, "Palestine will be Arab and free".

On 9.5.1932 two Jews were robbed and beaten near Tulkarm.

On 8.6.1932 a body of a dead Jew was discovered near the road of Jerusalem-Bethlehem.

A train carrying Jewish labourers working in Rutenberg's Electricity Co. in Nahariya left the lines after the railway was sabotaged during July 1932.

Shots were fired on the night of 1.9.1932 at a Jewish farm near Gedera.

On 23.2.1933 a Jewish guard was killed by Bedouin in Wadi Hawareth.

The Arabs claimed that some, if least, of these crimes had other than political motivation<sup>61</sup> and should therefore be considered ordinary crimes. Theoretically they were right but in fact there were no ordinary inter-communal crimes in Palestine. By being inter-communal they immediately became political crimes. Describing the killing of the Jewish guard at Wadi Hawareth, "al Jamiah al Islamiyya" wrote :<sup>62</sup> "The Bedu never meant to kill, he only had a stick, he was pressed, and he hit and

60. Ibid. 10.4.1932.

61. The Jewess S. Zohar, for instance, was raped before being murdered.

62. "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 28.2.1932.

Benjamin died. The man did not seek to kill, he sought only to save his own life".

To this list of crime and violence should be added the dozens of cases of what is known in the Middle East as "Agricultural or Agrarian Crimes", namely burning and uprooting trees and forest, destroying and damaging the crops in the fields, the wounding of cattle etc and also the conflicts about ownership of land, evictions etc.

As for the campaign against Jewish arming, even Arab Colonies in remote parts of the world participated in it.<sup>63</sup>

In August 1932, 3 Jews were caught in Jerusalem trying to buy arms from British policemen. Commenting on their trial<sup>64</sup> "al Jamiah al Arabiyya" wrote a long editorial, "the Jews, their arms and the Jewish Defence Force" in which it described in great detail the growth and increase of this force.

On the occasion of the anniversary of Hittin, all the papers mentioned the Arab victories during their days of glory "which no doubt would be renewed". "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" published the speech of Sheikh Muzaffar in which he said,<sup>65</sup> "How tonight resembles yesternight" (that is, the present to the past). "The Crusaders of the past are like the Imperialists of today. And if Sala-al-Din was alive today he would have certainly fought the British, French and Italians, but before that he would have fought the internal traitors who sell lands and cooperate with the enemy".

Commenting on an article written by the Jewish Revisionist leader, Jabotinsky, in which he called for the creation of a Jewish Army, as without

63. See, for example, telegram of protest from the Arab Community in Tela, Honduras to the British Ambassador in Guatemala. 3.9.1932 C.O. 733/209/87353.
64. Only one of them was sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya". 27.8. 1932.
65. Ibid 29.8.1932.

such an army the Balfour Declaration would not be fulfilled, "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" said <sup>66</sup> "and what are we doing? Should we not have an Arab Army to see that the Balfour Declaration should not be fulfilled?" And the same question "What are we doing?" was posed in another article "the Jewish Military Organizations" published some time later. <sup>67</sup>

The paper also published in full a speech by Sami Shawkat, the Director General of Education in Iraq, in which he said that the Arabs ought to learn the profession of killing (or profession of death - Sing'at al Maut) because nations who do not know this profession die dishonourable deaths. And the Editor, Munif al Husseini added: "if learning the profession of killing is the duty of every Arab, it is much more so for every Palestinian who has to fight 2 enemies." <sup>68</sup>

And indeed, learning the profession of death and the concept of the "armed struggle" got a further boost among the Arab public by the growing activities of the more radical parties, the "Youth Congress" and specially the "Istiqlal" (Independence) party <sup>69</sup> towards the end of 1932 and early 1933. The C.I.D. periodical Appreciation summarizing this period, emphasized continuously the extreme nature of these activities. In one report we found the following: <sup>70</sup>

"The Arab Palestine Independence Party"

The Istiqlal Party, which is the only active political body in Palestine at present, and which is so well merged in the pan-Arab movement, is showing signs of increased activity. Its cause is apparently becoming more and more popular amongst young men, and

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66. Ibid. 7.9.1932. Jabotinsky's article was published in "Raswest", the Revisionist paper appearing in Paris, on 24.8.1932.  
 67. Ibid. 23.11.1932.  
 68. Ibid. 19.10.1932.  
 69. See Chapter 14.  
 70. See C.I.D. Summary report the 6/33 of 18.2.1933. F.O.371/16926. See also report No. 49/32 of 16.12.1932. Ibid.

politicians who are not blinded by personal interest in the Nashashibi-Musseini conflict. The party leaders are quietly, but diligently at work spreading their independence (extreme) doctrine and inculcating hatred in the minds of young men, students, teachers etc. with the ultimate object of organizing public opinion and paving the way for military activity under their own leadership.

They spread agitation against Government in every possible form, with the clear intention of arousing the people and directing hostility against Government. They speak of secret organizations and action; and maintain the closest relations with their colleagues in Trans-Jordan. They have in particular found a fertile ground for their anti-Government propoganda in Nablus.

The energy shown in the North in opening branches of the Y.M.M.A. in small villages is due to the activity of Rashid Haj Ibrahim and Subhi el Khadra, and there is little doubt that the party aims at organising and assuming control over these associations, which would become a dangerous weapon in its hands. The increased interest of Arabs in sports and in independent Boy Scouts troops, as is witnessed in their frequent excursions and displays, with political manifestations, is due to the spirit which the party is spreading. It should be noted that the party includes a dangerous element who hold revolutionary views and are intent on militant activity and who may in future prove a source of agitation and trouble."

I already pointed out that Rashid Haj Ibrahim and Subhi al Khadra were the two Arab leaders most connected with the terrorist groups and also the close relationship between the Y.M.M.A. and these groups. As for

"Sport activities" and "Boy Scouts activities", these were the "formal cover" for para-military training both with the Jews and the Arabs.

The Palestine Communist Party (P.C.P.) though of very limited practical importance in Palestine Arab society, because of its very small number of members, most of whom were Jews anyhow, served it all the same as a source of thoughts and ideas, both directly and through the left wing part of the Istiqlal party centred around Hamdi al Hussein. Its slogan "armed revolt" publicized and popularized the use of this expression and it slowly became absorbed in general usage. And in general, reading through Arab announcements, declarations, speeches etc. of that time, one is struck by the increased use of warlike words such as "struggle" (nidai, kipah), "holy war" (jihad), "battle" (maarakha), "revolt" (thawra), "war" and "fight" (harb) etc. This usage started with the extreme radical parties, but soon it became general.

In one of his typical speeches, for instance, Akram Zueitar (who at the time was a school teacher in the nationalist school "Al Najah" in Nablus) addressed a meeting of "Khalid Ibn al Walid" - Boy Scouts organization in the Sports Club of Nablus on 24.2.1933 (all meaningful names in the context of our subject). He spoke<sup>71</sup> of sacrifice and the need to boycott foreigners, he mentioned de Valera and Ghandi, he commended military training and concluded by saying that he hoped to see the young Palestinians fighting for the independence of their country.

In a manifesto to the Arab people dated 21.3.33, the Arab Executive said : "The nation will not expect any good from the Government and its oppression. The nation will consider the Government as the enemy from

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71. See C.I.D. summary report No. 8/33 of 10.3.1933 Ibid.

which it must liberate itself through every legal means".<sup>72</sup>

However, even the continuing emphasis which the Arab Executive used to put on "the peaceful and legal" means of its struggle went through a slight but meaningful transformation. In its manifesto of 23.4.1933 calling the people to non-cooperation, the Arab Executive said <sup>73</sup>: "Whereas this nation is oppressed but firm in its faith and does not possess the means that would enable it to parry the harm and repel the transgression it, except its firm unity and perseverance in its struggle through peaceful and legal means, the Arab Executive Committee fervently appeals to all the noble Arab nation .... to enforce the recent decision of non-cooperation".

It followed therefore that once "this nation will possess the means that would enable it to parry the harm and repel the transgression", it would use them rather than the "peaceful" and "legal" means.

The authorities, keeping an eye on developments amongst the Arabs, noticed these changes and "got the message". In Government circles, the discussions were not any more whether there would be an outbreak of Arab hostility but when this outbreak was going to occur.<sup>74</sup>

And truly enough, on 13.10.1933, the short but very violent autumn riots of 1933 started.

After the riots were suppressed, the H.C. presented his Government with his appreciation of the situation, accompanied with memoranda by the military and police authorities on the same subject, as well as a memorandum by Musa al Alami.

They all stated the probability of future riots and use of violence.

72. "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 22.3.33.

73. "Falastin" 24.4.1933.

74. See note of discussion in the C.O. about the situation in Palestine 1.5.1933 C.O. 733/239/17356 Pt.1. The Government, for reasons which I shall explain later, was not worried.

The H.C. wrote<sup>75</sup>: "the liability to further riots is greater, since instead of a reasonable measure of goodwill, there is now a general feeling of hostility".

Musa al Alami wrote<sup>76</sup>: "the feeling now is decidedly anti-British. There is no moderate and no extremist in this regard. The only difference of opinion is that some people have no hope whatever in the British and wish to go to extremes to revenge their rights and deliver themselves; and others hope that as the days go by, Britain may recognize that the Arabs are better friends than the Jews and may thus change their policy. It should be nevertheless made clear that there are no Arabs who believe now in the justice and fairness of the British and who expect a change of policy because of that sense of justice. The feeling is that pressure must be brought to

75. To the Colonial Secretary 18.12.1933 C.O.733/248/17700. However, the H.C. went on to express his confidence. He did not consider the disorders a threat to British rule "for three main reasons: first, because their character was purely political; second, because the fellaheen did not join in the riots; and third, because the leaders showed no powers of organization".

He considered that there were three main sources of influence which bear on the Arab mind: religious, political and economic, of which religious was by far the most important. He believed therefore that as long as his understanding with the Mufti continued, the latter would not raise the religious issue, the only one which would move the fellaheen, so that if any further disturbances were to occur, the Government could easily suppress them with the available means of police and military.

76. See Memorandum from Musa Alami to the H.C. "Present state of mind and feelings of the Arabs of Palestine". September 1933 (my italics) C.O/733/257/37356/1.

bear upon Britain to change its policy either : (a) positively, by using force, or (b) negatively, by the Jews exasperating the British, or, alternatively, by the British finding themselves in the need of the Arab and Moslem worlds".

And later on he continued :

"The programme of the youth is based on violence only. The older generation is also now discussing violence, when only a few years ago it used to reprimand any remarks of this sort. The older generation would wish things to go from bad to worse so as to bring about a spontaneous and bloody reaction. The younger one prefers the open deliberate fight. The general feeling is this : that if death is all we can look for as a result of the present policy, rather than a slow and long process of death, let us die in an attempt to free ourselves from our enemies".

In retrospect, the 1933 riots can, no doubt, be regarded as a prelude and a general rehearsal for the Arab revolt of 1936 so what happened after 1933 in the ideological change towards the use of violence was not any more a qualitative change but only a quantitative one.

The concept of "armed struggle" became as important as the concept of "political struggle" using peaceful and legal means".

The Jews, sensing the growing danger, continued and increased their efforts to arm themselves.

Early in February 1934, three Jews were caught buying ammunition from men of the R.A.F.<sup>77</sup> This became the subject of a protest meeting held in Nablus and the Arab Executive Bureau sent a complaint to the Government.

The largest seizure of arms occurred on 16 October 1936 when a

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77. Police Summary report No. 4/34 of 13.2.1934 F.O. 371/17878

large quantity of arms and ammunition, smuggled by the Jews in a consignment of cement from Belgium on board the ship S.S. Leopold II, was discovered at Jaffa port.<sup>78</sup> The news spread quickly throughout the country and changed the political situation.

The Arabs of all classes were indignant to learn of the quantities of arms and ammunition seized and expressed deep resentment, blaming the Government for allowing the Jews to be armed, citing previous incidents of smuggling and alleging that the Arabs had no weapons with which to defend themselves. Hatred against the Jews became evident. The Arabs took it for granted that the arms were not intended only for defensive aims but would be used against them, and that their own lives - not only their economic and political status - were in danger. The Arabic press gave prominence to the subject and in particular the Istiqlalist "al-Difa"<sup>79</sup> was strong in its attacks on Government.

Only after the government had warned the editors of the Arab press did the papers show more restraint.

Political bodies at once became active. The Executive of the Young Men issued a strongly worded statement in the press, the Husseinite Palestine Arab Party drew up a Memorandum and submitted a protest to the government. The Nashashibite Defence Party also submitted a protest. All parties as well as other political organizations held meetings where various suggestions as to the necessity of strikes, demonstrations and protests were made. The general view was that protests to government were of no avail and that all parties should combine. The strength of the general apprehension was such that the Arab parties - which only days

79. "Al Difa" 18.10.35.

78. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 17.10.35.

earlier had refused to cooperate - were induced to abandon their differences and combine in one protest.<sup>80</sup> An all-party meeting (excluding the Istiqlal who were against any contacts with the Government) was held on 21st October which decided to submit a memorandum to the Government, embodying Arab demands with respect to the smuggled arms, searches in Jewish settlements etc., and to hold a general strike on 26.10.35. The strike was completely observed with total closure of shops - including cafes and restaurants, and cessation of the main activities including traffic. The S.M.C. also struck. On the borders of Jaffa and Tel Aviv, large crowds of Arabs and Jews faced each other and a very tense situation arose which was averted by prompt and firm police action. Stones were thrown in Nablus at Samaritan houses but on the whole the day passed by peacefully.<sup>81</sup>

The all-party meeting of 21.10.35, which was held to discuss the question of arms, discussed also the submission to Government by all parties, of a memorandum embodying Arab political demands in general. The memorandum was to take the form of a final warning and was intended to be a last effort to approach the Government with Arab grievances. Accordingly, the memorandum was presented to the H.C. at an interview which he granted the heads of the parties<sup>82</sup> at their request on 25.11.1935 shortly after his return to Palestine. It included the following demands :

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80. Even this was not achieved easily as the Palestine Arab Party, considering themselves as representative of the majority, and not willing - for party reasons - to cooperate with the others, did not attend the general party meeting held on 18.10.35 at the Young Men's offices, but hurried with their protest to the Government and convened a meeting of their own, also on 22.10.35. This was resented bitterly by the representatives of the other parties, and only after intervention by the Mufti was a combined action achieved.

81. Police Summary Report No. 16/35 of 30.10.1935 F.O. 371/18957.

82. For full particulars of the interview and the full text of the memorandum see C.O. 733/278/75156.

1. The establishment of a democratic government
2. Prohibition of the transfer of land to Jews and the enactment of a law similar to the Five Feddan Law in Egypt
3. (a) The immediate cessation of Jewish immigration and the formation of a competent committee to determine the absorptive capacity of the country and to lay down a principle for immigration  
(b) Legislation to require all lawful residents to obtain and carry identity cards and  
(c) Immediate and effective investigation into illicit immigration.

During the interview, Ragheb Nashashibi - who opened on behalf of the Arabs - referred to the question of arms and said that the Jews who had been enabled by British protection to lay their hands on all the resources of the country, had no longer any confidence in the protection of the powerful British Empire and were now arming themselves. The arms imported by the Jews would one day be used either against the Arabs or the British. In the circumstances, it was the duty of every Arab to arm himself as a measure of self-defence. The Government should discover the importers of arms and punish them severely, however important might be their position. Nashashibi said that the H.C. would, no doubt, admit that the consignment of arms which was seized was not the only one, and that there must have been more of the same kind and also that it must have been arranged by a Jewish national organization as it was too big to be arranged by private individuals.

He also demanded an answer to the all-party memorandum about the smuggled arms.

The question of the arms was also referred to by Abdul Latif al Salah, the president of the National Bloc party.

The Arab leaders emphasized that unless they received a reply within a month which could be generally regarded as giving satisfaction to their requests, they would consider the matter as finished and their demands as having been rejected. They would lose all influence with their followers and would have to resign, the extremists would take control and the political situation would rapidly deteriorate.

But actually the event had already occurred which caused the traditional leadership (official) to lose influence and even "put to shame" its readiness to 'sacrifice' for the national cause as proven by its compromising attitude in order not to go to jail following the 1933 disturbances. On 20.10.1935 Sheikh Izz al Din al Kassam died courageously with 3 of his followers in an armed clash with a much superior police force.

We have already seen that the Haifa secret organization of Sheikh al Kassam ceased temporarily its activities after the discovery of its responsibility for the Nahalal murder case. In September 1934, he renewed his activities when he organized the "League of the Holy War fighters" (Usbat al Mujahidin) whose aim was to "fight for the religion and the homeland and kill British and Jews because they occupy Palestine."<sup>83</sup> He used the preacher's stand at the "Independence" Mosque in Haifa to disseminate his views. At that time he joined the branch of the Istiqlal party in Haifa and became close to some of the branch leaders.<sup>84</sup> Subhi Yasin mentions in his book<sup>85</sup> that Sheikh al Kassam approached the Mufti

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83. "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya", as reported by the History of the Hagana Op Cit p. 467 - no date was however mentioned and I could not locate the issue.

84. Darwaza Op Cit p. 120.

85. Subhi Yassin "The Great Arab Revolt in Palestine 1936-39." Op-Cit pp.14-15. See also N. Alush Op Cit. p. 102.

with a request to appoint him as a "travelling preacher" so that he would be able to "preach the revolt" in different parts of the country. The Mufti's answer, however, was "We are working to solve the problem through political means". On another occasion, he sent to the Mufti one of his followers informing him that he intended to declare a revolt in the north of the country and asked the Mufti to do likewise in the south, to which the Mufti answered, "the time is not yet ripe for such a step, and that the political endeavours would be enough to achieve the rights for the Arabs of Palestine".

During that period, the Sheikh also established contact with the Italians, who promised him their support.<sup>86</sup>

He also bought arms and trained his people and made his preparations for further actions. The discovery of the Jewish smuggled arms had perhaps influenced him to start earlier than he intended. On the 2nd November 1935, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the command of the organization met<sup>87</sup> and resolved to act, and early in November 1935, he departed together with his followers to the area of Mount Gilboa.

The C.I.D. summary of 16.11.1935 reported<sup>88</sup>, "one feature of the reaction to the discovery of smuggled arms and ammunition .... has been the suggestion to Arabs to arm themselves and the formation of gangs etc. named for want of a better name, 'Fascist Nazi'." There are indications that this has met with some response. A party of 4 armed men was found to have been collected from Haifa early in November. They were accompanied by a follower with a horse to convey a kit, and two or three minor sheikhs,

86. N. Alush. Ibid. No other source, however, confirms this.

87. N. Alush. Op Cit. P. 103.

88. C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation Summary No. 17/35 of 16.11.35 F.O. 371/18987.

after staying at the edge of the Jenin area overlooking the Jewish colonies below the Gilboan hills, they were disturbed by the arrival of a police patrol (7th Nov.) which apparently surprised them. The Sergeant (Rosenfeld of Shatta Police post) was faced unarmed and shot dead. The party hurriedly decamped leaving property (which had earlier been stolen from the Haifa railway stores) in a cave nearby. The four armed men had been given a kind of uniform and wore buff Kalpaks. Further information as to the formation of gangs and some useful correspondence has been seized. These and the growing youth and scout movements must be regarded as the most probable factors for disturbance of the peace of Palestine in the future."

The gang of Sheikh al Kassam numbered 23 persons (among them some who later became famous during the revolt, such as Farhan al Saadi, Yousef Abu Durah and Halil al Issa 'The Big Abu Ibrahim') with an unknown number of supporters.<sup>89</sup>

The police started to close in on the gang.<sup>90</sup> On 17.11.35, a police force came across the gang and killed one of its members. The gang then split into two parts. The police mobilized a specially trained force consisting of 50 British and Palestinian policement. On 20.11.35, this force, in a deep valley near Yaabed in the Jenin sub-district, surrounded the smallest part headed by Sheikh Kassam with nine of his followers. One British policeman was killed instantly. The police called on the gang to surrender, but the Sheikh answered that he would fight until death.

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89. According to Izzat Darwaza the group of Sheikh Kassam numbered 50, see Darwaza Op Cit 120. N. Alush says that the group numbered 200 with another 800 supporters. N. Alush Op Cit p.103 N. Alush, who is a Marxist, gives a very tendentious description of the organization of al Kassam emphasizing its radical revolutionary character and the fact that it consisted of "peasants and workers". Indeed it did, but all other sources, and I accept their view, emphasize the deep religious character of the organization.

90. The 2 Arab policemen whom the gang left alive when Sgt. Rosenfeld was killed, gave information and so did other paid informers of the police.

The exchange of fire continued for more than 4 hours, "the Jenin sub-district was like a field of battle", wrote "Falastin"<sup>91</sup>. Only after Sheikh Kassam and three others were killed and a fifth one was seriously wounded did the remaining five yield to the police."<sup>92</sup>

His heroic death, and more particularly the religious character which was associated with the formation and subsequent behaviour of the gang and the eulogy by all the press of its acts, greatly impressed the general Arab masses. The Arab press, finding a real hero, raised him to the ranks of the first hero/martyrs of Islam and published his pictures in their front pages.

The Arab extremist arranged for the deceased an impressive funeral which was an outstanding event. Under instructions from the M.S.C., the death of Sheikh al Kassam was announced from the minarets. Akram Zueitar the Istiqlalist leader from Nablus called on Arab leaders to participate in the funeral, but there was not much response though local leaders and representatives of the S.M.C. attended the funeral and visited the families of the deceased. Many sent wires of condolence. In a eulogy in the mosque before the funeral started, a preacher said, "Dear friend and martyr, I have heard you preach from a platform resting on a sword. Today..... you are, by God, a greater preacher than alive you ever were."<sup>93</sup>

Despite the precautions taken by the Haifa leaders, the crowd who

91. "Falastin" 21.11.1935.

92. The other part of the gang under the command of Sheikh Farhan al Saardi escaped and found refuge in the Nablus mountains.

93. The Peel Report pp. 88-99.



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considered Sheikh Kassam a martyr in the cause of religion and the country, started to stone the police, and disorders on a large scale were very near and only the appearance of armed police parties brought order.

On the 40th day following his death, Jamal al Husseini declared<sup>94</sup> "that unless the Government would change its policy", all would follow the way of Kassam.

Even if it was agreed that although practically Sheikh Izzal Din accomplished little, or even nothing, he expressed in practical form an idea, set an example to his countrymen and opened the new avenue of armed struggle. The Jews clearly understood this development. A few days after Sheikh al Kassam's death, Ben-Gurion said "the Arabs have found for the first time their Tel-Hai."<sup>95</sup>

N. Alush describes<sup>96</sup> how the traditional leadership, wishing to weaken the impact which Sheikh Izzal Din had on the Arab people, and at the same time to prove the effectiveness of the political efforts in achieving Arab national aims, interviewed the H.C. less than a week<sup>97</sup> after his death. However, following the sacrifice of al Kassam and the example set by him, the concept of the "armed struggle" became the supreme one in Arab eyes even though some of the Arab leaders ignored it and continued their political struggle. On April 1936, however, started the great Arab rebellion. The idea of the armed struggle had won.

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94. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 30.12.1935. He said the same in a gentler manner to the H.C. during the interview on 25.11.35 C.O./733/278/75156/2.
95. Tel-Hai, where Y. Trumpeldor and his friends were killed by Arabs in defence of the place in 1921, became the symbol of Jewish heroism and sacrifice. In a speech to the Labour Party, Ben Gurion Memoirs. Vol. 2 Op Cit p. 52.
96. N. Alush Op Cit. p. 104.
97. See p.354

PART IV. THE ARAB REVOLT

## Chapter 16

The Mufti and the Arab Revolt 1936 (First phase)

The history of the Arab revolt of 1936 is well known<sup>1</sup> and I do not intend to recapitulate it here again. I shall try, however, to examine the role played by the Mufti, the first among the Palestinian leaders, and therefore considered - wrongly - as the initiator of the revolt.

On 3.11.36, that is, after the first phase of the revolt was over, the H.C. General A. Wauchope who - as shown in this study - depended on the Mufti as the cornerstone of his 'Arab Policy', suggested to the Colonial Secretary to curtail and limit the power and influence of Haj Amin. He wrote the following:<sup>2</sup> "After nearly five years experience, I have reached the conclusion that the Mufti is not an outstanding personality, nor a great leader and during the last few months, if I may so describe the mind of the Mufti, wicked Dr. Jekyll<sup>3</sup> has become more and more dominant over the more moderate Mr. Hyde. He has allowed himself to be pushed into extreme courses against his better judgment. And, as I have repeated on several occasions, he is afraid of being left alone in the dark. On the other hand, like almost every Arab in Palestine, he is at heart an Arab nationalist and a strong and implacable anti-Zionist".

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1. See the Peel Report Ch.IV. The Disturbances of 1936 pp.96-112. Marlowe - Rebellion in Palestine Ch.X. The Rebellion - First phase pp.138-172. Simson Op Cit pp.183-273. Haikal Op.Cit pp.194-238. The Arab Rebellion 1936 (Thawrat Falastin 1936) published by "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" Jaffa 1936. I. Safari Op.Cit. pp.147-176 N. Sadaqa Op.Cit pp.176-190. Darwaza Op.Cit pp.121-147. Amin Said Arab revolts in the 20th Century (Thawrat al Arab fi ilkrin al Isrin) Cairo 1960 pp.115-127. Y. Ornan The Felaheen and the Arab Revolt (Hafalahin ve ha mered ha Aravi) an unpublished M.A. thesis Jerusalem 1970 and S. Yassin the Great Arab Revolt in Palestine 1936-1939 Op.Cit.
  2. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 3.11.36 C.O. 733/287/75023. My Italics.
  3. Williams noted in the margin "This should be the other way around".

In the next paragraphs, we shall examine the opinion of the H.C. that the Mufti was pushed into extreme courses against his better judgement, in other words, that developments and events proved stronger and forced the Mufti's hand.

The Palestine Government which was continuously supplied with intelligence by the C.I.D. appreciation summaries had, more or less, a clear cut picture of the tactics that the increasingly radical parties, including the Husseinis might follow. These were:- the establishment and growth of the para-military organizations, non-co-operation with the Government, followed by civil non-violent disobedience, and further establishment of terrorist groups modelled on the lines of the band organized by Sheikh Izz al Din al Kassam whose preaching combined religious fanaticism, anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism.

The Mufti's subsequent behaviour during the period April-June indicates however, that he was not then of the opinion that the Arabs should pursue an extreme anti-Government policy and he was very reluctant to use violence. In trying to prove this, I shall rely on 2 main sources: the C.I.D. appreciation summaries and Jewish Intelligence reports covering that period. I consider these and especially the C.I.D. summaries, to be the most accurate available sources of information as to what really happened in the Arab camp during that period.

We should also remember that the Mufti tried at the time - and for understandable reasons - to appear in the public eye as more militant than he really was, and the same applies more or less to Arab papers of the time and to most of what was written since by the Mufti himself and other Arabs.

Towards the last months of 1935, there existed two different opposing groupings in Palestine inter-Arab politics. One was based mainly on policy differences with the 5 coalition parties as they were called (the Palestine

Arab Party, the Reform Party, the National Defence Party, the National bloc and the Youth Congress) which presented their joint memorandum to the H.C. on 25.11.35<sup>4</sup> on the one side against the Istiqlal party with its followers, advocating the policy of non-co-operation on the other.

This "ideological difference" did not hinder the existence of a second one, based mainly on personal sympathies and family differences, in which on one side were allied the Istiqlal, the National Defence Party, the National bloc and some elements of the Youth Congress - called the "associated opposition parties"<sup>5</sup> - against the Husseinite Palestine Arab party supported quietly by the Reform party.

In each of these opposing groupings, the real opposition was between the Husseinites and the Istiqlalists. This is not to say that the traditional real hatred between the Husseinis and Nashabishis diminished in any way, and indeed it soon re-asserted itself stronger than ever.

The field of battle between the Husseinis and the Istiqlal centred around the question as to which would have the support of the Youth and students, amongst whom political feeling was becoming more and more strong.

At the outset, the Istiqlal with its more extreme views, had the better chance. Several groups of independent Young Men, led by Akram Zueitar in Nablus, Hamdi Hussein in Jaffa and Atef Nourallah in Haifa tended to co-operate with them. A. C.I.D. appreciation summary in early December 1935 remarked<sup>6</sup> ".....Party leaders (e.g. Jamal al Hussein)

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4. See supra p. 234. Another instance of co-operation between these parties to the exclusion of the Istiqlal was the discussion about the Legislative Council and the delegation to London etc.
  5. See the comments of "Falastin" on the fact that 2 public meetings were held on 2nd November 1935, one in Haifa by the "Palestine Arab Party", and one in Nablus "by what may be termed the Associated Opposition Parties" "Falastin" 3.2.35, 11.2.35. See also C.I.D. summary report No.17/35 of 16.11.35. F.O. 371/18957.
  6. C.I.D. Appreciation summary No.18/35 of 4.12.35. F.O. 371/20018.

will find themselves forced to adopt an extremist policy, not only in order to restore their prestige and prevent the leadership of the nationalist movement from passing out of their hands, but also in order to satisfy public opinion and try a new course of action, as all their previous efforts in protest, demonstrations, public meetings etc. had failed to attain their object".

The result was that each party, including even the Nashabishis, were ready to put forward extreme demands in order to out-manoeuve the others and gain the support of the young. Furthermore, the increasingly radical complexion of the Istiqlal, the Husseinis, as well as the Nashabishis was also due to the intensive political activities of younger leaders whose aim it was to replace - or at least to join - the old and established leadership.

Each party, therefore, was organising the Youth. In Haifa and the north, Rashid Haj Ibrahim for the Istiqlal was endeavouring to revive the activity of the Young Mens Moslem Association.

Fahri Nashabishi, for the National Defence Party, was behind the activities of the "Workers Organization" in Jaffa, run on the same lines as the "Black Shirts" in Italy. And the Husseinis endeavoured to organize their boy scouts groups under the title "Futawah" (strength or Youth) on lines of similar semi-military young mens groups in Egypt and other countries.

On 11.2.36, the Futawah held its first public meeting<sup>7</sup> in 'Rowdat al Maarif' Jerusalem attended by seventy persons the majority of whom were youths and students of the College. The Chairman commented that although the attendance was small, it represented the flower of Jerusalem's youth.

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7. For a full description of the meeting see "al Liwa" 12.2.36. See also Jewish Intelligence report 17.2.36, File 8/35 the H.A. and C.I.D. report No.2/36 of 18.2.36, F.O. 371/20018.

Those present, he went on to say, would become the standard bearers and leaders of this new movement. Other speakers quoted the words of Bismarck: "Our problem will not be solved by loud voices but only by iron and blood".

The Chairman spoke on the organization of the "militia" movement and recited the following oath to be taken by those joining the movement "Liberty is my right, Independence my aim (my hope - amali), Arabism my principle, Palestine my country and mine only. This I attest and God is my witness to my loyalty". Jamal al Husseini mentioned a statement made by Hitler to the effect that he started in the beginning with 6 followers only which increased to 600 and grew in time to 60 million, and he expressed his hope that their small gathering would be the nucleus which would repel the ambitions of colonization and heal the wounds of the nation. He then said that the Arab nation and their posterity were threatened with death and annihilation. He laid special emphasis on the difficulties which confronted the movement and stressed that their path was surrounded with dangers. Those who felt weak should leave their ranks, but those who were full of faith and determination and desire to work should advance and come on to the field. The struggle for which they had assembled was difficult and the road long. Everyone should ask: "Is my body which will be a foundation stone in the edifice of this nation, made of mortar or of rock?". And he ended by calling upon all those who participate in the Fuluwah's activities to do it with full faith.

The organization's uniform was khaki shorts and blue shirts and the members were going to receive full military training.

Through the Futuwah, the Palestine Arab party aimed at organizing and dominating the youth of Palestine.

The "battle" over the support of the youth was part of an all-out war.

At two of its informal meetings in (early) 1936, the Istiqlal party resolved on the following decisions:-<sup>8</sup>

1. To reject the Legislative Council.
2. To continue working against Haj Amin Hussein who was blamed for having previously ruined the Istiqlal party.
3. To endeavour to withdraw public confidence from the five coalition parties and secure the support of the public to "Youngmen Groups".
4. To hold public meetings with the object of provoking public opinion so that the masses would be prepared to participate in any movement when a suitable time should arrive;
5. To secure the participation in the Nationalist movement of the students (as in Egypt).

Another field in which the two parties competed with one another was their effort to "adopt" the memory of Izz-al Din al Kassam. With the Istiqlal holding memorial meetings (in Hafia and Jenin on 5.1.36 and Haifa on 30.1.36<sup>9</sup>) in which all the important party leaders made strong speeches praising the acts of Sheikh al Kassam and his followers whom they said "opened a door through which all Arabs should enter" and stated that the actions of the deceased had done more for the Arab cause than anything so far undertaken by the Arab leaders (referring, no doubt, to the Mufti). In Jenin, there was a procession to the cemetery of some thousand people, carrying Arab flags and wreaths which bore the inscription "Long live Palestine as an independent state for the Arabs".

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8. See C.I.D. appreciation summary No.1/36 of 22.1.36 F.O. 371/30018. *My Italics.* On the very strong differences of opinion between the Husseinis and the Istiqlalists see also Jewish Intelligence reports of 19.2.36 and 23.2.36 File 8/35 The H.A.
  9. See al Difa 6.1.36 and 31.1.36. See also C.I.D. reports No.1/36 of 22.1.36 and No.2/36 of 18.2.36. F.O. 371/20018.

The Husseinis, however, in their more practical way, established what could be termed, politico-religious societies<sup>10</sup> "walking in the path of al Kassam" such as the society "to commend virtue and condemn vice" (al Amr bil Maarroof wal Nahi an al Munkar) headed by Sheikh Sabri Abdin and Sheikh Mohammad Ali al Jaabari in Hebron, "The Sunni Party of Allah in Jerusalem" and the Darawish Society (al Darawish) in and around Haifa which were connected with each other. (The latter one, it seems, was more independent and less under Husseinis influence).

In these activities among the religious elements, the Husseinis no doubt, were greatly assisted by the Ulama Conference which met in Jerusalem, on 14th February 1936 under the Chairmanship of the Mufti<sup>11</sup> who, during his speech, "urged young men to cultivate the spirit of manhood and courage".

All these facts prove, that on the organizational level, the Husseinis succeeded in establishing and bringing into existence these different bodies and societies which were joined by the young and other enthusiastic elements who, in the case of the non-existence of the Husseinis led organizations, would have most probably joined similar organizations led and dominated by the Husseinis' opponents.

Now, the fact that these bodies existed on the organizational level, tended no doubt, to affect and influence their activities on the operational level, as actually happened later, but this was not necessarily the aim of the Husseinis leadership.

At a meeting of the Executive of the Palestine Arab Party on 28.2.36, certain members from among the young and more extreme elements of the party, raised the question and suggested following a "negative" policy, i.e. to adopt civil disobedience, demonstrations, and other extreme means.

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10. See Subhi Yassin Op Cit p.20. See also File 8/2, note of 10.3.36 and police letters of 22.1.36 and 28.1.36. The H.A. and C.I.D. summary No.3/36 of 3.3.36. F.O. 371/20018.

11. See supra p. 214

Jamal al Husseini answered,<sup>12</sup> that if the Arab demands were rejected, the Nablus Assembly which had been postponed<sup>13</sup> would be convened and asked to decide on the action to be taken. He added, however, that before anything effective could be done, the 'Futuwah' groups must be formed, the branches re-organized and activity increased. He went on to say that they had two courses before them; either negotiation or struggle. Since they had begun negotiations they should persevere with them, and if the result was unsatisfactory the other course of action would still be open to them.

A logical convincing answer, no doubt, but one which gave the leadership further time to complete their preparations whilst at the same time it was a further delay of starting the struggle. It also authorised the leadership to continue negotiating.

From the subsequent behaviour of the Mufti, it was clear that he preferred negotiations and was very reluctant to start "the Armed struggle". Not that he opposed violence because of any moral or ideological principles. His previous and subsequent history showed that he did not hesitate to use any means in pursuance of his aims. His considerations, however, were political and practical.

In the early thirties, following the 1929 disturbances and up to the issue of the Prime Minister's "Black Letter" but even later as well, the Arabs tried to "sell" Britain the idea that once she would ditch her pro-Zionist policy she could depend on permanent Arab friendship and collaboration. In the middle thirties, when the unchallengability of Britain in the Mediterranean and the Middle East was shaken and Italy and Germany made known their intentions to try and change the "status quo", the Arabs felt that they could raise their "price" for their collaboration.

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12. See C.I.D. Summary No.4/36 of 10.3.36. F.O. 371/20018.

13. See p. 237.

They considered that in case of war Britain would find herself in need of the Arab and Moslem worlds and might, as a result, change her policy in Palestine.<sup>14</sup>

When the Abyssinian War broke out, the Arab community's feelings were, on the whole, anti-Italian and in sympathy with Britain, and Arabs hoped that if Britain would embark on a war against Italy, they might attain independence in return for the assistance they would extend her.<sup>15</sup> The likelihood of an Anglo-Italian war subsided however, and these hopes had to wait.

The beginning of 1936 was not not any better in that respect and Palestine's Arab neighbours were very reluctant to support a Palestinian uprising against the British.

When the strike in Syria was in progress during February and March, Palestinian leaders were conducting talks with Syrian leaders with the aim of co-ordinating a simultaneous general strike in Palestine. But Syrian leaders objected to this Palestinian plan, apparently because they did not want to offend the British Government which they thought viewed with benevolence their struggle against the French, and explained that they were not prepared to discuss Palestinian problems until their forthcoming negotiations were successfully concluded.<sup>16</sup> The Mufti also had visited Egypt but did not succeed in getting support as the Egyptian leaders, at the beginning of March, started their own negotiations with Britain and were not

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14. See Musa Alami's paper "Present state of mind and feelings of the Arabs in Palestine" written for the H.C. in September 1933. C.O.733/257/37356/ See also speech of Hassan Bidqi Dajany the Secretary General of the "National Defence Party" in the popular meeting in Ramallah on 21st July 1935. "Falastin" 22.7.35. The speech of Jamal Husseini in the inaugurating ceremony on opening the "Palestine Arab Party" branch in Tulkarm on 16.9.35. "Al Jamiah al Arabiyya" 17.9.35. See also the long paragraph "Pan-Arab affairs" in the C.I.D. Periodical Appreciation Summary No.14/35 of 28.9.35. F.O. 371/18957.

15. Ibid.

16. See C.I.D. appreciation summaries No.4/36 of 10.3.36 and 6/36 of 24.3.36 F.O.371/20013. Even after the riots started, Syrian Nationalists decided, in a secret meeting, to sympathise openly with the Palestinians but to counsel confidentially to curtail and stop agitation in Palestine lest it would affect their own treaty negotiations in Paris. See cable from Col. Mackereth, British Consul in Damascus to F.O. 21.4.36. C.O. 733/310/75528.

keen on the existence of troubles in Palestine.

However, it would be a mistake to ignore that the Syrian and Egyptian examples, of the success of violence or the threat of violence, did influence the Palestinians.

It should be mentioned also that during that period the Husseinis were advocating and actually preparing to send a delegation to London to further there the Arab political effort.

These considerations, and Jamal Hussein's emphasis that the Arabs should persevere with the negotiations into which they had entered, showed that the answer which the Mufti sent<sup>17</sup> to Sheikh Izz al Din al Kaasam (some time in October 1935) that the time had not yet come to declare a revolt against the British, was still valid in his view in March/April 1936.

However on the night of 15th April, a number of cars on the road between Tulkarm and Nablus were held up by Arab highwaymen. After removing the valuables from the occupants, the bandits shot in cold blood three Jews who were among the passengers.

Many Arabs tried ever since to present this event as an ordinary crime with no political motivation.<sup>18</sup>

Others,<sup>19</sup> however, stated that these were no ordinary highwaymen but a group of "the Brothers of al Kassam" (Ihwan al Kassam) led by Sheikh Farhan al Saadi and motivated by ideological national motives.

The Government's view was that<sup>20</sup> "there is little doubt that the unfortunate victims were deliberately chosen because they were Jews".

On the following night, two Arabs were deliberately shot by Jews and there was no doubt in Arab minds that<sup>21</sup> this was a reprisal for the murder of the Jews on the previous night.

17. See supra p. 355

18. See "Falastin" 25.4.36. See also N. Sadaqa Op Cit 177-8. Y. Haikal Op Cit. p.198. Darwaza Op Cit p.121

19. Subhi Yassin Op Cit pp.30, 127. Halil Sakik Op Cit p.47. N. Alush Op Cit p.109.

20. Palestine Report 1937. Col. No.129, p.177.

21. See "Falastin", "al Liwa", "ad Difa" 19.4.36.

The funeral of one of the two murdered Jews in Tel-Aviv on 17.4.36 turned into a demonstration. There were cries "We don't want this Government, we want a Jewish Army" and the police were stoned. A party of Jews started to move towards Jaffa but was stopped by the police.<sup>22</sup>

The funeral was followed by an anti-Arab labour campaign in Tel-Aviv and its vicinity and during 17th and 18th April, there were several cases of assault and threats against Arabs.

On 19th April, following rumours that two Arabs had been killed in Tel-Aviv by Jews, serious riots started on a larger scale.

A Jewish summary report written on 20.4.36 at 12.00 states<sup>23</sup> that "there is not yet any clear information whether any of the Arab leaders instigated the Jaffa riots or not. It is known that the Mufti visited Jaffa on the afternoon of the 18th. Knowledgeable sources, however, report that though he showed interest in what was going on in Tel-Aviv, he neither instructed nor hinted that something (reprisals) should be done.

The outbreak of the Jaffa riots was attributed later<sup>24</sup> to a great extent to the Mufti's opponent Fahri Nashabishi. On 19.4.36, the day of the Jaffa riots, rumours started to circulate in Jerusalem that an Arab was murdered in the Jewish quarter of Mea Shearim and the tension increased. Only after the Supreme Moslem Council denied the rumours after an investigation, were the Arabs calmed.<sup>25</sup>

On the same day at 20.00 a meeting was held in Nablus which decided "to demonstrate and strike for a few days".<sup>26</sup>

At approximately the same time, a Youth meeting was held in the Arab Labourer's Club in the old city of Jerusalem which passed a similar decision.<sup>27</sup>

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22. C.I.D. Appreciation Summary No.9/36 of 6.5.36. F.O. 371/20018. See also Haikal Op Cit. p.199.

23. See information of the "Arab Bureau" 20.4.36. File 8/36. The H.A. My Italics.

24. See Y. Shimoni Op Cit. p.297.

25. See source of f.n. 23.

26. Haaretz 20.4.36.

27. See source of f.n. 23.

Shortly before however, on 19.4.36, in the evening hours, the Mufti, during an interview with the H.C.<sup>28</sup> confirmed the latter's view "that barring accident, no further rioting should occur". He also went on to express his hope that agreement would be reached concerning the delegation's composition so that the delegation would be able to proceed soon to London.

On 20th April, an Arab National Committee was formed at Nablus and resolved that a General strike should be declared throughout the country and maintained until the Arab demands, as put forward in the previous November had been conceded.<sup>29</sup>

A similar National Committee was formed in Jaffa and the formation in other places was urged as well. A deputation of notables was received by the Jaffa District Commissioner who was informed of the strike.<sup>30</sup> One forms the clear impression that the Arab leadership was caught unprepared by these developments.

The strike on 20th April in Jerusalem was resolved by the youth meeting of the previous day and not by a decision of the leadership.<sup>31</sup> Only later an appeal was published by the Palestinian "Arab Party" to all Arabs to continue the strike until "the atmosphere is clarified and calamity removed".<sup>32</sup>

The Mufti, it seems, also had not formed by then a definite line. When tribal leaders and the representatives of a big popular meeting which was held at Beersheba on 20th April, telephoned the Mufti and consulted him about any immediate action which they should take, he refrained from giving a clear answer saying that no definite policy was as yet decided upon and that every one should do what seemed best to him.<sup>33</sup>

28. Wauchope to Parkinson 19.4.36. C.O. 377/297/75156.

29. Haikal Op Cit. p.200. H. Sakik Op Cit. p.48. A. Zulitar Op Cit p.98. The Peel Report p.96

30. For the full text of the declaration of the strike see "Falastin" 21.4.36 See also Issa Fafari Op Cit. pp.10-19. Resistance Documents pp.374-75.

31. See f.n. 23.

32. See Wauchope's cable to the Colonial Secretary 20.4.36. C.O. 377/310/75528. My italics.

33. See source to f.n. 23.

The first one to form a definite extreme line was apparently the Istiqlal party. During two meetings, held on 20th April (one at noon and the second at six in the evening), the Executive of the party decided (1) to continue the strike vigorously, to enforce it by all means (including violent ones - according to Jewish appreciation reports) and to form national committees in those places in which they were not yet formed; (2) to protest to the H.C. against Jewish attacks on Arabs; and (3) to invite the Husseinis to a joint co-operation.<sup>34</sup>

Accordingly, Auni abd al Hadi and Ahmad Hilmi met the Mufti and suggested to him that the Husseinis and the Istiqlal should work together. The Mufti again did not commit himself and directed them to Jamal Hussein with whom a meeting was arranged only for the next day.

On 21.4.36, the H.C. met the 5 leaders of the Coalition parties. He impressed upon them the evil consequences of disturbances and told them that he felt that he could rely upon them to use their influence to check all forms of disorder. "They promised", he informed the Colonial Secretary, "to do what was possible to pacify the people".<sup>35</sup> The H.C. then raised the question of the composition of the London delegation and Jamal Hussein and Abdul Latif Salah expressed the view that on account of the disturbances, the departure of the delegation should be delayed.<sup>36</sup>

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34. Ad-Difa 21.4.36. See also information of the "Arab Bureau" 21.4.36. File 8/36. The H.A.
35. Wauchope to Colonial Secretary 21.4.36. C.O. 733/310/75528. For a full description of the interview in which all the Arab leaders expressed their regrets regarding the loss of lives and property and promised to help the H.C. in restoring peace - see enclosure to Wauchope's letter to Thomas 23.4.36. Ibid.
36. The 3 other party leaders and especially R. Nashabishi wanted the delegation to go. Nashabishi actually wrote on 21.4.36 a declaration to the Arab people in favour of terminating the strike "which does not help the Arab cause". However, his assistants advised him that the publication of the declaration would cause damage to the "National Defence" party and it therefore was not published. See the second source in footnote 34.

Later in the day, the H.C. saw also the Mufti who promised to do his best to prevent continuance of disorder.

On 22.4.36, the meeting was held between the Husseinis and the Istiqlalists (the Mufti and Jamal Hussein, Auni abd al Hadi, Ajaj Nuwayhid, Ahmed Hilmi, Izzat Darwaza and others). It was decided<sup>37</sup> to unite their forces for common action, to postpone the departure of the delegation to London and to form several committees for raising funds and contributions, for medical assistance, for propaganda abroad, for boycotting the Jews etc.

On the same day the five Arab leaders of the Coalition met and though Nashabishi hesitated, he joined the others in deciding<sup>38</sup> (1) to postpone the departure of the delegation to London (2) to urge the people to indefinite continuance of the strike "exhibiting patience, quietness and determination" (however the flour mills, bakeries, clinics, pharmacists and means of transport were excluded) and (3) to meet again on 25.4.36 in order to examine the general situation.

It should be emphasized that the decision about the strike was an act of formalizing an already existing situation, because at that stage the strike - under the supervision of local national committees - was already on, since 20th April at least in Nablus and Jaffa and in Haifa since 21st April. The dynamics of the strike and the disturbances continued in the towns irrespective of the resolutions adopted in the leaders' meetings.

All Jews and many Arabs as well as the Government expected serious disturbances would take place on 24th April after the Friday noon prayers and it was felt that the centre of the disturbances would be transferred to Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> The Mufti, however, gave the H.C. categorical assurances that the sermons preached on Friday would be moderate in tone and under his influence the Arab leaders organized no demonstration for that day.

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37. Ibid.

38. "Falastin" 23.4.36.

39. See Wauchope to Thomas 29.4.36. C.O. 733/297/75156/1. See also Jewish Intelligence report 21.4.36. File 8/36. The H.A.

A Jewish intelligence report describing that day states<sup>40</sup> "The number of people who attended the Friday prayers did not exceed 600 - half the average Friday attendance - only 200 of whom were villagers. Said Musa Darwish, who served as the right hand man of the Mufti during the disturbances of 1929, collected the villagers in the mosque yard before the prayers and advised them not to follow the youth of the city (the Shabab) in any incidents, not to participate in any disturbances and to return directly to their villages at the end of the religious service. They were so affected by what he told them that they left immediately after the prayers without waiting to listen to the sermon.

The sermon itself, by Sheikh Said al Hatib was a short purely religious sermon which did not mention the current situation at all. The Mufti, who attended the service accompanied by the District Office N. Baydoun, was asked several times by the crowd to say a few words but he refused. When he moved to his office in the S.M.C. the crowd ran after him and angrily demanded that he should make a speech. His assistants and bodyguards had to intervene, explaining to the crowd that as all Jewish shops were closed, there would be no use demonstrating in front of them and as for the Government, any action against it would be foolish as the Police had strict orders to shoot so they would not advise the crowd to demonstrate.

The "Falastin"<sup>41</sup> next day poured its wrath and contempt on the Jerusalem leaders and praised the striking heroic towns of Jaffa, Nablus

40. See Information of the Arab Bureau 25.4.36 File 8/36. The H.A. In this report the Hagana "Intelligence Service" started to differentiate - as had been done already much earlier in the C.I.D. reports - between Jamal, and the Palestine Arab party which were more extreme and the more moderate Mufti. The report does not produce any evidence to prove this distinction so it can be assumed that it was based on their "reading" of the situation. So when at the beginning of the report it is stated that the Husseinis tried to persuade the villagers to come to the Friday prayers, as is made very clear later in the report - is to the more extreme elements of the Husseinis but not the Mufti.

41. "Falastin" 25.4.36.

and Haifa. The fact that Friday, 24th April passed in Jerusalem peacefully was resented by the provincial leaders and confirmed their suspicions that the Jerusalem leaders were reluctant to pursue a policy of strike and riots. They therefore, hurried, on 25th April, to force on the Jerusalem leaders their extreme line.<sup>42</sup> At 11.00 the Haifa and Jaffa deputations met the Jerusalem leaders and proposed to form a Supreme National Committee which would control all national activity in Palestine. R. Nashabishi hesitated and asked that the meeting should be postponed until 4.30. By then the meeting had turned into a public meeting with the hall filled with some 300 young people and students, shouting and quoting the "Falastin" issue in which the Jerusalem leaders had been criticized for their weakness and fear. Under pressure of the young men, it was resolved to form the Supreme Committee and cease all party activities. In their presence also, and no doubt under their pressure, the Supreme Committee adopted its first decision "that the General Strike should continue until the British Government makes a fundamental change in its present policy in Palestine in a manner which will be manifested by the stoppage of Jewish immigration".

"The Committee will work with the nation, inspired by its true and genuine determination to achieve a realization of its major and fundamental demands which have been persistently made, namely: (1) complete stoppage of Jewish immigration (2) Prohibition of transfer of Arab lands to Jews and (3) the establishment of a national government responsible to a representative council....."<sup>43</sup>

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42. Jewish Intelligence Report 25.4.36 File 8/36 The H.A.

43. See "Declaration on the formation of the Supreme Committee" and text of resolutions. Issa Safari Op Cit 22-25. Resistance Documents Op Cit pp 378-79. See also Wauchope's letter to Thomas 29.4.36. C.O. 733/297/75156/1.

The Supreme Council was composed of the five party leaders to whom were added the Mufti Haj Amin (President) Auni abd al Hadi (Secretary), Ahmed Hilmi (Treasurer) and Yacoub Farraj and Alfred Rock (Christian representatives).

Both the Mufti, who did not relish the idea of coming to a direct confrontation with the H.C., and R. Nashabishi who was not happy to "serve" under his rival the Mufti, were reluctant to join the Committee<sup>44</sup> but they had no chance of withstanding the popular wave of enthusiasm for "a united national action led by a united body".

However, the Supreme Committee, even in its best moments, was never a body entirely free from party interest, as became apparent very soon. This internal division, together with the disinclination of the Mufti to sever all connections with the British Government in general, and with Wauchope in particular, counted for the fact that the resolutions of the Supreme Committee were cautiously drafted. It should be emphasized that the resolutions did not consider or mention the possibility of taking further steps other than the strike.

Indeed, it could be stated here that the Mufti and the Supreme Committee did very little leading, and in fact were dragged most of the way. Subhi Yassin<sup>45</sup> confirms this by asserting that the Supreme Committee and the parties did not play any significant role in the strike and the rebellion (la fi il Idrab au al Tawra). He emphasized that the Supreme Committee was the upshot of the strike and rebellion and not their mainspring. It was the Kassams (the followers of Sheikh Izzal Din al Kassam) and the people who nurtured the rebellion. It was the various national committees which forced the leaders who were busy in their personal quarrels to start the struggle, or rather to adopt it.

44. See I. Darwaza Op Cit. p.123

45. Subhi Yassin Op Cit. pp.31-32. See also Darwaza Op Cit. p.123 and the C.I.D. appreciation summaries especially no.11/36 of 23.6.36 F.O. 371/20018.

The differences of opinion between the members of the Supreme Committee were strong. It was Ragheb Nashabishi who appeared then in the old/new version of "moderate turned extremist", and started to initiate more radical resolutions and policy. No doubt, he was encouraged by the moderate British reaction and by the apparent reluctance of the H.C. to use force and harsher measures. The more radical elements within his party, such as Fahri Nashabishi, Hassan Sidqi Dajani (the influential leader of the Arab transport workers), and Fahri abd al Hadi, urged him to follow a more extreme line as this would be the only way to achieve the people's support. Another possible explanation<sup>46</sup> which I am disinclined to agree with, could be that R. Nashabishi hoped that if the Arabs would follow an extreme policy, the Government would be forced to intervene, break up the strike, and so put an end to this situation which he did not like, and the last, but not least important reason, was his desire to undermine the Mufti's position. Nashabishi's extreme line was designed to manoeuvre the Mufti and Dr. Khalidi, both in a sense Government employees, into a position in which they would be compelled to commit themselves openly, an event which might produce a strong Government reaction.

Already at the first meeting of the Supreme Committee, Sidqi Dajany, the Secretary General of the National Defence Party, suggested that the Arab officials in Government service should be required to resign.<sup>47</sup>

The C.I.D. appreciation summary of early May states: "Ragheb Beyand and his followers (and one or two of the National Committee in Nablus) are disposed to suggest non-cooperation and other extreme measures, probably with the object of embarrassing Dr. Khaldi and Haj Amin Husseini who hold official posts".<sup>48</sup>

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46. See Sharett Op Cit p.91

47. See Information Report of the "Arab Bureau" 25.4.36 F 8/36 The H.A.  
See also C.I.D. appreciation summary No.9/36 of 6.5.36. F.O. 371/20018.

48. Ibid.

To face this challenge, the Mufti apparently decided to appear in the public eye as a militant, or rather let Jamal Husseini and the Arab party appear militant, which was easy, as many important elements within the party were really so, whilst he himself tried to keep something of the "special relationship" which existed for so long between himself and the High Commissioner.

In a moderately worded letter<sup>49</sup> which he wrote, as Chairman of the Supreme Committee, to the H.C. and to which he attached the manifesto of the Supreme Committee, he expressed the hope that the H.C. would endeavour to change the present Palestine policy fundamentally so as to secure realization of demands stated in the attached manifesto". Conceiving that this letter might indicate the Mufti's desire to terminate the disorders, the H.C. again pressed the British Government for concessions for the Arabs<sup>50</sup> and proposed the appointment of a Royal Commission, though at that stage he opposed total stoppage of immigration.

Indeed the H.C. considered that the Mufti and Arab leaders had put themselves in a tight corner. "It is important", he wrote to the Colonial Secretary, "that the position of the Arab leaders be understood". A demand was pressed upon them from all Arab quarters in Palestine that the strike should continue until immigration had been stopped and this they foolishly endorsed in the excitement of the first few days of disorder. They thought that as Sir Herbert Samuel had stopped immigration after the disorders of 1921 I would accept this demand. They were mistaken. But leaders are at present powerless to stop the strike unless immigration is suspended as the feeling of Arabs is now so strong....."<sup>51</sup>

The fact that the leaders were not in a position to direct the people was repeatedly emphasized.

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49. Haj Amin to Wauchope 27.4.36. C.O. 733/297/75156/1. See also Wauchope's cable to the Colonial Secretary 28.4.36 C.O. 733/310/75528 Pt. I.
50. See his letter to the Colonial Secretary 29.4.36 Ibid.
51. See his cable to the Colonial Secretary 16.5.36 Ibid.

During a meeting of the H.C. with the members of the Supreme Committee on 5.5.36, Ragheb Nashabishi said that the tension in the country was great and that the attitude of the leaders was dictated by the pressure brought to bear upon them by the nation. "The people", he said<sup>52</sup> "at the present time were ruling the leaders and not the leaders ruling the people....." Before finishing, he again asked the H.C. to inform the Colonial Secretary that it was not in the hands of the leaders to stop the tension prevailing in Palestine.

During another meeting on 14.5.36, the H.C. communicated to the Committee's members in strict confidence, the Government's decision to appoint a Royal Commission. Reporting to the Colonial Secretary on their reactions, he wrote<sup>53</sup> that they all gave the same reply, saying that they were powerless - against the strength of public opinion all over the country - to call off the strike, nor would they succeed in stopping acts of lawlessness, unless he would promise them that there would be a temporary suspension of immigration until the Royal Commission had made its report.

Issa Bandedck, the Mayor of Bethlehem, during a meeting between the H.C. and Arab Mayors held on 30.5.36, said "the<sup>54</sup> situation was not in the hands of the leaders. Neither the Supreme Arab Committee nor any other leader could oppose the people without losing honour and credit. If Government took steps to stop immigration, the leaders would be able to stop disorder but they could not do this unless some concessions were made by Government."

The H.C. came to believe that the appointment of a Royal Commission might save the leaders' face and thus end the strike and arrest the growing mood of rebellion.

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52. For a full description of the meeting see enclosure II to Wauchope's letter to Thomas 13.4.36. Ibid.
53. See cable from Wauchope to Colonial Secretary 14.5.36. C.O. 733/297/75156/1.
54. For a full description of the meeting see enclosure to Wauchope's letter to the Colonial Secretary 6.6.36 C.O. 733/310/75528 Pt. III.

The C.I.D. appreciation summary indicated at the same time that the Husseinis sought secretly a way to end the strike without losing face and power.

On 4.5.36, in the evening, the Mufti informed<sup>55</sup> the H.C. that there was a possibility that the Supreme Committee might support illegal measures such as non-payment of taxes.

On the same evening the members of the Supreme Committee were summoned to the H.C. the following morning. During the meeting on 5.5.36, he warned them of the gravity of their being associated with any illegal action. He also asked them to use their influence to bring back law and order, and he advised them again to send the deputation to London.

In a written answer by Auni al Hadi, which they delivered to him during a second meeting<sup>56</sup> in the afternoon of the same day, they expressed regret for the loss of life and property and added: "As regards the responsibility for the illegal acts whether or murder, arson or other acts, the Committee cannot accept responsibility as it always adopts purely peaceful means". They went on to state that unless the H.C. would stop the immigration during the period of their discussions with the Colonial Secretary in London, they could not call off the strike or send the deputation to London. The Mufti again stated the Arabs readiness to co-operate with the British, asked for British help towards the realization of Arab aspirations, and finished by expressing his confidence that the H.C. would endeavour to help the Arabs of Palestine.

Commenting on the Arabs' demand to stop immigration, the H.C. expressed his view that if Government refrained indefinitely from granting Labour Schedule, it would show weakness and consequently he could not recommend that this course be adopted. He added however: "but I see no bridge which

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55. See Wauchope's cable to Col. Sec. 5.5.36 Ibid Pt.I

56. For the full text of the answer and description of the meeting see Ibid See also Y. Haikal Op Cit p.204.

would assist leaders to withdraw from the impossible position in which they are now placed. It seems therefore that the strike will continue and the chance of further disorders will grow".<sup>57</sup>

One gets the clear impression that the H.C. wanted the British Government to be the first to propose a measure of suspension of immigration.

On the same night, after the second meeting of the H.C. with the Supreme Committee, several National Committees demanded<sup>58</sup> by telephone the convening of a general meeting to discuss the current situation.

Also the same evening, the first Arab leader with some standing was detained by the police. Hassan Sidqi Dajani the Secretary-General of the Opposition party and President of the Arab Transport Strike Committee was detained with his Vice-President for publishing an illegal manifesto calling on Government officials to cease work and recommended the refusal to pay taxes.<sup>59</sup>

The General Conference of the Supreme Committee and the District National Committees met in Jerusalem on 7.5.36. It was opened by a most impressive speech by the Mufti<sup>60</sup> passionate and dramatic yet restrained, extremely anti-Jewish but very moderate as regards the British. He finished his speech by calling upon Arabs and Moslems everywhere in the World to support Palestine lest it would become the second Andalusia. The Conference was, however, dominated by extreme views and resolved<sup>61</sup> to continue the strike and abstain from payment of taxes as from 15th May until and unless the British Government introduced a fundamental change in its present policy manifesting itself in stoppage of Jewish immigration.

57. Ibid.

58. Information of the "Arab Bureau" 5.5.36 File 8/36. The H.A.

59. After walking out of the courtroom in which each of them was fined L.P 25 they received heroes welcome by hundred of cheering drivers.

60. For a full text of the speech see "Falastin" 9.5.36. See also Resistance Documents Op Cit pp.388-393.

61. "al-Liwa" 8.5.36. N. Sadaqa Op Cit p.130. Y. Haikal Op Cit p.205.

This decision met with general approval in the press and in the towns, and well-attended meetings of villagers in its support, were held in the Nablus and Jerusalem districts.<sup>62</sup>

The C.I.D. appreciation summary which reported on the conference stated:<sup>63</sup>  
 "There is also little doubt that the adoption of the proposal for non-payment of taxes was largely due to the activities of Ragheb Bey Nashabishi and his supporters"..... while "certain of the leaders particularly the Mufti and Jamal al Husseini were against the proposal and only supported it because it was clear that opposition was useless".

On 14.5.36, the H.C., as mentioned above, in strict confidence communicated to the members of the Supreme Council the Government's decision to appoint a Royal Commission with wide powers which would come to Palestine if the Arabs would end the strike.

The Mufti asked that the Supreme Committee be given time to study the H.C.'s statement carefully, and it was agreed that the answer would be given some hours later.

The Committee then met in the house of Auni abd al Hadi.

A Jewish Intelligence Report describing the meeting states<sup>64</sup> that Ahmed Hilmi and Alfred Rock suggested acceptance of the H.C.'s proposal as the best way to end the strike which had caused heavy damage to Arab economy in Palestine. Dr. Khalidi, however, (tired no doubt of Nashabishi's attacks on him and wishing to prove his 'nationalism') opposed it saying that the youth, who were all extreme, would not accept it and would turn the people against the Committee. The Mufti and Jamal Husseini agreed with Dr. Khalidi. Ragheb Nashabishi refrained from expressing his view.

62. "Falastin" 8.5.36, "al-Liwa" 9.5.36.

63. C.I.D. appreciation summary No.10/36 of 21.5.36. F.O. 371/20018.

64. Information of the Arab Bureau 15.5.36 File 8/36. The H.A. See also "al-Liwa" 15.5.36. Arab papers just reported that the meeting had taken place. See also C.P. 198 (36) May 1936.

The last to speak was Auni abd al Hadi who spoke at length against the H.C.'s proposal saying that this was their last chance to force the British and get from them real concessions as it would be impossible to organize once more Arab public opinion and solidarity as it then existed. It was Auni's speech which decided the issue.

At 4.30 in the afternoon, the Supreme Committee met the H.C. again and informed him "that the Arab people will not agree to end the strike on the basis of this proposal" (Royal Commission) "as the policy of the Arab people at present is to continue the strike until the British Government introduces a fundamental change in its present policy which will manifest itself in stoppage of Jewish immigration". The H.C. then repeated his proposal that an Arab delegation should go to London but this was rejected by the Mufti. The H.C. got angry and spoke very sharply saying that he was very sorry that he had no alternative but to use force. Until then he had been lenient but from then on he would use harsh and extreme measures to repress the riots by force.

After leaving the H.C., the Committee met again to discuss the question of sending a delegation to London. R. Nashabishi opposed it strongly, and the issue was closed.

Reporting to the Colonial Secretary on these meetings and informing him of the negative reply to their demands that immigration be stopped until after the Royal Commission had reported, the H.C. wrote<sup>65</sup>: "But in view of the gravity of the fact that, unless some limitation of immigration be made, I see no prospect at present of the strike ending or of any lessening of lawless acts, I shall be glad to hear if you consider my reply to the Arab leaders embodies your views or if you consider advisable any modification of my reply". One feels as if the H.C. requested such a modification.<sup>66</sup>

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65. Ibid.

66. To those not acquainted with Wauchope's style, this may seem a strange way to request, but that was as far as the proud Wauchope could bring himself to ask for a reversal of his own previous decision.

On 15.5.36, the Arab Press published<sup>67</sup> the appeal of the Supreme Committee against payment of taxes. It asked the people, however, to resort to peaceful methods and to avoid violence.

The general strike, however, developed in the meantime into a general rebellion all over the country with arson attacks on communications, individual murders etc.

The H.C. believed<sup>68</sup> that the revolt was directed by leaders whom he described as "the real, tough, more or less secret instigators of violence and intimidation".

He did not include in this category the members of the Supreme Committee who "have publicly dissociated themselves from violent methods", and among these members he considered the Mufti to be one of the moderates. Yet, for all his belief in the moderating influence of the Mufti, ridden by the need to face both ways, he foresaw that the time might come when he would have to detain or deport the members of the Arab Higher Committee and the Mufti.<sup>69</sup> As a precautionary measure, the Colonial Secretary authorised him to do it if need should arise.<sup>70</sup> He was, however, most reluctant to do that, considering that the disadvantages outweighed the 'gains', and in a meeting of the Advisory Council<sup>71</sup> he explained again his reasons for abstaining from deposing the Mufti and the members of the Supreme Committee: "It is important that there should be responsible leaders with whom I can deal and the Council of Ten" (another name for the Supreme Committee) "have publicly dissociated themselves from violent methods". In this the H.C. was following the advice of the very experienced British Consul in Damascus

67. "al-Liwa" 15.5.36.

68. See his statement made in Executive Council in the presence of the District Commissioner, Inspector of Police etc. 21.5.36. C.O. 377/311/75528/6.

69. Wauchope to Thomas 18.5.36. C.O. 733/311/75528.

70. Thomas to Wauchope 20.5.36. Ibid.

71. See Minutes of meeting held on 21.5.36. Ibid.

Col. Mackereth who, in comparing the situation in Syria and Palestine stated<sup>72</sup> that "the greatest blunder which undoubtedly prolonged and embittered the Syrian conflict was the exile administratively of the nationalist leaders."

By then, however, it seems that the H.C. knew of the role played by the Supreme Committee, or at least by some of its members, in spreading the strike.<sup>73</sup> When it was suggested in the Advisory Council that the Felaheen were acting without provocation by any leaders, the H.C. replied "that he was convinced of the contrary". He still believed however, as shown by future pronouncements that the Committee had a moderating influence on the extreme elements,

On 23rd May, 61 Arab leaders, among them Fahri Nashabishi, were arrested in various parts of the country and in most cases were compelled to reside under police supervision elsewhere than their home towns. In June, some of the more prominent leaders including Auni abd al Hadi, were interned in a 'concentration camp' at Sarafand.<sup>74</sup> The Mufti, however, and his close supporters remained untouched. R. Nashabishi and several Istiqlalists<sup>75</sup> circulated rumours that the arrests and detentions were carried out by the authorities with the knowledge of the Mufti. More than that, a story went around that in a private meeting which the Mufti had had with the H.C. on or about 21st May, the Mufti promised to bring the strike to an end. Public opinion then turned against the Mufti and his close

72. Mackereth to Wauchope 21.4.36. C.O. 733/310/75528.
73. Earlier, he himself allowed the members of the Supreme Committee to tour the northern part of the country. The Northern District Commissioner attributed the deterioration of the situation in Haifa and the north to the propaganda made during that tour, which started on 12th May. See The Peel Report p.95. See also Simson Op-Cit pp.195-6. Assaf Op-Cit pp.135-6.
74. See The Peel Report p.98.
75. Jewish Intelligence report 31.5.36 File 38/8. The H.A. The story as such is not mentioned in the opposition Arab papers, however, their criticism of the Mufti towards the end of May was stronger than usual. See "Falastin" "Mir'at al sharq". As for the alleged meeting on 21st May it is not mentioned in any of the Government official papers which I examined.

supporters. Faiz Haddad, the head of the local National Committee in Jerusalem, during a meeting on 25.5.36(?), proposed a vote of non-confidence in the Mufti and Dr. Khalidi and was supported by the majority of the Committee. Only after Jamil Hussein, who headed the minority, hurried and brought to the meeting Auni abd al Hadi who spoke for a long time, explaining the damage which would be caused by such a vote, and requesting them to withdraw it was the proposal withdrawn and it was further agreed to keep it all secret. However, the National Committees of Nablus and Gaza learned of it and they also wrote to the Supreme Committee expressing non-confidence in the Mufti and the Husseinis.<sup>76</sup>

Sharett records that during a meeting which he had with Musa Alami on 21.6.36,<sup>77</sup> the latter asked him why the Jews had attacked the Mufti personally, when he in fact was less extreme than others. M. Alami added that because of these attacks the Government had taken upon itself to protect the Mufti thus damaging his standing in the public view. Alami then stated his sincere belief that the Mufti was against the use of violence saying that the Mufti had changed and understood more, and become more tolerant than he had been a few years previously. The Mufti's intention added Alami, was to employ against the Jews only the weapon of a non-violent general strike to be followed by an economic boycott but not to use violent means as they would not bring positive results, besides the fact that the Government was much stronger in the use of such means and would repress the Arabs by force.

The fact that at the time Sharett did not argue this fact of the comparative moderation of the Mufti and his reluctance to use violence -

76. Ibid.

77. See Sharett Op Cit pp.177-78. Alami also put the whole blame for the deplorable situation in Palestine on the inconsistent policy of the H.C. See also Furlonge Op Cit p.110 and Ben-Gurion Op Cit pp.90-106.

as he well did some six or seven weeks later<sup>78</sup> - does not necessarily prove, but at least it indicates, that at that time he indeed could not argue it. He continually asked, however, for the Mufti's deportation.

On 7th August 1936, the H.C. in a letter to the Colonial Secretary wrote the following:<sup>79</sup> ".....the Jews, you know, want me to banish the Mufti. You know what far reaching effects this would have within and without Palestine. I imagine the closing of all Mosques would be certain and I doubt if we should not find our difficulties increased rather than lessened by his removal.

I came to Palestine full of rather vague ideas how to "clip the Mufti's wings" but Drayton<sup>80</sup> and Trusted<sup>80</sup> have shown me how great are the legal difficulties apart from the political drawbacks, and during the last four years the Mufti has been more a help than a hindrance to Government. Even now, I know he is not so extreme as his enemies say and though rather a foxy gentleman, he is more genuine than a man like Ragheb Bey and more to be relied on".

At this stage, we ought to examine the role of the religious aspect in the revolt.

In pursuance of his line to contain the disturbances, the Mufti did not raise the religious cry and for this, the H.C., who as we saw, was very sensitive on this aspect since the 1933 autumn riots, was very grateful.

"I am informed", the H.C. wrote<sup>81</sup> on 23rd May 1936, "and I believe that this Committee" (the Supreme Committee) "has on several occasions had a moderating influence on more extreme leaders. It is certain that the Mufti has on each Friday refrained from exciting crowds who come to the Mosque.

78. In his interview with the H.C. on 15.8.36. Sharett Op Cit pp. 262 -63.

79. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore. C.O. 733/297/75756.

80. Attorney-General in the Government of Palestine.

81. Wauchope to Parkinson 23.5.36. C.O. 733/310/75528.

It is largely due to his influence that the religious cry has not yet been raised and all serious disturbances avoided on Friday".

And again in his report about the interview which he granted to the Chief Ulama of Palestine on 1.6.36<sup>82</sup> the H.C. commented<sup>83</sup> "It is a remarkable fact that the religious cry has not been raised during the last six weeks, that the Friday sermons have been far more moderate than I could have hoped for during a period when the feelings of the people are so deeply stirred and for this the Mufti is mainly responsible".

The significance of this should be examined in view of a background which was described in the following manner:<sup>84</sup>

"The Religious (Moslem) Aspect - Jihad or Holy War"

It has long been the considered opinion of students of the Palestine problem that real and prolonged disorder can only be stimulated and protracted through the medium of religion. The events of November last, when the late Sheikh Izzal Din al Kassam took to arms and the field, were given the cloak of religion; his action has been glorified by certain sections, and he and his followers regarded as 'martyrs'. Further similar politico-religious bands, between that time and April this year (when more serious incidents occurred) only failed, for the want of a courageous leader.

There are now demands that Haj Amin Husseini, President of the Moslem Supreme Council should declare a Holy War (Jihad)."

In a cable dated 17.6.36, the H.C. commented on the statement which the Colonial Secretary was going to make during the Parliamentary debate of 19th June and proposed the following:<sup>85</sup>

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- 82. For the full minutes of the interview see enclosure to the H.C.'s letter of 6.6.36 Ibid.
  - 83. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 7.6.36. C.O. 733/297/75756.
  - 84. See para. 5 in the C.I.D. Appreciation Summary No.11/36 of 23.6.36 F.O. 371/20018.
  - 85. C.O. 733/297/75156.

"I shall be greatly obliged if during the debate on 19th June you could state that the Supreme Moslem Council has ordered no strike and Sharia Courts and Waqf Administration are open and working. This statement will have an excellent effect on the civil service if made by you".

Accordingly, Ormsby-Gore included the following passage in his speech:<sup>86</sup>

"I should also mention that the Supreme Moslem Council have decided not to take part in the strike, the Sharia Courts are open and the Waqf Administration is working. I am glad to say that there has been no disorder or complaints regarding anything in connection with the services at Mosques which have carried on their religious duties in a normal manner".

Reporting on the reactions in Palestine to the speech, the H.C. informed the Colonial Secretary:<sup>87</sup>

"Statements in your speech were misinterpreted as challenges (1) that Supreme Moslem Council had decided not to take part in the strike and (2) that religious duties were proceeding in a normal manner.....

As regards (1), I stated in my private and personal telegram of June 17th that Supreme Moslem Council had not ordered a strike. I should have emphasized the difference between those words and a statement made that the Council had decided not to declare a strike. The Mufti had refrained from calling a meeting so that no declaration should be made. His opponents pretended to read your remarks as a challenge and pressure was brought to bear to such an extent by those who constantly criticize the Mufti for not taking any steps against Government that he issued a statement that Supreme Moslem Council is in full sympathy with strike. This statement is being forwarded to you. The effect of (2) has been to cause an attempt to be made to import a religious issue into the conflict but so far this has met with very little result....."

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86. Hansard, Commons 5th Series Vol.CCCXIII Cols. 1313-24.

87. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 1.7.36 C.O. 733/297/75156.

Indeed, as soon as the Colonial Secretary's statement was published in full in Palestine, the Supreme Moslem Council issued a statement<sup>88</sup> to the effect that it was in full sympathy with the strike.

At the same time the Mufti, as President of the S.M.C. wrote a short memorandum to the H.C. which he published in the Press<sup>89</sup> as well. In the memorandum<sup>90</sup> the Mufti stated that the continuation of the National Home Policy involved great danger to the Moslem Holy Places including the "al Aqsa" and he went on to say that "the Council" (the S.M.C.) "believe that the principal motive which moved the Jews to think of making Palestine a National Home for themselves, was a religious one. That being the case the Zionist cause is fundamentally and principally a religious cause.....and which aims at the reconstruction of the Jewish Temple of King Solomon in the place of the Holy Masjed al Aqsa....."

It was also noted<sup>91</sup> that from the beginning of July these same themes were preached in the Mosques.

In his answer to the Mufti's memorandum, Hathorn Hall the Chief Secretary writing on behalf of the H.C. wrote:<sup>92</sup>

"It now appears from your present letter that your Eminence is raising a fourth issue. The Secretary of State cannot fail to conclude from your letter, as it now stands, that the principal Moslem religious authority in Palestine is making an appeal to religious feelings throughout the Moslem world in order to achieve certain political aims in Palestine."

The Chief Secretary went on to say that "the High Commissioner cannot agree with your statement that the Zionist case is fundamentally and principally a religious case..... but he is gravely concerned to contradict

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88. "Declaration and clarification" by the S.M.C. 21.6.36 'al-Liwa' 22.6.36.

89. "Falastin" 26.6.36.

90. For full text of the memorandum dated 22.6.36 see C.O. 733/310/75528.

91. See description of Air Vice-Marshal Pevis 15.10.36. C.O. 733/317/75528/74. See also C.I.D. report no.12/36 of 12.7.36. F.O. 371/20018.

92. See letter dated 27.6.36. C.O. 733/310/75528.

your assertion that the Moslem Holy Places are in danger...." and he finished ".....Remembering your correct attitude up to the present in reprobating acts of violence, he would remind you of the responsibility which rests upon you as the Head of the Moslem Community in Palestine to declare publicly and emphatically that you are on the side of law and order".

In his answer<sup>93</sup> to the H.C., the Mufti, in a friendly letter in which he tried perhaps to retain or to revive something of their old "special relation" assured the H.C. that it was not his intention to raise a fourth issue, adding however that the religious aspect of the Palestine case was there all the time, and that he did not intend to make a new appeal to religious feelings throughout the Moslem World in order to achieve certain political aims in Palestine. He then wrote: "As regards myself, I am still of the same attitude to which your Excellency refers in your letter, in that I am actuated by a keen and distinct desire to follow lawful and peaceful means in asserting the nation's rights".

In a letter<sup>94</sup> which this time he signed himself in order perhaps to show his approval, the H.C. expressed his satisfaction with the Mufti's assurances adding that the Mufti should make clear the goodness of his intention not only to the H.C. "but to make it clear to everyone that you wish all violence to end and that you are on the side of law and order".

The Jewish Chief Rabbinate<sup>95</sup> published a statement, asking the H.C. to bring it to the knowledge of the British Government, in which it said that the revival of this "old and new libel" of the organizers of riots against the Jews purporting to attribute to the Jews a wish to invade the Holy places of the Moslems, could only prove "an intent so malicious and mischievous" that the Chief Rabbinate found it unnecessary to react to it.

93. Haj Amin to Wauchope 1.7.36. Ibid.

94. Wauchope to Haj Amin 6.7.36. Ibid.

95. The Chief Rabbinate to Wauchope 8.7.36. Ibid. See also "Haaretz" 8.7.36.

The religious issue was not raised and the agitation which followed these publications subsided.

The Royal Commission, in enumerating "the underlying causes" of the 1936 riots did not consider the religious factor as one of them.<sup>96</sup>

This is not to say however, that as the riots progressed, Islamic religious motives, the idea of Jihad - (a holy war against the unbelievers (kufar)) - and other religious aspects were not emphasized by the rebels.<sup>97</sup>

It seems, however, that around late July/early August the Mufti started to emerge as the most extreme among the Arab leaders. J. Marlowe states:<sup>98</sup> "the Rebellion was directed only by the Mufti and his satellites". On close examination, however, it is found that as far as the first two to three months of the rebellion are concerned, the facts do not match this statement.

The first stage of the revolt, following the radical resolutions to intensify the strike and to call for civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes, was - as shown above - mainly initiated by the Nashabishis supported by the Youngmen groups and the Istiqlalists, with the Mufti and his supporters following unenthusiastically in order not to remain behind and lose all their influence and power. Indeed, the first stage was described as the revolt of the opposition (Thawrat al Muaridin).<sup>99</sup>

The first armed bands were organized by the Nashabishis and the first "Commander General" of the revolt was Fahri abd al Hadi, an opposition man.<sup>100</sup>

96. The Peel Commission pp. 106-112. Most students of Palestine affairs agree with that conclusion. See however, for comparison Marlowe Op Cit p.138 and especially Marlowe Rebellion Op Cit pp.80-81.
97. See E Danin Documents and Figures - from the Archives of the Arab bands during the riots 1936-39 (Teudot to Demuiot) Tel Aviv 1940 Op Cit p.28. See also Y. Ornan Op Cit p.25.
98. J. Marlowe Op Cit p.157.
99. Y. Shimoni Op Cit p.297. See also Assaf. Arab Movement Op Cit note p.41. For the fact that the Mufti had no influence at the time on the rebels - see Intelligence Report of 31.5.36. File 8/38 The H.A.
100. Ibid. See also Y. Ornan Op Cit p.34.

When Fawzi Kawokji reached Palestine, he stayed for the first few days with the Rasheids, a well known opposition family in the Jenin sub-district. Most of the Kawokji's captains were non-Palestinian Arabs, but the Palestinians among them belonged to the opposition.<sup>101</sup> Abd al Kader al Husseini,<sup>102</sup> who commanded an armed band in the Jerusalem area was ignored by him.

Marlowe's statement, however, is certainly true as far as the latter period of the rebellion, following the change in the Mufti's position, is concerned.

At this stage, it would be useful to examine what the considerations of the Mufti probably were and what caused him to harden his line in framing his line of policy. Sincere nationalist that he was, he felt like all other Arabs and especially the educated classes that the fate of the Palestinian Arabs was definitely in the balance and that unless the Government would change its policy and grant them some concessions they were doomed to become a minority and to be eventually expelled from the country. He saw that during five years, Jewish population had doubled and had reached approximately 400,000 and that with the same rate of increase the Arabs would be submerged in the next few years. He was not prepared to believe that a Royal Commission would save them from this fate and, based on his experience of previous commissions, he was by no means confident that the recommendations of even a Royal Commission - if in favour of the Arabs -

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101. Ibid. Indeed in his first manifesto he declared himself as the Commander General of the revolt and did not mention the Mufti or the Supreme Committee at all, and from the phraseology of the manifesto, it is clear that it was done on purpose and not because of security reasons. See Palestine Resistance Documents Op Cit pp. 433-436.
102. Musa Kazim's son. During the first months of Israel's War of Independence, he commanded Arab forces in the Jerusalem area and was killed in the fighting at al Qastal.

would be likely to be carried out. He suggested that if the Government would carry out the recommendations of previous commissions such as the Shaw Commission and the Reports of Hope-Simpson and French, no further enquiry was needed. He was, of course anxious that the Royal Commission would see the country in its disturbed state and that its members might be impressed with the solidarity and bitterness of Arab feeling.

The calling off, therefore, of the strike as a condition precedent to the appointment of a Royal Commission was unacceptable to him, much more so as he knew well enough that it would be most difficult to recapture again the same enthusiasm. He argued that if conditions would improve before the Royal Commission arrived, it would be like taking away from the Arabs what they regarded as the only means by which any concession might be obtained. He also asserted, with a considerable amount of truth, that he was pledged to persevere in the policy of non-co-operation until immigration was stopped even temporarily. He was convinced that any capitulation on his part would mean that any control and influence which he still exercised would be lost and that he would be swept aside by more extreme elements. He found it considerably difficult to control many of his supporters and he knew well enough that he succeeded in retaining certain measure of control by accepting some of the less violent demands of his followers. These, however, were continuously pressing to adopt more active measures.

There were another two more personal considerations. The first was fear for his life. The Mufti was simply afraid that if he would advocate moderate measures, he would be killed.<sup>103</sup> The second one concerned his

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103. "He even borrowed.....a bullet-proof jacket to protect himself against these shabab and young toughs". See H.C.'s letter to Parkinson 22.10.36. C.O. 733/297/75156. See also H.C.'s cable to the Col. Sec. 19.9.36 Ibid and H.C.'s cable to the Col. Sec. 31.5.37 C.O. 733/311/75528 and letter from Iraqi Consul in Palestine to the Iraqi Foreign Ministry 28.1.37 - Iraqi Consulate file 3780 I.S.A.

relations with Wauchope,, Ever since the outbreak of the riots, he H.C. had asked him to declare publicly and in unmistakable terms his personal opposition to the acts of violence. This, for all the reasons mentioned above, he refused to do. His continued refusal brought to an end this "special relationship" which existed between him and the H.C. and on which he could count to "carry him over" once the strike and disturbances would have come to an end. He could be sure that whatever the outcome would be, as far as he personally was concerned, the authorities this time, would fulfil their old intention of curtailing his power, removing him from his offices and even punishing him.

However, by taking over the rebellion and by means of terror, intimidation and fear he could hope to make himself irreplaceable in the sense that his removal would make any political discussion with the Arabs impossible. So the authorities would have to think twice before taking any steps against him.

This consideration, however, was valid only as long as the Government was ready to negotiate, to compromise and to have this political discussion with the Arabs.

In fact, this turned out to be exactly the Government's policy.

Furthermore, neither the Jewish reaction nor the British one invited moderation on the Arab side. The Jewish policy based on the principle of self-restraint ("havlaga" in Hebrew) - that is, not engaging in reprisals and retaliation - was interpreted by the Arabs as weakness and fear. As far as the authorities, no really serious effort was made to cope with the

strike and with the rioting<sup>104</sup> so that the simple-minded people were again - as in 1929 - led to believe that "the Government is with us". (al Dawla Maa'ma).

Indeed, the fact that quite a considerable section of British officialdom in Palestine led by the Chief Justice Sir H. MacDonnell,<sup>105</sup>

104. An unofficial Committee of the U.S.A. Senate reported: "We received many complaints.....that the terror is not due to the inability but to the unwillingness of the British to cope with it effectively". See report of Senator Copeland in "the Crisis in Palestine". Report of Hers. Unofficial Senatorial Commission, New York 1936 p.18. *Writer's italics.*  
See also despatch by Air Vice Marshall R.E.C. Peirse on the disturbances, dated 15.10.36 W.O. 32/4177 in which he indicated that during a crucial phase in the rebellion which started in the middle of May 1936, there were difficulties in conducting military operations because of the civil administration's reluctance to use force. See also Simson Op Cit Ch. XII-XV "Rebellion and extreme moderation" pp. 183-251.

The H.C. explained his lack of action by his desire that the strike might die naturally. He then wrote "I am reluctant to take steps the effect of which would be to increase isolated attacks on Jews, arson, bomb throwing etc. which are inherently more difficult to stop". (see his letter to the Col. Sec. 16.5.36 C.O. 733/297/75156). When the riots became more serious, he rejected repression by force because it would entail the alienation, possibly permanently, of all moderate elements in the Arab community and it also would cause unrest in Transjordan and fierce reactions in other Arab countries and the Moslem World and even raise the religious cry of Moslems against Christians (see his cable 3.6.36 Ibid).

His assumption that it was desirable that the crisis should subside on its own was debatable and indeed the military authorities in Palestine opposed it strongly. However, his conciliatory attitude towards the Arabs was supported by the Cabinet until early September.

105. For the full story, concerning the differences of opinion and confrontation between the H.C. and the Chief Justices, the ruling of the latter in the case of the demolitions in Jaffa and the way it was used by Arab propaganda, and of his resignation see file "Position of the Chief Justice" C.O 733/75528/24.

and apparently Hathorn Hall<sup>106</sup> the Chief Secretary, Keith Roach<sup>107</sup>, the Northern District Commissioner and others, as well as the majority of the non-official British community in Palestine,<sup>108</sup> favoured the Arab cause in differing degrees.

These, I think were the considerations which brought the Mufti to follow a more extreme policy.<sup>109</sup>

106. Jewish intelligence reports contain information, though it is not stated categorically, about meetings between Hathorn Hall and other high ranking officials with Arab leaders, once in the house of Musa Alami and once in the house of G. Antonius. See reports of 30.6.36 and 12.7.36 File 8/38 The H.A.

E. Main, the author of "Palestine at the Crossroads", was at the time the special correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" in Palestine. On 18.1.37, he cabled, "that the Arabs were openly boasting how Hathorn Hall advised them to conduct themselves during the disturbances". See the cable and Hathorn Hall's strong denial in his letter to Parkinson of 21.1.37 C.O. 733/316/75528/61.

107. The decidedly pro-Arab views of Keith Roach who, in 1928 drew the Mufti's attention to the famous screen on the Wailing Wall pavement, are clearly shown in his memoranda to the Col. Sec. of 28.7.36 and 5.8.36 which he also sent to Parkinson in the Colonial Office on 30.9.36 together with a third memorandum. These include the following sentences: "Not only the Arabs but many other people" (he apparently was one of them) "consider that Arab interests were bartered for T.N.T." (discovered by Weizmann) and "The Prime Minister's letter to Dr. Weizmann.....is a very dangerous document" etc. etc.
108. For these views see record of interview between the H.C. and Mr. A.P.S. Clarke the Manager of Barclays Bank, and Archdeacon W.H. Stewart representing the non-official British community in Palestine on 17.6.36, C.O. 733/311/75528/8.
109. Another factor which could be mentioned in this respect is the financial help which the Arab revolt received from the Italians. I purposely minimize it as I am basically inclined to accept the Arab argument as presented by the Supreme Committee in a cable to the P.M.C. in Geneva protesting against the "propaganda resulting in doubting strength of Arab national spirit and claiming that the movement is instigated by foreign funds, which matter shows lack of appreciation of Arab spirit which bears greatest sacrifice and deprivation for freedom and independence". 12.8.37. C.O. 733/341/75528/26 and "Falastin" 13.8.37. See also interview between Musa Alami and Sharett 21.6.37. Sharett Op Cit p.177.

For Italian activities in Palestine affairs see file "Activities of the Italian Consul General - 1936 C.O. 733/321/75589. See also the Paper written by Rendell "Italian Propaganda in Palestine and the Middle East" 23.11.36, F.O. 371/20018. See also file "Italian propaganda", C.O. 733/299/75180 and file "Disturbances, Alleged Italian Activities C.O. 733/341/75528/38. G. Sheffer Op Cit pp. 237-245. Darwaza Op Cit pp. 175-76.

As far as can be judged, however, the change did not take place all at once and was rather a slow gradual process. There was, however, one event which served perhaps as the turning point.

The reference in the Secretary of State's statement during the Parliamentary debate on 19th June about the non-participation of the Supreme Moslem Council in the strike, was the cause of the circulation of various rumours as to the nationalist bona fida of the Mufti who, in order to deny them, issued his statement in reply to the Colonial Secretary affirming that the Supreme Moslem Council was associated with the national demands and the strike.

Following this statement, the Friday sermons in the mosques started, during July, to become inflammatory while during April/June and following the promise which the Mufti gave to the H.C. in April, the Friday sermons were generally religious in tone and intended not to arouse excitement.<sup>110</sup>

And then on 5th August, the members of the Supreme Committee travelled to Amman at the invitation of the Amir Abdallah who also invited many other known moderates. The C.I.D. appreciation summary which described the meeting stated:<sup>111</sup>"It became evident to the Mufti that some intriguing was going on behind his back to ensure that many persons would be present who would favour Ragheb Bey Nashabishi rather than himself and it was therefore in a bad mood that Haj Amin attended and listened to the discussions".

The Amir explained that if an end would be put to the strike and to acts of violence, he would be able to approach the Government and submit to it the Supreme Committee's demands which were namely 1) the stoppage of Jewish immigration; 2) the release of political prisoners; 3) the pardon of prisoners convicted of offences arising from the disorders; and 4) the remission of the collective fines imposed on the villages. The Mufti then

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110. See the H.C.'s comments on the despatch of Air Vice-Marshal Peirse 13.11.36. C.O. 377/317/75528/74.

111. C.I.D. Appreciation Summary No.14/36 of 18.8.36. F.O. 371/20018.

requested the Amir to produce written guarantees from the Government which the Amir was certainly unable to produce. The C.I.D. summary continued its description: "The delegates, therefore, left the conference unsatisfied, probably the most annoyed being Haj Amin Husseini who formed the conviction that some solution to the present situation had been considered in which he was not himself the prime mover and which, if successful, would undoubtedly have affected his prestige as the most important Arab personality in the country".

The result of this, the report continued, was an immediate outbreak of disorders throughout the country. Determined efforts were made to bring about a general strike in Haifa. The campaign of terrorism was intensified, and the action of armed bands in the hills became stimulated particularly in the Nablus District and elsewhere. More determined Husseini pressure to adhere to extreme national demands became apparent and discussions were held about boycotting the Royal Commission when it arrived. The breach between the Husseinis and the Nashabishis which was relatively bridged during the disorders began to widen again.<sup>112</sup>

Accordingly, the H.C.'s "reading" of the Mufti started about that period to change too. Commenting on a report submitted by Air Vice Marshal Peirse to the Secretary for Air,<sup>113</sup> Wauchope wrote to Ormsby-Gore:<sup>114</sup> "the hatred between the Mufti and Ragheb Bey Nashabishi has always been extreme. Until June and July it was veiled since until then Ragheb Bey had leaned to the extreme side to as great if not a greater extent than the Mufti. But at

112. Ibid.

113. Despatch by Air Vice Marshall R.E.C. Peirse, D.S.O. A.F.C. on Disturbances in Palestine 19th April to 14th September 1936. 15.10.36 C.O. 733/75528/74. On p.94 of his despatch, Peirse wrote: "I was of the opinion that the Mufti was the real motive force behind the strike and early in August I renewed my recommendations that he should be deported".

114. 13.11.36 Ibid.

about the time in question, Ragheb Bey had come to realize the hopelessness and futility of the struggle and like some of the Arab Mayors, he had become much more moderate. The Mufti, pressed by evil counsellors,<sup>115</sup> threatened by his extreme followers and even hopeful of gaining concessions, became more extreme and more reluctant to give in without some tangible success.

Jewish leaders, too, who during May had to admit unwillingly<sup>116</sup> to the H.C. that the Mufti was comparatively a moderate, and that the Youth organizations preached and followed a more extreme line of policy, maintained in early August<sup>117</sup> that the "abnormality" of the Mufti's moderation was rectified and he had reversed to what was to them his natural traditional position of chief agitator. Indeed Sharett stated most emphatically that the Mufti personally was directly responsible for the terrorist activities. The H.C., however, assumed that the Mufti was not a hero but a weak man physically and morally, who was afraid for his life, having received some threatening letters, that he did not pursue a way of his own but was always afraid of the Istiqlalists who dominated the situation and were more extreme than the Mufti.

During that period, the strike had been maintained steadily throughout the country. On the 100th day of the strike a proclamation<sup>118</sup> was issued by the Supreme Committee urging the nation to continue its support of the movement. During early August and in accordance with the hardening of the Mufti's position, very determined efforts were made to force Arab labourers

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115. Strangely enough it seems that Wauchope included among these - G. Antonius of whom he later wrote "Antonius, in my opinion, is a real extremist and exercised an evil influence over the Mufti.... see his letter to Parkinson 21.12.37 C.O. 733/332/75156/2.

116. See Sharett Op Cit p.98.

117. See Sharett's interview with the H.C. on 15.8.36 Ibid p.262-268.

118. "Falastin" 26.7.36.

on the railways, the Haifa Port, the I.P.C. (Iraq Petroleum Company), the P.W.D. (Public Works Dept)<sup>119</sup> to cease work. Emissaries were sent from Nablus, inspired probably by the Supreme Committee to stir up the strike movement.<sup>120</sup> This drive was intended to counterbalance the distinct signs of dissatisfaction following the economic stress which was being seriously felt by Arab traders, merchants, producers (soap and oil), banana and fruit growers and citrus owners. All these were anxious that the strike should end and the situation be restored to normal, and pressure to that effect was put on the Supreme Committee through several local national committees.

The exasperated Mufti who was convinced that this pressure was organized by Ragheb Nashabishi aiming to pose as the merchant's friend and trying to direct their dissatisfaction against him (the Mufti) authorised each of the local national committees to end the strike on its own, knowing well enough that none would dare to do it.<sup>121</sup> And none did. The Mufti's extreme line, supported by the more extreme line of the Shabab and Istiqlal, dominated and dictated the Arabs' policy.

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119. In all these places, the strike was not observed. There is no clear evidence concerning the Mufti's view on the participation of the Arab Government officials in the strike. It should be remembered, however, that many of them were contributing to the "strike fund" and that some senior Arab officials had been passing on to their compatriots, confidential information as to Government's intentions - see Minute by Williams 16.7.36 C.O. 733/313/75528/37. However, there are slight indications to show that he agreed to the memorandum presented to the H.C. by the Arab Government officials which was prepared by Musa Alami and G. Antonius. See Jewish Intelligence Report 30.6.36 File 8/38 the H.A. For this memorandum, asking for the stoppage of Jewish immigration before the arrival of the Royal Commission see the file "Memorandum by Arab officers in the First & Second Division of the Public Service C.O. 733/313/75528/37. See also the Peel Report pp.98-99 and Darwaza Op Cit p.126.
120. See C.I.D. appreciation summary No.14/36 of 18.8.36 F.O. 371/20018.
121. See Jewish Intelligence summary 26.7.36 File 39/8 The H.A.

On 22nd August, the H.C. sent to the Colonial Secretary an important despatch<sup>122</sup> containing his appreciation of the situation in Palestine together with his recommendations. He presented three possible courses of action:-

- (a) "The continuance of our present policy on its present line and methods of action.
- (b) The second alternative is the granting of some concession to people with whom it is most important we should live on friendly terms in future years, but not granting a concession of such a nature as to give the impression of yielding in face of violence and disorder, which we have been unable otherwise to end.
- (c) The third course would involve a complete departure from the present moderate measures adopted and recourse to much more violent measures designed to subdue lawlessness in the shortest space of time. By this is meant ruthless action including the bombing of villages and towns, after due notice to the inhabitants, and the imposition of martial law over at least a large part of the country".

As for the first course, both the H.C. and the military commander (Air Vice Marshal Peirse) agreed that it did not hold out any prospect of speedy success in the restoration of order. The third course was recommended by the Air Officer commanding.<sup>123</sup> Air Vice Marshal Peirse proposed a declaration of Martial Law and strong military measures including air bombardment of Nablus and other villages if necessary, which would cow the country and put an end to the revolt. In addition to his military plan he proposed other complementary measures the first of which was "Arrest and deportation of the Mufti and other leaders unlikely to be required as Government intermediaries with country". Peirse went on to say in his

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122. See secret despatch from Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 22.8.36. C.P. 225(36) August 1936.

123. See Memorandum by the Air Officer commanding on the military situation in Palestine and Transjordan 20.8.36 Appendix II Ibid.

memorandum, that if the initial action would be adequately severe the religious cry would not be effective.

The H.C. strongly opposed this course of action. Sticking to his view that the restoration of law and order should not be achieved by such measures as would "leave an embittered, sullen, and in their hearts, rebellious Arab population ready to rebel in any future year", he recommended to the Government to follow the second course.

Commenting on the proposal to deport the Mufti, the H.C. remarked that the advantages of deporting him were known to all. He pointed, however, to the grave drawbacks of such policy, stating that the Mufti had very considerable influence as head of the Moslem community in Palestine and was influential in other Arab Moslem countries and known in India and even farther afield. Through the control of Moslem funds, patronage and through the employees of the Awqaf and the Sharia Courts, he had great political power throughout Palestine. The H.C. then posed the following questions: "If it is legally possible to remove him from his post as President of the Supreme Moslem Council, is it expedient to do so? Would that stop the disturbances in Palestine or would it make them worse and more widespread? What would be the effect in neighbouring Moslem countries? And those farther afield? Could he be effectively replaced by someone who would be acceptable to the Moslems and amenable to British authority?"

In discussing the second course which he recommended, the H.C. stated that the concessions adopted would have to meet the approval of the extremists as otherwise the revolt would not be ended. The extremists, he said were made of the Shabab or Young Men Party and the Istiqlal led by Auni abd al Hadi. Of the Mufti he wrote: "I do not believe the Mufti will have the courage to oppose in the open the demands of this party". (the extremists). "What action he may take behind the scenes is hard to foretell.

There are many factors that weigh with that astute mind, but perhaps his chief fear is to be left alone in the open, liable to be accused by friend and foe of treachery to the Arab cause. We can expect little backing from that quarter".

On the basis of discussions which he had with several Arab leaders, including Auni abd al Hadi but not apparently the Mufti, the H.C.<sup>124</sup> submitted for the Government's consideration that if the leaders were to make a successful public appeal to end disorder, it would be wise to make a concession to the Arabs.

The H.C. enclosed with his memorandum a note giving his views on the strength of the Arab national spirit in Palestine.<sup>125</sup>

124. H.C. visited al Hadi twice at the detention camp in Sarafand. The Jews were unhappy about these visits see Sharett Op Cit p.267.

125. Appendix IV to C.P. 225 (36) August 1936. The note contained the following passages:-

IV "In the course of a national struggle it is hard for any leader to proclaim the advantages of surrender, that is to say, in Palestine today the ending of the strike and the ending of armed resistance.

The Mufti is not a morally courageous man and it would be contrary to his whole nature to take a decisive lead in ending disorders when he would be criticized loudly by his many opponents as a traitor to the Arabs and a tool of the English.

V During the last three months many different people have been suggested as the real leaders of the strike and of violence. The real leaders throughout have been the extremists. The extremists lead and they frighten those who, like the Mufti, refuse to stand in the open and declare themselves wholeheartedly for violence or wholeheartedly for acceptance of Government offers.....

VII The Amir (Abdullah) considers the Istiqlalists and the Mufti as the main opponents to his policy of mediation. The Amir has many enemies but the failure of his attempted mediation was inevitable because he had nothing to offer".

And the note finishes thus: "The unexpected constancy and tenacity of purpose shown by the Arabs during the past four months has surprised everyone including the Amir and most, if not all, Arab leaders.

I have said before, this tenacity is due to the Arab fear of being submerged by the Jews. Suspension of immigration would be a definite act - as distinct from a promise - which in their eyes would show that Her Majesty's Government had regard for this danger. I fear no further promise will have this effect. I have no reason to believe that their tenacity will weaken unless some temporary concession as to immigration is made".

The Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore, who from the beginning of his tenure of office in early June, a new determination towards sterner action was discernible<sup>126</sup> accepted, however, Wauchope's second alternative.<sup>127</sup>

At this stage, we should examine briefly the question of the intervention of the Arab rulers.<sup>128</sup> Already on 26.4.36, the Mufti, according to a resolution of the Supreme Committee, sent to Arab kings and rulers, appeals for moral support.<sup>129</sup> Two early attempts to mediate (except for the unceasing but fruitless efforts by Abdullah) one by King Ibn Saud towards the end of April 1936, which was discouraged by the Foreign Office<sup>130</sup> and a second one at the beginning of June by Nuri Said the Iraqi Foreign Minister who met Weizmann in London on 9.6.36,<sup>131</sup> came to nothing.

126. See his cable to Wauchope urging him to act more firmly within the then existing defence regulations and encouraging him to ask, if necessary, for additional powers. 4.6.36, C.O. 733/297/75156. See also his first statement in the Commons on the question of Palestine 9.6.36. Hansard Vol. 313 cols. 35-37.
127. See memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies 26.8.36 - C.P. 225(36) August 1936 - in which he proposed to his colleagues in the Cabinet to authorise the H.C. "to endeavour to secure, without delay, the declaration which he suggests would be made by the Arab leaders calling for the cessation of violence with a view to the announcement shortly afterwards, of the decision to suspend temporarily all permanent immigration into Palestine with effect from the beginning of October".
128. For a detailed study of it see G. Sheffer Op Cit pp.330-370. See also Darwaza Op Cit pp.137-140 Haikal Op Cit p.232-240. Besiso Op Cit p.196-200. N. Sadaqa Op Cit pp.188-190 and the bulky files "Intervention of Arab Kings" C.O. 733/314/75528/44.
129. "Falastin" 27.4.36.
130. See cable from F.O. to British Embassy in Jeddah 7.5.36. C.O. 733/314/75528/44.
131. Nuri suggested that Iraq would gladly mediate between Jews and Arabs in Palestine with the ultimate aim of incorporating the Jewish National Home within an Arab Union, but that the pre-condition to such an Iraqi move must be Jewish agreement to stoppage of immigration. According to one version given by Nuri, Weizmann wished for a time to consult his colleagues. Nuri in a meeting with Rendel from the F.O. held on 9th June. See minute by Brennan from the F.O. 24.6.36 F.O.371/20020. According to a second version of Nuri "Dr. Weizmann had agreed to ask H.M.G. to stop Jewish immigration. See letter from A. Clark Kerr to Rendel 16.6.36. Ibid. A third version joining the first two was given by Nuri in a meeting with Sharett in Palestine on 21.8.36. Sharett Op Cit. p.29.

Following further communications from the Mufti in which he called for the King's support,<sup>132</sup> the Saudis, towards the end of June, made a second, more determined effort.<sup>133</sup> This time, and mainly because of Anglo-Saudi relations, the British Government accepted the proffered Saudi mediation.<sup>134</sup> However, when the Saudis, supported by Iraq and the Yemen, put forward the Palestinians' preconditions for the termination of the strike which were: stoppage of immigration, release of all Arab detainees and the cancellation of collective fines imposed on Arab communities, the first one was rejected by the Cabinet<sup>135</sup> in its meeting on 15th July 1936 on the grounds of preserving imperial prestige.

The Egyptians, too, proclaimed at the beginning of July their readiness to mediate in Palestine<sup>136</sup> but their offer was turned down.<sup>137</sup>

A second more serious Iraqi attempt started during August initiated it seems, by the British<sup>138</sup>. When Nuri Said reached Palestine, Wauchope gladly played host to him in Government House and all along supported Nuri's mediation as an alternative to the implementation of repressive measures which would have entailed the transfer of his and the civil authority's powers to military hands. The H.C. strongly recommended<sup>139</sup> to the British Government to authorize him urgently to confirm Nuri's intervention on the basis of a memorandum to be addressed by him (Nuri) to the Supreme Committee.

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132. "Falastin" 20.6.36.

133. See Minutes of meeting between Oliphant from the F.O. and the Saudi Minister in London 23.6.36. F.O. 371/20020.

134. Cab Con 51(36) 6.7.36.

135. Cab Con.52(36) 15.7.36.

136. See minute by S. Bennett from the F.O. 4.7.36. F.O. 371/20020.

137. See minutes by Campbell and Oliphant 7.7.36. Ibid.

138. Hints by Wauchope to Sharett during a meeting on 2.9.36, Sharett Op Cit p.293. See also private letter of Bateman from the British Embassy in Baghdad to Rendel in the F.O. 1.9.37. F.O. 371/20025. For comparison see Haikal who states that the mediation was decided by a meeting of the Iraqi Cabinet on 18.8.36 headed by King Ghazi and attended by the British Ambassador. Haikal Op Cit p.233. However, Bateman informed Wauchope already on 17.8.36 that Nuri would like to visit Palestine to attempt direct mediation.

139. Wauchope to Ormsby-Dore, 22.8.36 C.O. 733/314/75528/44.

This followed a long and apparently successful talk which Nuri had with the Mufti and other members of the Supreme Committee about the terms of the proposed memorandum.

The memorandum stated<sup>140</sup> that because of Iraq's racial ties with the Palestinian Arabs and her friendship with Britain, she had felt it incumbent upon itself to mediate".....

The mediation aimed at (1) securing the end of the strike and the disturbances (2) securing the "grant of all legitimate demands of the Arabs in Palestine whether such demands arise out of the present disturbances or are connected with the basis of general policy in Palestine". From the way the draft memorandum was phrased, there was no doubt that the Iraqis intended to support the stoppage of immigration and later a reconsideration of the whole policy of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. Arab newspapers and the Arab public in general hailed the mission of Nuri as "a big stride towards the cementing of Arab unity and the making of Palestine as an integral part of the system of Arab countries<sup>141</sup>" and "as an act which has done away with the local character of Palestine and put upon it the international Arab stamp and also as a decisive step towards the establishment of the Arab Federation".<sup>142</sup>

Nuri's memorandum was regarded in London as "a most dangerous proposal" much more so when it was followed by a suggestion of Yasin al Hashami the Iraqi Prime Minister, to establish in Jerusalem a permanent Iraqi office.<sup>143</sup>

The Colonial Secretary therefore, suggested a redrafting of the memorandum omitting the last clause and emphasizing that Iraq's representations on behalf of the Palestinians could be related "only to such recommendations as may be made by the Royal Commission."<sup>144</sup>

140. Ibid.

141. "Falastin" 27.8.36.

142. "ad-Difa" 27.8.36. See also ad-Difa and al-Liwa 30.8.36.

143. Bateman to Foreign Secretary 27.8.36. The F.O. in its telegram to Bateman dated 29.8.36 refused this offer. F.O. 371/20023.

144. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 27.8.36 C.O. 733/75528/44.

And though the H.C.<sup>145</sup> and the British Embassy in Baghdad<sup>146</sup> continued to press for acceptance of Nuri's offer, there was no change in London's views when Nuri left Palestine on 30th August 1936. Following his departure, the Arab press published a manifesto by the Supreme Committee accepting Nuri's offer of mediation<sup>147</sup> and declaring that the strike would continue.

It was the Mufti who insisted on the inclusion of the last paragraph in the manifesto<sup>148</sup> referring to the continuance of the strike, an inclusion which no doubt affected the decisions of the Cabinet on 2.9.36 but about that later.

We have seen above that the Colonial Secretary, though in general favoured a more harsh policy with regard to the revolt, was ready, however, to advise his colleagues in the Cabinet to accept the H.C.'s proposal to confirm the second alternative of granting the Arabs some concessions including the suspension of immigration in order to bring to an end the strike and the disorders. But on second thoughts, and after an interview with Weizmann and Ben-Gurion on 31.8.36, and after being flooded by letters and telegrams<sup>149</sup> in which he was accused of lowering still further British prestige, betraying the Jewish people and surrendering to murder and crime, and being impressed by Jewish and pro-Jewish demonstrations in different

145. See his telegrams of 28.8., 29.8., and 31.8 to the Col. Sec. Ibid.

146. Bateman to Foreign Secretary 27.9. and 29.9.36 F.O. 371/20013.

147. "al-Liwa" 31.8.36, "ad-Difa" 31.8.36. The manifesto read:

"the nation will continue its complete strike with the same perseverance and confidence by which it has been known in a proud manner, steadfast in its faith, patience and dignified until such time as these negotiations (with other Arab Governments and with the British) will arrive at much the desired results which will safeguard for this brave nation its existence and secure for it its rights and realization of its aspirations.

148. See Sharett Op Cit p.304.

149. From, among others, General Smuts, Lloyd George, American Senators, representatives and leaders etc.

parts of Britain, he changed his mind and wrote to the H.C.:<sup>150</sup>

"Quite frankly, I fear that things have turned out in a way which makes it really impossible for me to press my colleagues tomorrow to go so far as you wish". He stated that the Mufti's proclamation about continuing the strike had the worst effect in Britain and added "I have a profound mistrust of the Mufti and all his works. I believe him to be not only bitterly anti-Jewish but also anti-British and a rascal",

When the Cabinet met<sup>151</sup> on 2.9.36 to discuss Palestine, it was Ormsby-Gore with his tough line who dictated the tone. After describing the worsening situation in Palestine, he enumerated the various pressures that had been exerted on the Colonial Office. He referred to Nuri's memorandum which if accepted, would be regarded "as a direct challenge to the Mandate". Turning to the manifesto of the Supreme Committee and the alleged terms of a provisional agreement between Nuri and the Palestinian leaders<sup>152</sup> as published a day earlier in a Jerusalem newspaper, he argued that rather than attempting to achieve the end of the strike at all costs the "authority and prestige of the Government of Palestine should be re-asserted without any delay."

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150. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 1.9.36 C.O. 733/297/75156. According to N. Sadaqa, the German Ministry of propaganda reproduced a zincograph copy of this letter in 1939 saying: "We may have admitted too many Jews in Palestine, we may have been inadequate in protecting peasantry from losing their lands and homes..... however, should we accept Nuri's proposals, the strength of international Jewry with all its numerous mighty friends in all parties will oppose us strongly. Sadaqa Op Cit p.189. The letter as it appears in the above-mentioned file in the P.R.O. says: "We may....we may.....homes....but that our fundamental policy has been wrong I for one can never admit".

151. Cab. Con 56(36) 2.9.36.

152. These were: a general amnesty, suspension of immigration during the enquiry of the Royal Commission, undertaking that the Royal Commission would recommend the reduction of immigration, a continued Iraqi involvement in Palestine affairs. They were published in the "Palestine Post", mistakenly described by Ormsby-Gore as a pro-Arab paper, in its issue of 1.9.36.

The tough line of Ormsby-Gore was supported by the majority in the Cabinet<sup>153</sup> and it was decided to crush the rebellion by force. It should be stressed, however, that from reading through the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting, one gets the clear impression that it was the question of the prestige of Britain and her armed forces, that was at stake, which contributed to this decision not less if not more than any local Palestinian consideration.

Accordingly, the Cabinet re-affirmed their previous decisions that order must be restored and British authority re-established in the country. It deferred decisions regarding the suspension of immigration, and it resolved "that intensive measures" short of bombing civilian centres "designed to crush Arab resistance should be taken" following the despatch of an additional division and the introduction of Martial Law.

The H.C. was informed of these decisions by the Colonial Secretary<sup>154</sup> who at the same time informed of the appointment of Lt. General Dill as the supreme commander of all troops in Palestine. However, as the issue of

153. The main support came from Ministers responsible for the services. Lord Swinton (the ex-Cunliffe-Lister), the Secretary of State for Air and until then the staunchest supporter of Wauchope in the Cabinet stated that: "a surrender was politically impossible both at home and in Palestine and throughout the world". Duff Cooper, the Secretary for State for War pointed out that Wauchope's policy..... had, in fact, failed". He stated that "even if we were to surrender we should only gain a temporary peace". He suggested the despatch of an additional division, proclamation of Martial Law and the transfer of the supreme control to the hands of an experienced Lieutenant-General who should not be subject in any way to the High Commissioner in Palestine. Other members supported them as well. Only Zetland, the Secretary for India, Lord Cranborne - who in the absence of Eden represented the Foreign Office - and Halifax, the Lord Privy Seal who stated that "we had hitherto accepted the advice of Sir. A. Wauchope and had relied on his great experience and local knowledge. It was a very serious thing for the Cabinet to adopt a policy to which their adviser on the spot had raised the strongest possible objections" favoured the line of policy proposed by Wauchope.

154. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 3.9.36. C.O. 733/297/75156.

supreme authority in Palestine was still left open, Wauchope continued as best as he could to resist the transfer of his powers to the military.<sup>155</sup>

The publication in Palestine<sup>156</sup> in the meantime of the denial by the Colonial Secretary (in reply to a letter from Dr. Weizmann) that Nuri Said had been given authority to promise any concessions, severely shook the confidence of the Arabs who entertained until then great hopes about the results of his mediation.

The draft of the statement of policy covering the Cabinet decisions was finally approved on 5.9.36<sup>157</sup> and published in Palestine on 8.9.36<sup>158</sup>. This outspoken declaration of policy was critically answered in the Arabic press and was attributed by the Arabs to Jewish influence in London.<sup>159</sup>

Even before the statement's publication, the prospects of more drastic measures of repression caused a "certain wavering among the Supreme Committee" members.<sup>160</sup>

Wauchope naturally seized the opportunity, perhaps his last, before the transfer of the supreme control in Palestine to the hands of General Dill, to initiate new diplomatic moves towards reaching a settlement.<sup>161</sup>

In three separate meetings<sup>162</sup> with the Mufti and R. Nashabishi on 9.9.36 and Auni abd al Hadi on 10.9.36, he warned them about the measures the Government was contemplating and advised them to end the strike without delay.

155. See Correspondence in File "Relations between the H.C. and G.O.C. (Delegation of powers to G.O.C.) C.O. 733/317/75528/90.
156. "Falastin" 5.9.36. For Arab reactions to this letter see Darwaza Op Cit p.141
157. C.P. 237(36) Sept 1936.
158. Official communique No.248/36 Sept 1936.
159. "Falastin", "al-Liwa" 9.9.36 "ad-Difa" 10.9.36.
160. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 6.9.36 C.O. 733/297/75156.
161. See his cable to the Col. Sec. dated 6.9.36 asking whether there was any objection to such a step and the latter's answer of 7.9.36 authorizing him to do it on condition that there would not be any concession or promise to the Arabs C.O. 733/314/75528/44.
162. For a full description of the meetings see the enclosures to the H.C.'s letter to the Col. Sec. 12.9.36 Ibid. See also Sharett Op Cit p.298-300.

The three leaders suggested that Nuri Said should return to Palestine to continue his mediation. When the H.C. showed his reluctance to accept it, they said that were the Supreme Committee alone to appeal to the public to end the strike and stop the disorders, the appeal would not be obeyed. The Mufti and Nashabishi therefore suggested that the Government should appeal to the Arab rulers to call on the Palestinians to end the strike while Auni abd al Hadi proposed that only King Ghazi should be asked to do it.

The H.C. promised to forward the proposals to the Colonial Secretary after considering them.

In his letter to the Colonial Secretary, the H.C. wrote: "The three leaders have assured me that they are confident the Supreme Committee will pass a resolution as below provided they receive a message from Ibn Saud and Ghazi saying:

"It is in the interests of the Arabs in Palestine that you should immediately call off the strike and all disorders should be ended in order that the Royal Commission should come without delay to Palestine to carry out the enquiry as promised by His Majesty's Government."

In his talk with the Mufti, the H.C. mentioned that during his first four years, they had often worked together with good results which could only have been achieved as the result of mutual confidence. However, reading the Minutes of the meeting, one notices that the direct contact which existed previously between them matching often a certain mutual warmth was totally missing. On the other hand, Wauchope's increasing dealings with Auni abd al Hadi<sup>163</sup> indicated his appreciation of the shift of the centre of power within the Arab camp. It is interesting to note that Auni admitted during his interview that the continuance of violence meant only loss to the Arabs.

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163. Who was released from internment two weeks earlier following representations made on his behalf by Nuri Said. See words of Sir T. Inskip, Minister for co-ordination of defence during a meeting of Ministers held on 11.9.36. Ibid.

In London, the proposals of the Arab leaders were discussed at a meeting of ministers on 11.9.36, who decided to refuse them.<sup>164</sup>

The Supreme Committee were informed of this during an interview which they all had with the H.C. on 12.9.36.<sup>165</sup> They, retreating, asked whether they themselves could initiate an appeal to the Arab rulers. The Government responded favourably and thus started the final successful phase of mediation<sup>166</sup> which brought the strike to an end and consequently facilitated the arrival in Palestine of the Royal Commission in a relatively calm atmosphere.

The Supreme Committee met on 13.9.36 and discussed the Government's statement of policy and their interview with the H.C. on the previous day. They published a declaration answering the Government's statement.<sup>167</sup> This, however, did not solve their real problem. They knew that unless the strike and the acts of violence would stop, the Arabs and perhaps they personally, would have to face these drastic measures of repression, but their principal difficulty was that without being able to promise the people some concession they felt unable to face them after over five months of hardship. On the one hand there was the pressure of the business and trade circles, the citrus growers and others to bring about the termination of the strike, and on the other, threats had been uttered and letters written urging them to maintain their stand against the Government until Arab demands were satisfied in view of the sacrifices already made.<sup>168</sup> They felt, therefore, that they were asked to shoulder too much responsibility to take the final step themselves, and that they would have failed anyway if they had tried

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164. See conclusions of a meeting held on 11.9.36 Ibid.

165. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 12.9.36. For a full description of the meeting and the text of the H.C.'s statement see Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 19.9.36 Ibid.

166. For the developments during this phase see correspondence in the file "Proposed mediation by the Kings" C.O. 733/314/75528/44.

167. "Falastin" 14.9.36.

168. See C.I.D. appreciation summaries No.15/36 of 1.9.36 and No.16/36 of 28.9.36. F.O. 371/20018.

to do so. They decided<sup>169</sup> that it was imperative that the Committee should receive support from the Arab Kings and rulers the way they got it from Nuri Said.

The Mufti accordingly, sent a telegram to King Ibn Saud informing him that in view of the statement of policy issued by the British Government, the Supreme Arab Committee "had decided unanimously and with pleasure to accept the mediation of Ibn Saud and welcomed such mediation".<sup>170</sup>

The final successful phase of mediation was on.<sup>171</sup>

It should be noted that the anti-Mufti Arab papers<sup>172</sup> which favoured the King's mediation denounced all the same, subsequent to 14.9.36 the Supreme Committee's "indication of weakness and desire to shelve its responsibilities".

The exact text of the King's appeal was hammered out in an endless stream of cables and in a non-stop series of meetings of the Supreme Committee between the Mufti and Kazem Bey the Iraqi Consul at Haifa and between the Mufti and Sheikh Kamel al Qassab the representative of King Ibn Saud.

169. Ibid.

170. "Falastin" 14.9.36. See also cable from R. Ballard in Jedda to the Foreign Office 23.9.36. C.O. 733/314/75528/44.

171. See note 165. Mention should be made here of another effort of mediation initiated by Lord H. Samuel who produced a 9 point plan of agreement between Arabs and Jews in a wide frame of an Arab Confederation including Palestine with the Jewish National Home. Lord Samuel discussed his plan with Nuri Said in the presence of the pro-Arab Lord Winterton. For full particulars see file "Proposals of Lord Samuel". C.O. 733/315/75528/58. For the impact of this plan on future British train of thought see Kedourie Op Cit pp. 77-81. For Zionist resentment against the plan see Sharett Op Cit, pp. 311-313.

172. "Falastin" 14.9.36, 17.9.36, 20.9.36 "ad-Difa", 15.9.36, 20.9.36.

The main point of difference was that the Mufti wanted the appeal to include conditions and promises which the kings - because of British firm opposition - would not include. On 1.10.36, the Mufti expressed to the Iraqi Consul in Palestine<sup>173</sup> his fear that the agreed draft of the appeal might not be forceful enough to persuade the armed insurgent bands to disperse. He therefore, begged that efforts should be made to strengthen the wording of the appeal. The C.I.D. appreciation summary<sup>174</sup> reporting about a meeting of the Supreme Committee on 29.9.36 attended by Sheikh al Qassab says: "Haj Amin fought until the very last for certain conditions. The remaining members of the Supreme Committee with the exception of Jamal al Husseini realized that it was useless to endeavour to insert any conditions whatsoever and that the call-off must be complete". In another meeting on 3.10.36, when the Iraqi Consul, Kazem Bey, called upon the Committee to produce for examination by the rulers, the text of the manifesto which they proposed to publish after the receipt of the ruler's appeal, the Mufti attempted to vacillate and postpone the meeting, but the majority insisted on taking an early decision and the manifesto was drawn up and signed by the members. At this juncture, Ragheb Nashabishi suggested that the calling off of the strike meant ipso facto the dissolution of the Supreme Committee. The Mufti, hoping that if the National Committees would eventually be called together, they would express their confidence in the Supreme Committee so that it might continue to function, insisted that when the appeal of the Kings arrive, the National Committees should be assembled to signify their approval. Arab papers at the time<sup>175</sup> were suggesting that the text of the appeal was being varied to suit the views of the Mufti.

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173. See Bateman's cable to the F.O. 3.10.36 C.O. 733/314/75528/44

174. C.I.D. appreciation summary No.17/36 of 16.6.36 F.O. 371/20018.

175. "al-Liwa" 3.10.36, 5.10.36 "Falastin" 3.10.36.

About 6th October, the negotiations appeared to have come to a standstill and at a meeting on 7th October, a rupture occurred between the Mufti and R. Nashabishi and others.

The draft appeal was finally agreed to by the Supreme Committee after long discussions at an emergency meeting on 8.10.36 and only after a letter was read from Ibn Saud saying: "If you consider that you can continue your struggle with good results, it is your affair. We should, in that case, afford you whatever assistance is possible. On the other hand, should you desire us to send you an appeal without embodying restrictions then we are prepared to comply".<sup>176</sup>

During this period, the Colonial Secretary, whose extreme dislike and profound distrust of the Mufti was mentioned above<sup>177</sup> did not change his view that some steps should be taken against the Mufti.<sup>178</sup>

On 7.9.36, British representatives in Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia were informed<sup>179</sup> that "the question is under consideration of possible deportation from Palestine of the Mufti of Jerusalem who appears to have

176. See source f.n. 173.

177. See supra p. 408

178. He wrote: "that H. Luke who was "on the Arabophil side described the Mufti as a very bad arrogant man who has always hated the British in his heart and would never be loyal or trustworthy and that as long as he had so much wealth and power the British would always have the danger of similar outbreaks and serious trouble". Ormsby-Gore then continued: "Ever since the arrival of Nuri it is pretty clear that the Mufti has been the chief villain of the piece and that his intrigues to preserve his own personal power are the chief obstacle to the restoration of order. I do not wish to appear to force your hand in any way but with the new powers it would appear to me that provided the how-when-and-why are well conceived, there should arise an opportunity of getting rid finally of Haj Amin al Husseini. It would, however, never do if he is eliminated to let him back under an amnesty when that time comes". 30.9.36 C.O. 733/315/75528/55.

A few days later he wrote, again: "If, as I presume, you still desire to get rid of the Mufti, it seems to me, taking the long view that it is important that we should not place ourselves in a position where we are unable to eliminate this mischief maker for good at this juncture". 5.10.36. 733/315/75528/44.

179. See cables from F.O. 7.9.36. Ibid.

been evil genius of Palestine throughout recent troubles and who now appears to be losing credit".....and they were asked for their views concerning the possible reaction which deportation might produce in these countries. A similar enquiry was made to the Government of India. All answered that "it would create a most unfortunate impression" but that reactions would not be serious.<sup>180</sup>

The H.C., after considering the question with General Dill, recommended to the Colonial Secretary<sup>181</sup> that whether the Kings' appeal was made or not, in case the disorders would continue the supreme authority in Palestine should be delegated to Dill who would deport the Mufti. But if the appeal was issued and the strike and all disorders came to an end, it would be difficult to deport the Mufti, unless he were to commit some action justifying deportation. The Colonial Secretary agreed to this line of action<sup>182</sup> though he expressed his hope "that we shall still be able to effectively clip his wings".

It can safely be assumed that the Mufti knew, or at least guessed about these British intentions and this no doubt served as a factor in influencing his decision to accept the Kings' appeal.

Just before midnight 9-10th October, the appeal<sup>183</sup> reached the President of the Supreme Committee to be followed by identical appeals from Ghazi and Amir Abdallah early in the morning of the 10th.

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180. The British representative in Baghdad answered that although on account of his intrigues with the Italians the Mufti was not personally popular with the Iraqi Government, he was the recognized leader with whom the Iraqi Government was negotiating and that his deportation would create a most unfortunate impression and would make the Government's task of holding extremist agitation in check much more difficult. See A. Clark Kerr to F.O. 8.10.36. See also Mr. Kelly (Alexandria) to F.O. 8.10.36, Sir. R. Bullard to F.O. 9.10.36 and cable from Home Dept. Govt. of India to Secretary of State for India 10.10.36 Ibid.

181. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 7.10.36 Ibid.

182. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 13.10.36 Ibid.

183. "To our sons Arabs of Palestine. We have been much distressed by present situation in Palestine, and in agreement with our brother Kings and the Amir, we appeal to you to restore tranquillity in order to prevent further bloodshed, relying on the good intentions of British Government and their declared desire to see that justice is done. Be assured that we shall continue our endeavour to help you". "Falastin" 11.10.36.

The appeal was published in Arab papers together with a manifesto:<sup>184</sup>  
 The Mufti issued 10,000 copies of his manifesto to the villagers. The call of the Supreme Committee was approved by all local national committees throughout the country and there was an immediate response. Attendances at Mosques in various parts of the country on Monday morning the 12th were large and enthusiastic and the strike was over. In order to let the bands disperse quietly the General Officer commanding had issued instructions to the troops to abstain from all aggressive action until 16th October.<sup>185</sup>

This period of grace was later extended until 19th October and by then there had already been a very marked improvement in the security situation so it was decided that the supreme authority in Palestine would remain in the hands of the H.C.<sup>186</sup>

As soon as the H.C. learned of the decision to end the strike, he sent, by a trusted Arab official, a message to each of the Mufti, R. Nashabishi and Auni abd al Hadi expressing his pleasure that the Supreme Committee had called off the strike and the disorders and informing them that he relied on them that all aggression would cease.<sup>187</sup>

The termination of the strike, in my opinion, was achieved as a result of three cumulative reasons: first and foremost the late but firm decision of the British Government to crush the rebellion by force; second, the weakness of the Palestinian Arabs; and third, the continuing pressures - open and secret - of the Arab rulers on the Palestinians to end the strike.

184. "The Arab Supreme Committee has decided, after consideration and consultations with members of the local Committees from whom agreement was received, to publish the text of the Arab Kings' appeal. We call upon the noble Arab people to remain steadfast and quiet in ending this period of strike and unrest, on Monday morning, 12.10.36. The Arab Supreme Committee calls upon the Arab people to arise early on Monday morning for prayers in the mosques for the martyrs who have fallen in our struggle. Following the prayers, the Arab people should return to their stores, places of business and their regular work".  
 Ibid.
185. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 12.10.36 C.O. 733/315/75528/55.
186. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 13.10.36. Ibid.
187. Wauchope to Parkinson 16.10.36 C.O. 733/314/75528/44.

Chapter 17The Mufti and the Royal Commission and its Partition Plan

The Arabs emerged from the long strike feeling victorious. Arab papers congratulated "the heroic Arab Nation in Palestine which is now entitled to reap the fruits of its victory."<sup>1</sup>

Summing up Arab feelings during the first days after the end of the strike, the C.I.D. appreciation summary stated<sup>2</sup> :- "The Arabs have the impression .... that they have come through the ordeal of the 167 days strike with success and that Zionism has received a check. They are very hopeful that the Royal Commission will recommend at least the more important of their demands, while political leaders express gratitude that the Palestine Arab question has now become the concern of all Arab states and rulers".

In intra-Arabic politics, the Mufti's position became stronger than ever. A C.I.D. summary of early November stated :- "the Mufti ..... has come out of the whole matter of the disturbances as the strong man in Palestine Arab politics. Ragheb Nashashibi has lost much of his influence and is nothing like the power he was until comparatively recently. His wish to dissolve the Supreme Committee has not materialized."<sup>3</sup>

This same feeling of satisfaction mixed with expectation, was shared and expressed by the members of the Arab Supreme Committee who asked for and were granted an interview by the H.C. on 24.10.36.<sup>4</sup> Reading the record of

1. "Miraat al Sharq" 17.10.36. See also "Falastin" 14.10.36, 16.10.36 "al Liwa" 13.10.36, 14.10.36, 15.10.36.

2. C.I.D. appreciation summary No. 17/36 of 16.10.36 F.O. 371/20018

3. C.I.D. appreciation summary No. 18/36 of 7.11.36. Ibid. The report stated also that the "National Defence" party was much weakened with Hassan Sidqi Dajani breaking away and Fahri Nashashibi confining himself to organizing the workers in Jaffa.

4. Attended by the Mufti, Auni abd al Hadi, Jamal Hussein, Ahmed Hilmi, Alfred Rock, Y. Ghoussein and Fuad Saba - all supporters of the Mufti's policy. Another supporter Dr. Khalidi, and R. Nashashibi, Y. Farraj and Abdul Latif Salah, who opposed him, were absent. For a full record of the meeting, see the enclosure to the H.C.'s letter to the Colonial Secretary 3.11.36. C.O. 733/311/75528. See also "al Liwa". 25.10.36.

of the meeting one gets the impression that the Mufti felt and behaved as a winner presenting his demands. The H.C. opened by expressing his satisfaction that the appeal to call off the strike and to stop violence was promptly and effectively answered and that order had in general been restored. The Mufti, after associating himself with the H.C.'s remarks, went on to ask for the release of the detainees, the abolition of the Emergency Regulations, the termination of the service of the supernumerary police, the withdrawal of the collective fine imposed on Hebron, the closure of the new Jewish port at Tel-Aviv, the evacuation of Government school buildings held by the Army, and the re-employment of about 100 Arab workmen at Haifa port who had been dismissed during the disturbances. He also spoke against the grant of a new Immigration labour schedule and he asked the Government to stop Jewish attacks on Arabs. He then said that the Supreme Committee was doing its utmost to get the bands dispersed. He suggested that it would be better if the rebels would not be arrested or make the subject of police enquiries; if they could have a private assurance the rebels would at once leave the frontiers. Alfred Rock, Y. Ghussein and Auni abd al Nadi spoke too. Jamal Hussein said that if the Colonial Secretary were to grant a new immigration schedule, he considered that there would be no need to send the Royal Commission to Palestine. Both the Mufti and Jamal Hussein spoke of the Royal Commission and expressed their satisfaction that its terms of reference were very wide. The H.C. in a very conciliatory manner answered them point by point. He refused to abolish the emergency regulations, to terminate the services of the supernumerary police or to close the Tel-Aviv port. As for the labour schedules, he said that the decision rested with the Colonial Secretary.

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He promised to look into their other requests and see what would be done. Referring to the armed bands, he said that if the Supreme Committee would look back, they would realise his attitude from the fact that imminent martial law was not applied and that two divisions did not apply drastic measures. He could not give any promise about the armed bands but he would consider what had been said and would do his best to restore normal conditions as soon as possible.

And in fact the H.C.'s policy, without committing himself publicly to the Arabs, was to let the armed bands disperse or leave the country without military intervention. When General Dill commanded on 22.10.36 his troops to intercept Fawzi Kawokji and prevent him from crossing the Jordan, the H.C. asked him to call the action off on the grounds that such an action might make the Arabs renew the rebellion.<sup>5</sup>

In this case, as well as in their appreciation of the role played in the rebellion by the Mufti and the Supreme Committee, and their opinions regarding the Supreme Committee's policy towards the armed bands the views of the H.C. and the G.O.C.<sup>6</sup> differed considerably.

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5. See report from General Dill to Under-Secretary of War 30.10.36. C.O. 733/317/75528/74 See also Simson Op Cit pp.289-398.
  6. In a telegram to the C.I.G.S. on 15.10.36, General Dill wrote : "Feel there was no distinction between strike and disorders. There was one well controlled rebellion. Efficiency of control confirmed by efficiency in calling off.... In particular he (the H.C.) considers I greatly exaggerate influence of Higher Arab Committee" C.O. 733/713/75528/74. Describing the situation after the end of the strike and disorders, he wrote: "At this date, a fortnight after the calling off of resistance, the Arabs, as far as I can judge, remain in the belief that a truce exists and the Higher Arab Committee are encouraging their followers in the view that any military action would be a breach of the truce. The Higher Arab Committee remains intact, reinforced by members released from internment; the local Arab organizations are also intact, and the armed bodies which formed part of the whole are being left in a position in which they keep their organization and their arms; an armed truce is therefore the best description of the existing situation". Dill's report to the Under Secretary of War 30.10.36 Ibid.

The H.C. believed that it was a complete misconception to think that the Mufti ever had been or ever would be a great or forceful leader and that he had always to be pushed into every line of action that he reluctantly took. He considered that it would be the height of folly to imagine that by the removal of the Mufti or the Supreme Committee - of which the local national committees were until the end of August very often independent - the danger of a fresh Arab rising would be ended or even greatly reduced, and he concluded : "The Committee of ten are a feeble and disunited crew who are really in the position so well described by Bacon in one of his essays:- "The fly sat on the axle-tree of the chariot wheel and said what a dust do I raise". The security of the country is not dependent on their presence or absence. Such organizations as existed during the disturbances sprang up locally and spontaneously.<sup>7</sup> " The H.C. attributed the end of the strike and the disorders almost totally to the intervention of the Arab Kings and not to any action taken by the Mufti and the Supreme Committee.

And in a letter written on behalf of the H.C. to General Dill, Hathorn Hall the Chief Secretary stated<sup>8</sup> that the Supreme Committee wanted the armed bands to be dispersed.

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7. In his letter to Ormsby-Gore 17.10.36 in which he commented on Dill's telegram to the C.I.G.S. of 15.10.36 Ibid.
8. Hathorn Hall to Gen. Dill. 28.10.36 Ibid.  
 "The Higher Arab Committee now seems as anxious as in the Government to ensure that armed bands should be dispersed and order restored in the countryside. Indeed they made an unconditional offer through one of their members to take any action that Government wished in order to ensure that Fawzi Kawokji and his band left Palestine forthwith."

At the same time, however, the H.C. envisaged a plan of limiting the power and the influence of the Mufti by a series of reforms which would have reduced the S.M.C. to a purely advisory body to assist the Moslem director of the proposed Government Department of Wakfs.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that the H.C.'s policy towards the Mufti and the Supreme Committee, and his intention that the armed bands should disperse peacefully and not under military pressure, was dictated by his desire to facilitate the early arrival and the enquiry of the Royal Commission and by his estimate of the Mufti and the Supreme Committee.

The terms of reference of the Royal Commission<sup>10</sup> and its final membership were approved by the Cabinet in its meeting of 29.7.36<sup>11</sup>. But because of other commitments of the Commission's members, it could not leave for Palestine until the following October, a welcome delay as by then the country was pacified.

Following the end of the strike and the disorders, the Supreme Committee elected a sub-Committee<sup>12</sup> to prepare the Arab case before the Royal Commission to collect data etc.

9. See his letter to Ormsby-Gore 3.11.36 C.O. 733/287/75123. As a result of the strong objection by Parkinson who argued that because of the undertaking given by Lord Plumer in 1928, that representative Moslem opinion would be consulted in connection with any proposed reforms of the S.M.C. and because such consultation could not take place in the then prevailing conditions, the proposal was shelved. See Minute by Parkinson 24.11.36.
10. C.P. 190 (36) July 1936. The terms of reference were intended to be as wide as possible, short of authorizing the Royal Commission to reconsider the existence and the substance of the Mandate.
11. Cab. Con. 55 (33) 29.7.36.
12. Consisting of Auni abd al Hadi, Jamal Hussein and others. See Darwaza Op Cit p. 146.

Mention should be made here of the fact that Lord Peel expressed his view that if the Mufti did not come to give evidence before the Royal Commission, and requested the Commission to come to hear his evidence in the S.M.C.'s office in the same manner as was done by the Shaw Commission, then they would dispense with his evidence. In an exchange of telegrams<sup>13</sup> between the Col. Sec. and the H.C., it was decided not to give the Mufti any exceptional treatment.

The announcement by the Colonial Secretary on 5.11.36 in Parliament<sup>14</sup> that immigration would not be stopped and that the H.C. had approved a labour schedule of 1800 (as against 10,700 requested by the Jewish Agency) caused consternation amongst the Arabs.

"Al Liwa", the Husseinite paper, described the grant of the labour schedule as an act of bad faith and considered it - in view of the whole lengths to which the Arabs had gone to restore order - as a stab in the back. The paper went on to say that this act was a bad omen of the intentions of the British Government and suggested an Arab boycott of the Royal Commission.<sup>15</sup>

The boycott was resolved by the Supreme Committee at its meeting on 6.11.36 and a manifesto to that effect was issued to the press.<sup>16</sup> Efforts were made by the Nashashibis and apparently by Auni abd al Hadi to delay the publication of the Manifesto until after an interview which the Supreme

13. See exchange of telegrams between the H.C. and the Col. Sec. 6.11.36/7.11.36. In his telegram to Wauchope dated 6.11.36 Ormsby-Gore wrote :- "It" (exceptional treatment to the Mufti) "would be certain to lead to questions in Parliament here and while I have hitherto done my best to defend the Mufti, you will realize how embarrassing this would be to me personally"- see also Wauchope's letter to Parkinson 13.11.36 C.O. 733/318/75550/1.

14. Hansard, Commons, Fifth Series. Vol. CCCVII Cols. 250-252.

15. Al Liwa 6.11.36, 7.11.36.

16. .... "The decision declared by the Secretary of State is a strong challenge to Arab feeling and an encroachment on their rights and proof of lack of good intention to solve the Arab case in Palastina in a proper manner based on the realization of their rights and the preservation of their national existence ...." "Falastin" 8.11.36.

Committee had with the H.C. on 7.11.36 during which he advised them to re-consider their decision. They met, however, on the evening of 7th November and under pressure of the Husseinis who continued to advocate a more extreme line the manifesto was signed by all members and published.

As a result of the decision to boycott the Royal Commission the atmosphere in Arab circles was changing rapidly and again mistrust of Government was being openly expressed.

The Colonial Secretary consulted the H.C. as to whether, in view of the boycott by the Supreme Committee, it would be desirable that the Arab Kings should be permitted to appoint representatives to present the Arab case before the Royal Commission which "might help to put the Mufti in a ridiculous position and so prove helpful in the long run."<sup>17</sup> The H.C. answered that "so far from such a course putting Mufti into a ridiculous position, he would contrive thereby to enhance his prestige representing it as a diplomatic victory."<sup>18</sup>

The Arab rulers, however, were uneasy about the Supreme Committee's decision to boycott the Royal Commission and were advising them to reconsider it.<sup>19</sup> And though the majority of the local National Committees continued to support the boycott, there were dissenting factors headed by the Nashashibi's Defence Party and some elements of "Youngmen" of Jaffa who were reported to be in favour of calling off the boycott and were willing to appear before the Royal Commission and give evidence.<sup>20</sup>

17. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 11.11.36 C.O. 733/75550/27

18. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 14.11.36 Ibid.

19. A. Clark Kerr to the Foreign Secretary 8.11.36 and 21.11.36. Minute by J.C. Sterndale Bennett on his meeting with the Saudi Charge d'Affairs in London 11.11.36 F.O. 371/20029.

20. See C.I.D. appreciation summary No. 19/36 of 20.11.36 F.O. 371/20018. The Summary reported: "It is understood that strongest in their opposition to cooperation were Auni abd al Hadi and Haj Amin al Hussein. The belief exists in the minds of the majority of Arabs that any Arab appearing before the Commission voluntarily will be asking for ostracism and possibly assassination."

Nevertheless, the Supreme Committee extended a welcome to the Royal Commission and two of its members called upon the Commission soon after its arrival and presented a note outlining the Arab stand and their reasons for the boycott.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, in accordance with a decision passed by the Supreme Committee in its meeting on 17th November, the Arabs secretly continued to prepare their evidence and collect all relevant data.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the Supreme Committee insisted that no disorders should occur during the enquiry of the Royal Commission and when some extreme elements demanded to declare a strike on 12.11.36, the day on which the ceremonial opening session was held at Government House, the Committee issued a manifesto calling the Arab nation to remain quiet in response to the request of the Arab Kings.<sup>23</sup>

After many hesitations and discussions, the Supreme Committee decided to send a delegation to Baghdad and Riad to consult Kings Ghazi and Ibn Saud. As the Kings' dislike of the boycott was known, this decision by itself showed a certain change of heart. The Mufti, however, informed the Iraqi Consul in Palestine that the Supreme Committee resolved to continue the boycott unless there was a total stoppage of immigration and until the country was granted autonomous rule like Syria.<sup>24</sup>

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. "Al-Liwa" 11.11.36.

24. See letter from Iraqi Consul in Palestine to the Iraqi Foreign Office 23.11.36. "Reports and Press Summary" file of the Iraqi Consulate in Haifa No. 3700 I.S.A.

The delegation, headed by Auni abd al Hadi<sup>25</sup> reached Baghdad on 19.12.36. They had several long consultations with the Iraqi Foreign Minister and left for Riad on 24.12.36. After meeting King Ibn Saud, they returned to Palestine via Baghdad taking with them identical letters<sup>26</sup> from Ibn Saud and King Ghazi in which the Kings, after expressing faith in the justice of the British Government, urged the Supreme Committee to cooperate with the Royal Commission.

On 6.1.37 the Supreme Committee had a meeting lasting from 9.0 a.m. until 3.30 p.m. After long discussions in which the members of the delegation - who were mainly Istiqlalists - supported by the Nashashibis did their best to convince the Supreme Committee to respond to the Kings' appeal, it was decided to call off the boycott.

The Committee published a manifesto<sup>27</sup> to the Arab people explaining their decision "in compliance with the request of Arab rulers" and warned at the same time against giving evidence without the agreement of the Supreme Committee.

The problem of Arab evidence, however, worried the Supreme Committee to quite an extent. It was decided to form a sub-committee to prepare the evidence and to decide who would be the Arab witnesses and what should be said by each. The opposition elements, however, were not satisfied with the sub-committee's composition.<sup>28</sup> As Arab leaders had very little faith in each other, it was decided that the Arab witnesses would give evidence

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25. And consisting of Sheikh Kamal al Qassab, Izzat Darwaza and Muin al Maadi. On the delegation see Ibid. See also Darwaza Op Cit. pp.153-154. See also A. Clark-Kerr to Foreign Office 29.12.36 and 4.1.37 and R. Bullard to Foreign Office 2.1.37 C.O. 733/320/75550/27.
26. "Falastin" 7.1.37. (The letter of Ibn Saud was dated 1.1.37 and that of King Ghazi 3.1.37).
27. Ibid.
28. Auni abd el Hadi, Izzat Darwaza, Jamal Hussein, Fuad Saba and Abdul Latif Salah, "Al Jamiah al Islamiyya" 8.1.37.

only in open sessions so that it would not be possible later to accuse each other of betraying the Arab cause<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, one cause for hesitation was the "reluctance of the leaders to state openly their extreme demands and fear that some of their arguments will be riddled in the course of their evidence."<sup>30</sup>

The Royal Commission then prolonged its stay<sup>31</sup> in Palestine for an extra two weeks to enable Arab evidence to be heard. The first Arab witness was the Mufti, who opened the Arab case by stating: "The Arab case in Palestine is one which aims at national independence".<sup>32</sup>

Reading the Arab evidence,<sup>33</sup> one gets the clear impression that with the exception of G. Antonius and even that is arguable, the Mufti's deposition was the best, but he too was not always convincing in answering questions.<sup>34</sup> On the whole the Arab evidence was presented in the crudest

29. Letter from Iraqi Consul in Palestine to Iraqi Foreign Office. 12.1.37 File 3780. I.S.A.

30. The Iraqi Consul wrote that as many Arab leaders were not good at answering questions and might give weak answers which would damage the Arab case, it was preferable to give written evidence only. See his letter to the Iraqi Foreign Office 6.1.37 Ibid.

31. The Peel Report p.

32. The Peel Evidence p. 292.

33. Ibid pp. 292-368

34. In his description of the Mufti's evidence, C. Sykes writes thus :-  
 "He had a formidable task to impose on the Commissioners, an impression deeper than that made by the Jewish witnesses, especially Dr. Weizmann. His performance was uneven, at one moment he argued with keen and impressive skill, at another he spoilt the effect of undoubtedly strong arguments on his side by supporting them with weak ones."  
 Sykes Op-Cit. pp. 198-200.

and most extreme form<sup>35</sup> and tended to stir up their followers rather than convince the Royal Commission.

At the end of their enquiry, the Royal Commission concluded that "the underlying causes of the disturbances were (1) the desire of the Arabs for national independence (2) their hatred and fear of the establishment of the Jewish National Home.<sup>36</sup>

Reaching the conclusion that the Mandate had become unworkable and must be abrogated, the Royal Commission decided to recommend the partition of Palestine into three regions : a Jewish sovereign state,<sup>37</sup> an Arab state

35. To Musa Alami, "the Arab evidence, although adequate on the legal side of the case, seemed to have suffered from hasty preparation as well as from the chronic inability of his race to distinguish between arguments which appealed to them and arguments likely to impress their auditors". See Furlonge Op Cit p.111.

In his report to the Iraqi Foreign Office, the Iraqi Consul in Palestine wrote : "On the whole, the evidence of the Arab witnesses was useful and good for the Arabs, but in many cases, unfortunately, it lacked supporting proofs and exact statistical data so that the members of the Royal Commission received only a weak impression as the Arab witnesses could not verify their arguments by facts and figures". 19.1.37. File 3700. I.S.A.

British views of the Arab evidence were described thus by A. Eden, the Foreign Secretary:- "The recent speeches of the Mufti of Jerusalem and his followers before the Commission are calculated to produce an intensive reaction against the Arabs which is already beginning to have its effect. Clearly no one could contemplate acceding to such Arab claims, and even if the claims were reasonable, the hectoring and threatening tone which has been used in their prosecution would be enough to prejudice the least easily influenced Government against a cause which relies on such defenders". In a memorandum embodying his ideas on Palestine 12.1.37 which he sent to Ormsby-Gore. C.O. 733/332/75156.

36. The Peel Report p.110. They further concluded that these two causes were the same which brought about the disturbances of 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1933, that they were and always had been inextricably linked together and that all the other factors were complementary or subsidiary. Ibid p.111
37. Which, roughly, was going to include all of Palestine north of Beisan and the entire coastal region north of a point halfway between Gaza and Jaffa.

incorporating Transjordan and the rest of Palestine, and a Jerusalem enclave<sup>38</sup> under permanent British mandate.

The Cabinet endorsed in principle the acceptance of partition<sup>39</sup> and simultaneously with the publication of the Royal Commission report<sup>40</sup> on July 7, the Government issued a statement of policy<sup>41</sup> announcing its adoption of this recommendation for a solution of the Palestine problem.

Following the end of the strike the security situation in Palestine was far from being quiet but compared to the previous six months it was much better. Indeed, following the Supreme Committee's decision to give evidence before the Royal Commission, there was little prospect of any serious general disorder in the country until the publication of the Royal Commission's report and the Government's intentions towards it were known. And actually the incidents which had occurred during that period, most of which were highway robberies, with the majority of the victims Arabs, were contrary to the wishes of the Arab leaders. On the other hand, it was common belief among both Arabs and Jews that if the report of the Royal Commission and the Government's decision thereon were unfavourable to the Arabs, the rebellion would break out again.<sup>42</sup> However, a series of terror acts started

38. The enclave was going to include also Bethlehem, Lydda, Ramle and a corridor to the sea at Jaffa.

39. Cab. Con. 27(37) 30.6.1937 Cab. Con 23 (37) 5.7.1939

40. Palestine, Royal Commission Report Cmd 5479 July 1939. The Summary of the Report was embodied in an official communique published in Palestine under No. 9/37 "Falastin" 9.7.36.

41. Palestine, Statement of Policy, Cmd 5513, July 1937 published in Palestine as official Communique No. 11/37 Ibid.

42. See Wuacnops's telegram to Ormsby-Core 29.12.36 C.P.1 (37)  
See also letter of Iraqi Consul in Palestine to Iraqi Foreign Office 27.12.36. File 3780. I.S.A.

around early February. On 6.2.37, the H.C. sent for the Mufti, R. Nashashabi and Auni al Hadi.<sup>43</sup> They expressed abhorrence of the recent acts of violence and assassination which had been perpetrated so they said by irresponsible people for personal motives. The Mufti assured the H.C. that the Supreme Committee would consider the question of issuing a public statement expressing their abhorrence of assassinations and crimes of violence.

No such statement was issued, however,<sup>44</sup> and the Chief Secretary, not prepared to let matters rest, issued a statement the text of which was agreed by the three Arab leaders before its publication, saying that during a meeting on 6th February the H.C. spoke with the three Arab leaders "on the subject of the recent assassinations and crimes of violence. They all expressed their abhorrence of these acts."<sup>45</sup> The Mufti, feeling the need to renew his personal contacts and to explain his views to non-Palestinian Arab leaders, left Palestine on 10.2.37 for Egypt and continued on 13.2.37 on his way to

43. For a full record of the meeting see the enclosure to Hathorn Hall's letter to Ormsby Gore of 13.2.37 C.O. 733/311/75528 Pt.VII. During the meeting the H.C. enquired about the rumours that funds which were collected for the poor by the Central Relief Committee were used for other aims. The Mufti denied this. It should be noted that the talking on the Arab side was done only by the Mufti and Abd al Hadi.
44. As the H.C. left Palestine for Britain two days after the interview, the Arab leaders thought perhaps that they could get away with it. When the Chief Secretary approached them, they argued that to issue the statement immediately following an interview with the H.C. would have given the impression that they were dictated to by the Government. They decided, therefore, to await the occurrence of another incident and then to issue a strongly worded statement of condemnation. Ibid.
45. "al-Liwa" 10.2.37.

Riad.<sup>46</sup> General Dill, who all along regarded the Mufti as the main instigator of the rebellion, felt that his return from the Haj (Pilgrimage) with enhanced prestige might be the signal for renewing the rebellion. He, therefore, suggested that an order be issued excluding the Mufti from Palestine.<sup>47</sup>

The O.A.G. strongly opposed this suggestion.<sup>48</sup> Both the H.C. (who was then in Britain for his holiday) and the Colonial Secretary, concurred with the

46. al-Liwa 11.2.37. Amir Abdallah during a conversation with Cox, the British resident in Amman, said that the Palestine Government had made a very serious mistake in allowing the Mufti to go and carry out his intention of conducting a campaign in Mecca against the British policy in Palestine. The Mufti, said the Amir, had no intention of seeking a middle course and was doing his utmost to defeat the moderates - including the Amir, who had a genuine desire to find some workable solution. The Amir declared that the Mufti had been given so much rein that people in Palestine were saying that the Government wanted him to maintain his intransigent attitude so as to make trouble. See Cox's letter to Moody 11.2.37 C.O. 733/326/75023/2. On the Mufti's visit to Egypt, see Lampson's cable to the Foreign Office 1.3.37 Ibid. On the Mufti's visit to Saudi Arabia, see Bullard's telegram to the Foreign Office 25.3.37 and his letters of 4.3.37 and 9.3.37. Ibid. The Mufti - who apparently refrained from open political activity during his visit in Saudi Arabia, appealed to Ibn Saud for help. The King advised him to await the finding of the Royal Commission and to cooperate with the Palestine authorities in the maintenance of law and order.
47. See cable of O.A.G. to the Colonial Secretary 27.2.1937 Ibid.
48. Though he agreed that there would not be lasting peace in Palestine as long as the Mufti's influence remained unimpaired, he maintained that it would be represented that as long as Haj Amin was in Palestine, the Government had been frightened to deal with him, but that as soon as he left the country for his religious devotions they had, by a trick, secured his exclusion and this moreover when the country was at peace and when the Royal Commission which had heard his evidence were preparing their Report. The O.A.G. further claimed that an order of exclusion would leave the Mufti free to intrigue against the British in other Arab countries. He described the act as "distasteful" and said that it would be regarded as "an instance of British perfidy and bad faith" Ibid.

O.A.G.'s view <sup>49</sup>. The Cabinet discussed the subject and agreed with the Colonial Secretary.

Meanwhile, acts of terror continued in Palestine mainly in Jerusalem. It needed some urging by the O.A.G. both orally and in writing <sup>51</sup> to bring the Supreme Committee to fulfil their promise made to the H.C. during their meeting on 6.2.37, to issue a public statement. The statement <sup>52</sup> issued on 18.3.37, did not express abhorrence of the assassinations as promised, but it included an appeal to avoid acts of violence and to "restore to full quietness and tranquillity" as advised by the Arab Kings.

On 1.4.37, the H.C. granted an interview to the Mufti, R. Hashashibi and Auni al Abd al Hadi. <sup>53</sup> The Arab leaders showed a reasonable disposition and the Mufti reiterated twice his assurances of the desire of the Arabs for peace and tranquillity and of their readiness to cooperate with the Government in the restoration of good order throughout the country.

But this readiness of the Mufti was very short-lived. On the following

49. Ormsy-Gore wrote to the Prime Minister: "If we can or do get rid of the Mufti, for whom I have no love, I want him deported fairly and squarely ..... I cannot agree to Dill's proposal which to my mind would not be "cricket". 2.3.37. Ibid.
50. Cab. Con 10 (37) 4.3.37
51. See letter from Moody, Acting Chief Secretary to the Supreme Committee 12.3.37. C.O. 733/326/75023/2.
52. "al Liwa" 19.3.1973.
53. The Supreme Committee asked for the interview on 16.3.37 and were informed that the H.C. would be glad to see those three. For full particulars of the interview, see Wauchope's letter to Ormsy-Gore of 6.4.37. Ibid. Describing the interview the H.C. wrote:- "Several 'grievances' were discussed ... the three leaders adopted a more reasonable attitude than they have during the last 12 months. The Mufti stated clearly that he was ready to cooperate with Government in maintaining good order. In this, I think, I detect the influence of Ibn Saud, the influence of moderate Arabs outside Palestine as compared to the extremist Arabs within. But I fear that under certain circumstances, the influence of local Shabab and the Istiqlal Party may later on bring pressure to bear against satisfactory cooperation with Government and counsels of moderation which the Mufti now preaches and as regards his Sheikhs and Qadis at present practices."

day, two English papers<sup>54</sup> reported that the Royal Commission was considering either the cantonisation of the country or, more probably, the creation by the Partition of Palestine of two independent Jewish and Arab States.

The Arab press evinced the strongest opposition to the Partition scheme, and declared that the Arabs would never accept it. It denounced the scheme as a "Jewish proposal supported by a small English group". The scheme would defeat Arab aspirations for a pan-Arab Federation and would bring Gt. Britain into conflict with the Moslem world at large. The Arab papers agreed that the object of publishing the scheme was to sound the Arabs and to test their pulse.<sup>55</sup>

Arab protests started to pour in on the H.C. from all parts of the country, most of them emphasizing that the Arabs would oppose any attempts to divide their country with all legal means.<sup>56</sup>

54. "Daily Herald" and "News Chronicle". 2.4.37.

55. "al-Liwa" 4.4.37. The paper said that neither the Mandatory Government nor the League of Nations could force the scheme upon the Arabs. Religious questions as well as legal questions stood in the way of the proposed partition. What for example would become of the mosques, cemeteries and Waqf lands, which under the Partition would fall in the Jewish party? "Falastin" of 4.4.37 said that the rumoured resolution might be a mere manoeuvre but that the Arabs should express their resentment against it. "Falastin" mentioned that Amir Abdallah, when questioned by Lord Peel, branded the scheme as a most irresponsible and unworthy idea and warned the Royal Commission against its grave consequences. See also "ad-Difa" 4.4.37 and "Jamiah al Islamiyya" 4.4.37.

56. See for instance the protest of the Gaza Municipality 8.4.37 "Falastin" 9.4.37 or the protest of the Local Council of Majdal 11.4.37 "Falastin" 12.4.37.

The Mufti, however, who no doubt opposed the scheme bitterly, did not make any public comment. Indeed, the H.C. noted "the Mufti, since his visit to Ibn Saud, has been very quiet and the Higher Arab Committee almost dead except for internal squabbles".<sup>57</sup>

In early May the Arab press published agrily statements to the effect that the Jewish Agency had submitted an application for over 11,000 certificates at a time when there was serious unemployment.<sup>58</sup>

On 7.5.37 the H.C. received the Mufti, who remonstrated against any further immigration. The meeting, however, was cordial and to the H.C.'s surprise, the Mufti again promised to cooperate with the Government.<sup>59</sup>

On 11.5.1937, the Supreme Committee held a meeting and decided to issue a manifesto to the Arab people, as well as to send a cable to the Arab Kings and Princes and the British Prime Minister protesting against the grant of the labour schedule.<sup>60</sup>

57. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 27.4.1937 C.P. 127 (37) May 1937.
58. "Falastin" 1.5.37, "al-Liwa" 2.5.37. For the worsening situation of Arab unemployment in 1937 see file "Unemployment C.O. 733/325/75007.
59. "I gave an interview to Haj Amin .... who urged the release of all internees, remonstrated against the issuing of the schedule and any further immigration of Jews, and in a quiet and friendly way, discussed the action of Government in compelling a large number of very poor Arab workers to move from their present completely unsanitary quarter of tin shacks in the middle of Haifa town. Haj Amin again to my surprise promised cooperation with Government and suggested he might be able to find some Waqf land suitable for our transfer scheme .... The Jewish press, of course, say that Government released the internees owing to the pressure of Haj Amin and that we reduced the schedule also owing to fear of that gentleman"..... Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 20.5.37 C.P.144 (37) May 1937.
60. Both the Manifesto and the cable contained the following passage: "The Committee declares that the Arabs will not accept any Jewish immigration and will not rest assured until all their national demands are fulfilled". "al-Liwa" 12.5.37.

On 29.5.37 the Mufti was involved in a certain accident. Being fearful that an attempt was being made to assassinate him, he instructed his servants to search Jewish passengers of a car which stood by.<sup>61</sup>

The incident by itself was not important except for the implications which it could have on the future behaviour of the Mufti. Even if he had any ethical feeling against murder, the fact that he believed that an attempt was made on his life would have made it easier for him - morally - to order the murder of those whom he considered to be his enemies.

On 28th April 1937 Amir Abdullah left Haifa for London to attend the Coronation ceremonies.<sup>62</sup> It was generally believed that during his stay in London, he would hold political discussions concerning the Partition plan and the unification of the Arab part of Palestine with Trans-Jordan probably under his Crown. His departure became the occasion of big popular receptions in his honour in Jerusalem, Nablus and Haifa.<sup>63</sup>

These receptions were organized by the Nashashibis and all the traditional opposition elements. The Husseinis and their supporters did not participate. A similar series of receptions organized by the opposition and boycotted by the Husseinis was repeated when Abdallah returned on June<sup>64</sup>. The signs were clear. The Palestine opposition elements identified themselves with the cause of Amir Abdallah and established with him a unified front against the Mufti and his supporters.

61. See Police Communique 30.5.37, "al-Liwa" 31.5.37. See also cables no. 246 of 31.5.37 and No. 266 of 5.6.37 and letter of 7.6.37 from Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore C.O. 733/311/75528.

62. "Falastin" 29.4.37.

63. Ibid. 24.4.37, 26.4.37, 28.4.37 and also Darwaza Op-Cit pp.156-157.

64. "Falastin" 8.6.37, 11.6.39.

The tension between Abdallah and the Mufti grew, and on 19.6.37 the Chief Minister of Trans-Jordan at the instance of the Amir, wrote a letter<sup>65</sup> to the Mufti, with the intention that its contents should become public, accusing him of trying to sow dissension between the Amir and his people. On his side, the Mufti too was looking for allies outside Palestine against Abdallah. On 22 June, he arrived in Damascus<sup>66</sup> and stayed there until 3 July. During the many conferences with the Syrian Nationalists, in which Iraqi politicians participated as well, together with the Iraqi and Saudi Arabian Consuls in Damascus, they discussed the partition scheme. The Mufti raised objections, but the Syrians thought that it should be accepted as a step forward. There was a majority against accepting Amir Abdallah as sovereign of the new Arab State. The qualifications of other Arabian princes were discussed but none of them seemed satisfactory. The meetings ended inconclusively, but the impression remained of a general desire to work for an amalgamation of Syria and the new Arab State in Palestine, if and when it should be established. It was proposed to convene another congress to discuss this plan.<sup>67</sup>

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65. Ibrahim Hashim to Amin al Husseini 19.6.37. C.O. 733/326/75023/2.

66. "Al-Liwa" 23.6.37.

67. See letter from B. Mackereth - British Consul in Damascus to Wauchope 5.7.37 in which he also wrote : "the stay of the Haj Amin was the occasion of a remarkable political 'va et vient' about which it has been unusually difficult to obtain precise information. Both the French delegate and the head of the French Intelligence bureau tell me that they have but the vaguest notion of what went on." It was considered, however, that there was a general review of the Pan-Arab political position. Mackereth also enclosed with this letter a list of the persons who visited the Mufti. The list included practically all the "Who is Who" in Syrian politics as well as many Iraqi leaders and also several famous Arab 'fighters' and band leaders. C.O. 733/326/75023/2.

British Military Intelligence, however, stated that: "Reliable reports state that Mufti obtained little support from visit to Syrian politicians"... 68

But, in addition to the political discussions, it is most probable that the Mufti plotted the renewal of the rebellion and had several lengthy meetings in private with some known band leaders and arms smugglers. 69  
On several occasions, the Mufti was alleged to state that he would "declare war on the British on the 8th July". 70

On 3.7.1939, Ragheb Nashashibi and Y. Farraj, the two representatives of the opposition "National Defence Party" (though Y. Farraj was officially representing the Christian Community and not the Party) withdrew from the Arab Supreme Committee. 71

Ostensibly, the withdrawal was on the ground of the Mufti's mismanagement of the Supreme Committee's affairs, but it was generally accepted that this step - taken with the encouragement of Amir Abdallah - was intended to make the party free to take its own decisions independently of the Supreme Committee. 72

Learning of this withdrawal, the Mufti returned immediately to Palestine on 4.7.37. A military Intelligence report stated :- "Attempt to terrorize opposition by political assassinations likely in next few days." 73

Following the publication of the Royal Commission report and the Government's statement of policy, the H.C. received on 8.7.37 the Mufti and other Arab leaders. They all promised that they would try to keep the hotheads quiet, but emphasized that the hotheads were very many and that the despondency and depression among the Arabs was great. 74

68. See cable from G.H/Q Palestine to the War Office 5.7.37 Ibid.  
69. Ibid. The cable says: "While Mufti busy with politicians his subordinate known to have interviewed Mohammad al Ashmar notorious leader and bandit" (who commanded the Syrian contingent during the first phase of the rebellion of 1936)  
70. That is, after the publication of the Royal Commission's report. See letter of Mackereth Note 67.  
71. "Falastin" 4.7.37. 72. Darwaza Op Cit 157-158. Toynbee states that the withdrawal "was regarded in Palestine as a step toward acceptance of the anticipated proposal of Partition". Toynbee Op Cit p.550 See also Esco Study Op Cit p.857. 73. see source note 68. F.N.74 p. to.

The Supreme Committee held also a meeting on the same day and issued a statement<sup>75</sup> that "Whereas this country does not belong only to the Arabs of Palestine but to the whole Arab and Moslem worlds, and whereas the nation has been working in times of crisis under the guidance and support of their Majesties the Arab Kings" .... the Supreme Committee would communicate immediately with them again in order to decide upon the policy to be adopted by the Arabs. The Committee then called on the people not to be taken in by enticements, to stick to the national covenant and to keep tranquility.

A telegram<sup>76</sup> was sent to the Arab Kings stating that by accepting the Partition scheme, the "British Government's definite promise to your Majesty to do justice to present Arab demands will not be fulfilled". The telegram went on to ask for support and advice and appealed "to work for rescuing the country from imperialism, Jewish colonization and Partition."

The Istiqlalist paper "ad Difa"<sup>77</sup> attacked the Peel report for ignoring Arab national rights and aspirations but went on to say that in its findings the report is "the verdict of Time upon the incapable policy, the corrupt national organization and the long lethargy" of the Arabs.

"Falastin," the organ of the Nashashibis at the time gave a survey of the report<sup>78</sup> without, however, giving sweeping statements or clear cut decisions as to its contents and recommendations. In the nature of things, no Arab could be expected openly to accept the terms of the Royal Commission without an effort at bargaining. It was generally considered, however, that

75. "Falastin" 9.7.37. The statement ended thus: "The Arab Supreme Committee asks the honourable Arab nation which is confident in its rights and steadfast in its demands not to be taken in by enticements and adorned words, to remain on its national covenant and to maintain its self-restraint, its seriousness and tranquility, confident in the ultimate success of its rights and claims."

76. Ibid.

77. "al-Difa" 9.7.37.

78. "Falastin" 9.7.37.

74. See Wauchope's cable to Ormsby-Gore 8.7.37. C.O. 733/351/75718/6

the Nashashibis had been favourably inclined towards Partition,<sup>79</sup> and following the publication of the Peel Report, both R. Nashashibi and Y. Farraj told the H.C. freely without being asked that they were definitely in favour of the principle of Partition.<sup>80</sup>

Still, among the first to express their strong opposition to the Partition scheme were the 2 Opposition leaders Omar al Bitar from Jaffa and Acre<sup>81</sup>. Encouraged by this the Supreme Committee proposed to Asaad al Shukeiri from the National Defence Party that it should re-join, but the party declined. It could not, however, ignore the strong public opposition to the Partition plan. The surrender of Galilee and the Acre districts to the Jews had united all its Arabs - who on the whole followed the opposition - against the partition scheme, quite apart from the Mufti's influence.<sup>82</sup>

In the meantime also the Iraqi Prime-Minister made a formal protest against the proposed partition and in his answer to the Supreme Committee's telegram to King Ghazi which was prominently reproduced in the Arab press, he denounced it publicly.<sup>83</sup> Publicly, the reaction of Ibn Saud was more restrained but already by 10 July the Arabs of Palestine came to know of his total opposition to the Partition scheme.<sup>84</sup>

The Central Committee of the National Defence Party had a meeting on 11.7.37 and after careful consideration and under the impact of the Iraqi and Saudi opposition, resolved unanimously to reject the Partition

79. See Darwaza Op Cit pp. 161-163.

80. See Wauchope's letter to Parkinson 14.7.37. C.P. 193(37) 1937.

81. See Darwaza Op Cit p. 160.

82. See Wauchope's letter to Parkinson 19.8.37. C.O. 733/352/75718/6 and Wauchope's letter to Shuckburgh 30.7.37. Ibid.

83. The telegram read: "Iraqi Government is not in favour of the partition and fully sharing in National hopes and aims of her people they will do anything possible through customary channels to avert this misfortune. As head of Iraqi Government I had already protested against the recommendations of the Royal Commission". See A. Clark Kerr's cable to the Foreign Office 12.7.37 C.O. 733/352/75718/12. See also "al-Liwa" 14.7.37.

84. See Wauchope to Parkinson 14.7.37 C.P. 193(37) July 1937.

scheme<sup>85</sup> and to ask for the termination of the Mandate and the setting up of an independent sovereign state, bound to the British Government through a treaty, on the understanding that the ratio which existed then between the Arabs and the Jewish population would not be altered.<sup>86</sup>

Memoranda to that effect were transmitted to the Colonial Secretary and to the P.M.C. and the Council of the League of Nations.<sup>87</sup>

The National Defence Party was very angry with Abdallah for declaring himself in favour of Partition<sup>88</sup> and R. Nashashibi denied in a press interview<sup>89</sup> any previous agreement between Amir Abdallah and the party about accepting the plan.

On 23.7.37 the Supreme Committee submitted its reply to the Royal Commission report in a long memorandum<sup>90</sup> signed by the Mufti and the Secretary Fuad Saba. The memorandum, which was similar in its contents to that of the National Defence Party, demanded the immediate stoppage of immigration and the sale of lands and the establishment of a national democratic government bound to Britain by a treaty on the lines of the Anglo-Iraqi and Anglo-Egyptian treaties.

The Mufti, being anxious to find a solution other than Partition, and

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85. "Falastin" 12.7.37.

86. and "Insuring all lawful rights of the Jewish minority"

87. For the full text of the memorandum see enclosure to Wauchope's letter to Ormsby-Gore 24.7.37 C.O. 733/351/75718/6.

88. Wauchope to Parkinson 19.7.37 Ibid.

89. "Falastin" 22.7.37. Indeed the Govt. of Transjordan too had to publish a declaration denying its support of the plan "Falastin" 24.7.37.

90. For a full text of the memorandum, see the enclosure to Wauchope's letter to Ormsby-Gore 26.7.37 C.O.733/351/75718/6. The Arabs, the memorandum said, were prepared to negotiate the safeguarding of reasonable British interests, the guarantees for the preservation and right of access to all Holy Places and the protection of all legitimate rights of the Jews. The memorandum stated that a creation of a Jewish state in Palestine would be a blow aimed at Arab unity as it would erect a geographical barrier between the Arab states, and would stimulate "Jewish aspirations for further expansion".

counting on Jewish opposition to the plan, agreed in mid-July to an Arab initiative to hold tentative negotiations through an unnamed intermediary with leaders of the Jewish Agency. Nothing resulted from these contacts, however.<sup>91</sup>

On 16.7.37 there appeared in the "Times" an article which practically started the process of the Mufti's attempted arrest and his subsequent escape. But before that mention should be made of the Mufti's alleged statement concerning British attempt to reach with him an understanding on the basis of the Royal Commission's Partition plan according to which the Mufti was going to emerge as the head of the new Arab state. The Mufti recounts<sup>92</sup> that when it became known that the Royal Commission would recommend the Partition of Palestine, he was approached by a high ranking British official who tried to persuade him to accept the scheme saying: "What is wrong with Partition? It aims in creating an Arab state consisting of the Arab portion and Transjordan, and if you think that Amir Abdallah would be the head of this state, I can inform you that free elections would be held and that the person who wins the majority would become the head of State. "We know," he added smiling to me, "who is the people's choice and who would get a big majority of the votes".

No other source - to the best of my knowledge - mentions this attempt. However, considering the high esteem in which he was held and the "kid glove" treatment which he received until then from the British and the fact that Iraq and especially Ibn Saud, whose views were important in British eyes, opposed partition both because they detested the establishment of a Jewish state and; because they disliked, not less, the intended crowning of Amir Abdallah over the new united Arab state, I think it would be safe to assume that this story was not only a figment of the Mufti's imagination.

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91. See Sharett Op Cit Vol. 2. p. 189. See also Ben-Gurion Op Cit pp. 151-15 Wauchope's letter to Lord Dufferin 30.7.37 C.O. 733/351/75718 and Wauchope's letter to Parkinson 20.8.37 Ibid. Darwaza Op Cit pp. 180-181
92. See Amin al Hussein Haqiq Op Cit p.75 See also the Cairo daily "Ahabar-Yom" 28.9.1957, as reported in the file "memoirs of the Mufti" attached to the Mufti's diary. The H.A.

The Mufti continues to recount<sup>93</sup> that after failing with the "carrot" the British turned to the "stick". When they were convinced that his opposition to partition was absolute, Donville, the head of military intelligence in Palestine, passed to him - through a close friend - a message to the effect that the British would do anything for their Empire and would not hesitate to kill him should he stand in their way, and the message ended: "Do not be stubborn, think of your life and have pity on your family and relatives". The Mufti adds that when he learned of the "Times" article of 14.7.37, he knew for sure that the decision to "finish" him had been taken finally.

On 14.7.37 the "Times" published an article by its special correspondent in Jerusalem which contained the following passage :- "When the Report" (the Peel Report) "was published, it was assumed that its strictures on the Mufti would lead to his prompt elimination. Now that they" (Arab moderate notables who followed the Nashashibis) "see him still in office and able to direct the machinery for agitating and trouble-making, they are nonplussed. If the partition scheme goes through, the Mufti's position must inevitably be liquidated. It follows, therefore, that he must fight it tooth and nail".<sup>94</sup>

93. Ibid.

94. The Times 14.7.37. The article then continued: "Any Arab who makes a conciliatory move or does anything short of rejecting the partition scheme as impossible may expect to find himself denounced as a traitor and exposed to terrorism .... I understand that another point which weighed considerably with the gathering (of Jewish Labour Federation which voted against partition) is the fact that the Government does not show any sign of removing the Mufti. This is considered as equivalent to giving free rein to Arab Nationalism. Thus from both the Arab and the Jewish side we see that the Mufti's maintenance in his present position is an obstacle to any consideration of the report on its merits. If the Government really wants it to go through, it would help enormously if an announcement were made that an election for a new President of the Moslem Supreme Council was to be held at an early date."

The Report's strictures to which the "Times" reporter referred were no doubt those concerning the responsibility of the Mufti for disorders<sup>95</sup> and the remarks on the delay in reforming the Supreme Moslem Council<sup>96</sup> and about the vicious circle which will have to be broken sooner rather than later".

In the Colonial Office, it was expected that following the publication of this article, the Colonial Secretary was going to be criticized strongly in the forthcoming debate on 20.7.37 and that unless he could say that action was contemplated, his position might be difficult.<sup>97</sup>

95. The Peel Report, Chapter VI para. 97 p. 179 ..... "But whatever may have been the apparent moderation of the Mufti's attitude at the commencement, the manifestos issued by the Higher Arab Committee under his chairmanship endorsing the strike and then urging the Arabs to continue it until certain political aims had been achieved, were clearly prejudicial to law and order. Nor as far as we are aware, did the Higher Arab Committee at any time condemn the acts of sabotage and terrorism which became more frequent as the strike continued and the Mufti as Chairman, must in our view, bear his full share of responsibility for these disorders".
96. The Peel Report Paras. 103-105 pp. 180-181.
97. See Minute by Downie 14.7.37 C.O. 733/326/75023/4. Two possible avenues of action were studied: (1) a drastic amendment of the Supreme Moslem Council Order of 1921 and (2) a direct action against the Mufti such as deportation. It was suggested that from the point of view of damaging relations between the Government and the Arabs in the delicate negotiations which were in prospect about the partition, there was more danger in the first one. The difficulty with the second one, however, was that as far as the Government knew, there was no evidence against the Mufti to justify such action against him and that "the rather mild reflection on his behaviour" in the disturbances contained in the Peel Report "hardly affords the necessary excuse".

The H.C. was consulted<sup>98</sup> and proposed that the Mufti together with Auni abd al Hadi should be deported without delay to the Seychelles.<sup>99</sup> The Colonial Secretary authorised the deportation<sup>100</sup> and was "most anxious to be in a position to make an announcement on the subject during the debates otherwise the whole tenor of debate will be misleading."<sup>101</sup>

98. See Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 14.7.37 Ibid. The H.C. of his own accord waited for an opportunity to deport the Mufti and as early as 13 July made the necessary arrangements with General Dill and Capt. Godfrey of the R.N. See his letter to Parkinson 14.7.37 C.P. 193 (37) July 1937. The H.C. also informed Parkinson in the letter that Gen. Dill suggested to "buy" Nashashibi and give him £10,000 if he declared himself in favour of partition. The H.C., though, was of the opinion that Nashashibi could be bought for that sum, opposed the suggestion.
99. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 14.7.37 C.O. 733/352/75718/9. The cable contained the following passages : "I am convinced that the presence of the Mufti in Palestine is contrary to the best interests of the country. I have no doubt that he is fomenting feeling against partition which H.M.G. support in principle. One can give no proof of undesirable activities. Publicly the Mufti has not denounced the principle of partition, though this has been denounced publicly by both Ragheb Bey and Ben-Gurion and others. Before taking action against the Mufti... I should have preferred to wait until he had committed himself more definitely to some illegal act or act clearly hostile to the Government. But I do consider that there is some truth that moderate Arabs fear to express their real feeling for fear of reprisals. Whether the latter would be carried out by the Mufti's agents is, I think, very doubtful but the fear is genuine..." Wauchope argued that the message which the Supreme Committee sent to the Arab Kings and especially the phrase "to work for rescuing the country from Imperialism and Jewish colonization and partition" gave full justification for deportation but he strongly opposed that this should be given as the reason for deportation as the effect would be to unite all Arabs in the strongest opposition to the Government. The effects of deportation he thought would be considerable but not as grave as if it had taken place a year earlier. Then the Mufti was looked on as a religious leader, while his deportation in the summer of 1937 would have been accepted as an action against a "discarded partisan".
100. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 16.7.37 Ibid.
101. Ormsby-Gore to Wauchope 17.7.37 Ibid.

Accordingly the orders were given and all necessary arrangements were taken to effect the Mufti's arrest during a meeting of the Supreme Committee on the afternoon of 17.7.37 held at the Committee's office outside the old city. But the police failed<sup>102</sup> and the Mufti took refuge in the holy area of Haramash Sharif which he used as a sanctuary until his escape.

The Supreme Committee protested to the Colonial Secretary against the search of its premises<sup>103</sup>, not suggesting, however, that the action was directed against the Mufti personally.

The H.C. - who felt it necessary for security reasons - that further action should be taken without delay against the Mufti, consulted both the Colonial Office<sup>104</sup> and General Dill about possible courses of action. These were (a) to force entrance into the Mufti's home in the Haram ash - Sharif area, and endeavour to arrest him there, and (b) to order the Mufti to appear at the Government offices and then the H.C. would either (i) give him the choice of resigning his post as President of the Supreme Moslem Council and the Presidency of the Arab Higher Committee or of being arrested and deported forthwith or (ii) inform him that it was no longer in the interests of security that he should remain in Palestine when excitement was great and that the H.C. must deport him at once, in which case he was to be arrested immediately, and (c) in the event of the Mufti refusing to obey the order to leave the Haram, to declare the Supreme Committee as an illegal body and to announce that legislative

102. For full particulars of how the attempt failed, see Wauchope's report to Ormsby-Gore of 16.8.37 with its 5 enclosures including the report dated 30.7.37 of Mr. Fitzgerald, Deputy Supt. of Police, C.I.D., who was entrusted with the duty of arresting the Mufti and was reprimanded for his failure. C.O. 733/352/75718/9.

103. The Arab Supreme Committee to the Col. Sec. 19.7.37 Ibid. See also "Falastin" 18.7.37.

104. See exchange of telegrams between the H.C. and the Col. Sec. during the days 19.7. - 21.7.37. Ibid.

measures would be taken to remove the Mufti from the Presidency of the S.M.C.

Gen. Dill was in favour, of course (b) (ii), though it would lay the Government open to the charge of treachery.

The Cabinet in its meeting on 21.7.37 decided not to pursue any of these courses, considering that the best course was to play for time - even if it involved some loss of prestige - and to wait for some more overt act on the Mufti's part before re-attempting deportation.<sup>105</sup>

The situation which emerged was that the Police continued to guard the gates of the Old City under orders to arrest the Mufti if he should appear. The Mufti himself, however, continued to live in his Haram house, and there to receive deputations and to hold meetings of the Supreme Committee. His liberty of action and his power and ability to pursue his policy against the Government was not diminished by his lack of ability to move around.<sup>106</sup> However, apart from expression of his opposition to the Government's policy, he had been behaving - as far as the authorities knew -<sup>107</sup> in a strictly correct manner, and in an interview which he gave to the Daily Telegraph correspondent he spoke in moderate and guarded terms.<sup>108</sup>

106. See Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore 29.7.37 Ibid.

107. See Minute by Downie 29.7.27. Ibid.

108. The Daily Telegraph correspondent described him very warmly : "With light eyes which periodically break into a merry twinkle ... he has such an attractive disarming personality, one could not believe that this smiling, soft-speaking, somewhat languid Sheikh, had been officially held responsible for most of the troubles of the past year. He shows no trace of the anxious arduous period he has just traversed. Throughout the interview he appeared just as debonair, alert and full of high spirits... he expressed no resentment at the recent attempt to arrest him ...he escaped owing to his own presence of mind.... the Mufti now never leaves the enclosure. His only distraction is to promenade within the walls of the area or to watch the world from his private rooms overlooking the Wailing Wall"... During the interview the Mufti discussed the memorandum of the Supreme Committee to the Colonial Secretary and repeated his pledges to the Palestine Jews". Daily Telegraph 29.7.37.

105. Cab. Con. 31(37) 21.7.37. This decision was accepted in response to the For. Sec.'s observations about the negative effects deportation would have on Arab countries. For these effects in Iraq, see A. Clark Kerr's telegram to the For. Office 18.7.37 C.O. 733/352/75718/9.

This no doubt calculated behaviour of the Mufti (who at the time also initiated the contacts with the Jewish Agency mentioned above), brought about the reaction which the Mufti no doubt wished for. It was proposed in the Colonial Office to reverse the policy towards the Mufti, not to take any action against him as long as he behaved, to rescind the orders for his arrest and even that the H.C. would resume official relations with him.<sup>109</sup>

The Cabinet, which discussed further the problem of deportation of the Mufti took the following decision: "That the policy of arresting and deporting the Mufti if and when opportunity should offer should be adhered to, but without using any form of enticement."<sup>110</sup>

Lord Dufferin, after discussing the matter with the Prime Minister, proposed to the H.C. to relax the arrangements for watching the Mufti and to adopt towards him a more flexible and moderate policy along the line of action proposed in Downie's note.<sup>111</sup>

109. In a long departmental note prepared before the Cabinet meeting on 29.7.37 which was going to discuss further the problem of the deportation of the Mufti, Mr. Downie wrote: "...Without the strongest justification to arrest and deport the head of the Arab cause on the eve of the negotiations on the partition policy which must soon be undertaken with Arabs and Jews would surely be regarded as an outrage and would wreck any prospect of accomodation with the Arabs for a long time to come. If the Mufti is indeed the irreconcilable opponent of the Government's policy which he is represented to be, he will surely commit himself before long; if he does not commit himself, is there any good reason for not resuming relations with him and endeavouring to bring him to a reasonable frame of mind." 29.7.37. Ibid.

110. Cab. Con. 33 (37) 29.7.37.

111. See Lord Dufferin's cable to Wauchope 30.7.37 Ibid. It should be emphasized that this line of policy followed one basic assumption, namely that no "moderate" body of opinion had emerged and that all Arab Parties in Palestine opposed partition. It ignored the arguments raised by the "Times" correspondent in his articles of 14.7 and 16.7.37 and stated also by the Jews (see Dr. Joseph's letter to Dr. Weizmann 18.8.37 Ibid) that the fact that the Mufti was still maintained in his office retaining all his power and control over the Awqaf funds had "a paralyzing effect on Arab opinion in Palestine, and that the "moderate" body of opinion which was going to emerge, had been reduced to silence by fear."

The H.C., with the full agreement of the Executive Council, accepted this line and the position practically reversed to what it was prior to the publication of the "Times" articles and the Colonial Secretary's telegram of 14.7.37. In his telegram, the H.C. wrote: "I have now cancelled my previous orders to the police to arrest the Mufti ..... I feel that arrest of the Mufti now is contrary both to our wisest policy and to your wishes."<sup>112</sup>

Later, it came to the knowledge of the H.C. that the Mufti might go to Damascus, the Colonial Secretary informed<sup>113</sup> Wauchope that he did not object to the removal of the guards from the gates of the old city and to let the Mufti go to Damascus.

The Mufti, who no doubt had learned of these developments, was certainly heartened by them. Several other developments about that time caused him further satisfaction.

During the P.M.C.'s session discussing Palestine, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent on 30.7.37 a note to the Secretary-General for communication to the Council, protesting against the proposed policy of partition.<sup>114</sup> The fact that Iraq, generally considered as a British vassal state, allowed itself to protest publicly against partition at Baghdad and Geneva was interpreted as a clear sign that the attitude of the British Government itself towards partition was a lukewarm one.

112. Wauchope to Col. Sec. 31.7.37. Ibid. In his telegram, the H.C. also stated that he would not recommend the dismissal of the Mufti from his offices or the declaration of the Supreme Committee as an illegal organization. He also informed the Col. Sec. that the military command in Palestine was of the opinion that the Mufti should be arrested if he gave the police any opportunity and that failing that he should be removed from his office.

113. Colonial Sec. to Wauchope 3.8.37 Ibid.

114. For a full text of the note see file "Situation in Iraq" C.O. 733/352/75718/12. See also "al-Difa" 6.8.37.

This impression was further strengthened as a result of the Parliamentary debates, and the result of the vote in the House of Commons which was taken as a rejection of the Partition scheme.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to that, there was the known opposition to partition (or at least to the partition plan as proposed by the Peel Commission) of many high-ranking British officials.<sup>116</sup>

The cumulative effects of all these facts was to encourage the Mufti and his supporters and stir them to make every resistance against partition.

The Arab press - whose general tone towards the Jews was moderated

115. During the debate in the House of Lords on 20th July and 21st July, the Government's policy came under severe attack, especially in a very strong speech of Lord Samuel who again presented his scheme of an Arab Federation including Palestine and "the Jewish National Home". See Hansard, Lords 5th Series Vol. CVI cols. 559-674, 797-824. On 21.7.37, the Col. Sec. introduced in the House of Commons a resolution asking for formal approval for the Government's new policy on the principle on partition. The Labour Opposition demanded a Joint Select Committee to study the Peel Report and finally a compromise motion by W. Churchill was adopted whereby the Government was authorized to ask for the League of Nations approval of partition as a necessary preliminary to the drafting of a definite plan for submission to Parliament. See Hansard, Commons 5th Series, Vol. CCCXXVI cols. 2235-2367.

It should be noted that during the debate the pro-Zionist lobby opposed the Partition plan while the pro-Arab lobby - despite the Arabs' opposition to it - supported it. For the views of the pro-Arab lobby in the Commons see the letter of A. Crossley and another 10 M.P.'s to Ormsby-Gore 29.7.37 in the file "Parliamentary Debate" C.O. 733/352/75718/12.

116. See the Memorandum by Mr. Keith-Roach 5.8.36 C.O. 733/316/75528, 71.

following the publication of the Peel Report - again became more aggressive.<sup>117</sup>  
 The Arab-Jewish "negotiations" - and not less important, the rumours about these negotiations - ceased.

The opposition elements retired again into their<sup>118</sup> shells and even Amir Abdallah made overtures to his arch-enemy the Mufti<sup>119</sup> whose position seemed to be stronger than ever.

We have seen that the Government's line of policy towards the Mufti was to "play for time" and "endeavour to bring him to a reasonable frame of mind", keeping at the same time the open option of arresting and deporting him if he would be "out of step".<sup>120</sup> We do not have clear evidence of what was the Mufti's line of policy towards the Government but it can be safely assumed that he too was playing for time and endeavouring to bring the Government to pursue a more pro-Arab policy. This he tried to do by using political means - by organizing Arab opposition in Palestine<sup>121</sup> and in the Arab countries against partition, by convening the Beludan Congress etc. At the same time, however, he organized by remote secret control so as not to give the Government any justification for arresting him, a controlled terror campaign<sup>122</sup> aimed both at intimidating those Arabs who did not follow him and as an additional pressure on the Government, and the preparations for the renewal of the rebellion which he kept as an open option to be used in case the political efforts would fail. Earlier, on

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117. For comparison see Arab papers during the second and third weeks of July 1937 and during the first and second weeks of August 1937.
118. It should be noted that on 30.6.37 Fahri Nashashibi was attacked in Jaffa. "Falastin" 1.7.37. On 3.7.37, the Mayor of Bethlehem, an opposition sympathiser, was also attacked. "Falastin" 4.7.37.
119. So much so that the H.C. found it necessary to advise the Amir strongly against it. See his letter to Ormsby-Gore 22.7.37 C.O. 733/351/75118/2. On Abdallah's efforts to improve his relations with the Mufti see Memorandum by the acting British Resident in Amman A.S.Kirksbride 17.7.37. Ibid.
120. See Downie's Minute of 29.7.37 and Lord Dufferin's cable to Wauchope 30.7.37 C.O. 733/352/75718/9. 121. For Arab protests against partition see files C.O. 733/351/75718/6 and 75718/63. See also "Falastin" 13.7.37.
122. The Inter-Arab terror campaign, which during the second phase of the Arab rebellion during 1938-39 became even stronger, is best reflected by what E. Kedowrie describes as the "immortal" remark addressed to the Mufti by a certain Arab diplomat in the present of Ahmed Sukairi, whose brother was killed by fellow Arabs. "The Arabs, the Jews and the British differ over everything, but agree on one thing, the British kill the Arab, the Jews kill the Arab and the Arab kills the Arab". E. Kedowrie. Arabic Political Memoirs Encounter Vol. 39 No.5 Nov.1972. London. pp.77.

16.7.37, a day before he sought refuge in the Haram ash-Sharif, the Mufti established his first official contact with a German representative, when he visited Dohle, the German Consul-General in Jerusalem. He emphasized his sympathy for the "New Germany" and expressed his hope that it would support the Arabs and oppose Zionist aims in Palestine. He requested the Germans to maintain contact with his confidential Agent who was to proceed to Berlin.<sup>123</sup> The Mufti also discussed the Partition plan with the representatives of other powers including the U.S.A.<sup>124</sup>.

On 12.8.37 the Mufti sent a protest<sup>125</sup> to the H.C., stating that the attitude of the Royal Commission was biased and discriminatory in that it consulted Dr. Weizmann<sup>126</sup> on the proposed partition plan even before completing its enquiry while no such consultation took place with Arab representatives.

In the last days of July, the campaign of lawlessness was revived and was much intensified during the first 3 weeks of August<sup>127</sup>. The Supreme Committee, however, protested in a cable to the Prime Minister on

123. Report of the German Vice Consul Dittman, Jerusalem 10.8.37 as reported in L. Hirszowicz Op. Cit p. 43. During another meeting, the Mufti requested the Germans to intervene on behalf of the Arabs with the Polish Government, which, for its own internal reasons, was encouraging Jewish emigration from Poland to Palestine. The Mufti also sent a direct letter to the Polish Government on this subject. Ibid.
124. Wadsworth to the Secretary of State Jerusalem 16.8.37 F.R.U.S. Vol. 2 Washington 1954 pp.905-09 as reported by L. Hiszowicz Ibid.
125. "Falastin" 14.8.37. For a full text of the protest, see C.O. 733/336/75206. The Mufti asked that copies of the protest should be submitted to the Royal Commission, the Colonial Secretary and the League of Nations.
126. Referring to the closed session on 8.1.37 - even before the Mufti's evidence - during which Weizmann was asked his views concerning partition and to the famous secret meeting between Weizmann and Prof. Coupland in Nahalal. See Sykes Op. Cit. pp.200-203.
127. Palestine Report 1937. Col. No. 146, pp.7-8.

19.8.37 that "While country enjoys tranquility and political Arab bodies urge for quietness, a number of honest Arabs have been arrested without any proof of culpability in any illegal act meriting arrest....".<sup>128</sup>

However, and as is so often the case, the terror campaign started to get out of control. The Mufti sensed that his policy of "playing for time" might be endangered as the Government would be forced to take stronger measures. Accordingly, the Supreme Committee met on 31.8.1937 and published a Manifesto<sup>129</sup> deploring the crimes and appealing to the Arabs to remain calm and keep the peace and self restraint. The following Friday speeches were made in several Mosques urging the Arabs to observe the appeal of the Arab Supreme Committee and to take no part in reprisals for the recent attacks on Arabs.<sup>130</sup>

Commenting, however, on the manifesto, the O.A.G. expressed his doubts as to whether the Supreme Committee could effectively control Arab elements.<sup>131</sup>

In London the Colonial Secretary was very much disturbed by the "murder campaign" and fearing a "very severe criticism" in Parliament unless the murderers were caught and hung, he sent the O.A.G. very strong instructions impressing upon him the need to maintain law and order and to

128. "Al-Liwa" 20.8.37. See also the full text of protest in C.O. 733/351/75718/6.

129. "Falastin". 1.9.37. See also enclosure II to Battershill's letter to Ormsby-Gore 11.9.37. C.O. 733/341/75528/93. The Va'ad Leumi (elected leadership of the Yishuv) published a Manifesto of its own, as by then the Jews, or at least a part of them, followed a policy of reprisals.

130. Ibid.

131. Ibid.

eliminate "the Mufti and his gang".<sup>132</sup>

The impact of Ormsby-Gore's strong words was dampened, however, at least in the M.E. Department of the Colonial Office, by the observation of Shuckburgh who, basing himself on previous decisions, re-stated that "our policy towards the Mufti..... is in effect that the Mufti is not to be proceeded against without fresh and obvious justification."<sup>133</sup>

132. See Ormsby-Gore to Battershill 8.9.1937 Ibid. Even before that in a note to Shuckburgh on 5.9.37 Ormsby-Gore complained bitterly of "the weakness of the Palestine administration vis-a-vis the Mufti, their hestiation in backing Abdallah and their apparent ineffectiveness in stopping the terrorist campaign." Ibid. In his letter to Battershill, the Col.Sec.wrote:"I still feel that we shall never get on top of this murder campaign ..... until we have eliminated the Mufti and his gang. He was the fons et origo of the murders in 1929 and as long as we appear to funk dealing with this black hearted villain and allow him to disseminate anti-British propaganda throughout the Islamic world and organize terrorism of any Arabs in Palestine not subservient to him and his Supreme Moslem Council, we cannot hope to maintain law and order or even to be the de facto Government of Palestine." "Clearly too, we ought to do more to back Abdallah and any of his friends and back any enemies of the Mufti we can. I still want to deport the Mufti to the Seychelles as soon as it is practicable to get him. We shall never be able to carry out any policy in Palestine as long as the Mufti is where he is and has the power he has. The disastrous failure to effect his arrest in July is still the main cause of my anxieties and misgivings. Nothing but a strong hand - not with the small fry but with the big, is, in my opinion, any good..... I bitterly regret that we did not give the rebels an effective taste of martial law before the leaders called off the strike and disturbances. Our action or inaction appears to the world to have been weak .... Our one duty now is the maintenance of order with a strong hand. The only deterrent to crime is the certainty of its punishment. This is lacking in Palestine today and steps must be taken, in cooperation with the military, to alter this state of things."

133. See observation by Shuckburgh 7.9.37. Ibid.

The Mufti, on his side, after publishing the Supreme Committee's manifesto deploring the crimes and appealing for peace, continued his political offensive. The real opposition to partition was supported by a drive of "spontaneous" opposition organised by the Mufti's assistants in towns and villages all over the country.<sup>134</sup>

On 4.9.37, the Mufti sent on behalf of the Supreme Committee, a protest to the Chief Secretary against the continuance of Jewish immigration.<sup>135</sup>

On the 8th, 9th and 10th September, a vast pan-Arab Congress called "the National Arab Congress" was held at Bludan to voice vigorous protest against the British policy of partition in Palestine.

The Bludan Congress<sup>136</sup> was planned during the visit of the Mufti in Syria during June and was organized by Muin al Maadh, who was selected for this task by the Mufti, and Nabih al Azmah in the name of the "Damascus Committee for the Defence of Palestine". The expenses of the Congress were covered by the Mufti.

134. In a letter to the Mufti dated 12.7.37, Sheikh Muhammad Hashim al Khatib wrote the following :- "In accordance with your Eminence's instructions, I exerted my best efforts by the sending of telegrams to his E. the Higher Commissioner protesting against partition and supporting the Arab Higher Committee which is working for the realisation of the country's aspirations... We are endeavouring to arrange the despatch of a large number of telegrams in the names of villages".... The Jewish Agency obtained possession of a photograph of this letter and passed it to the authorities. See C.O. 733/332/75156.
135. See "Falastin" 6.9.1937. See also enclosure to Battershill's letter to Ormsby-Gore 22.9.37 C.O. 733/330/75113.
136. The information in this chapter on the Bludan Congress is based on a memorandum by G. Mackereth, the British Consul in Damascus sent to the Foreign Secretary, A. Eden on 15.9.37, together with its enclosures, a memorandum by a person named X - an Arab participant in the Congress - and a copy of a verbal report made by an informant who succeeded in attending a secret meeting of the more extreme Palestinian and Syrian elements of the Congress. For full particulars and a list of important participants, see file "Arab Congress at Bludan". C.O. 733/353/75718/35 which includes the full reports of the Political, Economic and Propaganda Committees. See also Darwaza Op Cit. pp.183-85 and A. Zuaitar Op Cit. pp.116-117.

The general tone of the Congress was vehemently anti-Zionist but not anti-British. No Minister from any country participated, but the Congress was attended by more than 400 national leaders from all Arab countries.<sup>137</sup>

The extreme elements - mainly Palestinian and Syrians - were not satisfied with the results of the Congress<sup>138</sup> and held a close secret meeting of their own which discussed the problem of renewing the rebellion.

It was stated that considerable accumulations of arms and ammunition had been made and hidden in different parts of Palestine under the direction of the Mufti and others.<sup>139</sup>

The Bludan Congress succeeded in crystallizing a general far-flung Arab opposition to the partition plan.<sup>140</sup>

137. 160 Syrians, 128 Palestinians, 65 Lebanese, 39 Transjordanians, 12 Iraqis - among them the President of the Congress, the ex-Iraqi Prime Minister, Naji al Suweidi who very ably led the moderates and was mainly responsible for the comparatively weak anti-British character of the Congress - 6 Egyptians and 1 Saudi-Arabian. Ibid.
138. Though its moderation probably added to the influence of its resolutions which were : 1) Palestine is an Arab country 2) unqualified rejection of the Partition plan and the proposal to establish a Jewish state, 3) the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, and the establishment of an Arab State which would sign a treaty with Britain and would guarantee the rights of the Jewish minority. Ibid.
139. See the report of the secret meeting on 10.9.37. Ibid.
140. The Congress was very widely covered by the Arab press in Palestine. See issues of the 2nd and 3rd week of September. The Mackereth memorandum contained also this paragraph :- "Incidentally the Palestine Broadcasting Service lent a generous hand by broadcasting at great length the proceedings of the Congress (It is a matter for conjecture how far the British Authorities in Palestine followed these accounts of the Arab commentator)". Ibid.

In a telegram to the League of Nations sent 3.9.37, the Supreme Committee re-affirmed the resolutions of the Bludan Congress.<sup>141</sup> The Mufti, however, could not fully exploit the political usefulness of the Bludan Congress in Palestine because of further developments.

On 26.9.37 at about 6.0 p.m. Mr. L.Y. Andrews, the District Commissioner in Galilee, who had been placed first on the Mufti's black list was murdered by Arab assassins,<sup>142</sup> together with his police guard whilst walking to church. The O.A.G. gave orders for the arrest of all suspects, both terrorist and political. 109 were taken during the night of 26/27 September and by 30 September about 200 suspects were detained in Acre Detention camp. Only very few Arabs, including Dr. H. Khalidi, attended the funeral and there was no Arab feeling of sorrow or show of sympathy.

On 27.9.37, the Supreme Committee published a statement<sup>143</sup> deploring the crime and condemning its perpetrators. The statement was published by all Arab papers on 28.9.37 without comment. On 29.9.37, however, Arab papers took the line<sup>144</sup> that while the Arabs sincerely condemned the two murders and terrorism in general, the Government was far from justified in exploiting the tragic event by imprisoning without trial hundreds of innocent Arabs.

On 29.9.37 the Supreme Committee asked the O.A.G. to receive them as a body. Realizing that they proposed to make an official protest over the arrests, he refused to see them, so the Mufti sent him a protest by letter<sup>145</sup> asking that a copy be transmitted to the Prime Minister and the

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141. "Falastin" 4.9.37. See also full text of the telegram in the O.A.G.'s cable to the Colonial Secretary 13.9.37. C.O. 733/351/75718/6.

142. For a full story of the murder and the following events, see Report by Keith Roach to the Chief Secretary 9.10.37 and the O.A.G.'s letters to Ormsby-Gore 14.10.37 and 23.10.37 C.O. 733/332/75156/Pt.I.

143. "Falastin" 28.9.37. "al-Liwa" 28.9.37.

144. "Falastin" 29.9.37. "al-Liwa" 29.9.37.

145. For the full text of the protest see enclosure to Battershill letter to Ormsby-Gore 29.9.37 C.O. 733/333/75156/23.

the Colonial Secretary.

The Cabinet discussed the Palestine situation on 29.9.37<sup>146</sup> and decided that steps must be taken at all costs "to re-affirm and establish the full authority of the Government". The Colonial Secretary accordingly authorized the O.A.G. to take the necessary steps.<sup>147</sup> However, on the insistence off the Secretary of State for India, it was decided not to lay hands on the Mufti as long as he remained in the Haram area. On 1 October, at dawn, the action which was authorized by the Colonial Secretary was put into operation. The Arab Supreme Committee and all national committees in Palestine were declared to be unlawful associations. Warrants of arrest were issued in respect of the members of the Supreme Committee. Dr. H. Khalidi, Fuad Saba, the Secretary of the Supreme Committee, and Ahmed Hilmi, its Treasurer, were arrested during the day, and together with Rashid Haj Ibrahim, who was arrested in Haifa, were placed on a naval ship and early on the following morning Y. Ghusein surrendered himself and was embarked on the ship which left with the five deportees for the Seychelles. Jamal Hussein, however, succeeded in escaping to Syria.

The Mufti, Haj Amin al Hussein, was deprived of his two posts of President of the Supreme Moslem Council and Chairman of the General Waqfs Committee.<sup>148</sup>

146. Cab. Con. 36 (37) 29.9.37.

147. Ormsby-Gore to Battershill 29.9.37. C.O. 733/332/75156.

148. On 16.10.37 after the Mufti's escape, a commission was appointed to control and manage the finances of the Moslem Awqaf in Palestine. Palestine Gazette No. 731 16.10.37.

An official Communiqué <sup>149</sup> concerning these acts was issued at noon. It was broadcast, however, only at 7.0 p.m. and published in the press only the following morning. Simultaneously with the issue of the Official Communiqué to the press, all editors were prohibited from making any reference or comments on these events until further notice. <sup>150</sup>

1 October passed on the whole quietly but on 2 October there was a small demonstration of Arab youths in Jerusalem followed - partly as a result of threats - by a general closure of all shops in the Old City of Jerusalem. The movement to close the shops started to spread to other parts of Palestine but by 5th October it had completely petered out. This, partly at least, could be ascribed to the Mufti who realized that the movement was only a half-hearted affair, and not wishing its failure to appear as a result of the Government's firm measures issued on 4th October a manifesto <sup>151</sup> calling on the Arabs to return to work.

To prevent publication of such additional pamphlets by the Mufti, censors orders were issued on 6.10.37 <sup>152</sup> declaring all printed matter -

149. Official communiqué No. 16/37 "Falastin" 2.10.37.
150. This prohibition was removed at midnight on 5th/6th October. The editors, however, were warned against the publication of false reports or false rumours or extreme comments.
151. I could not find a copy of this manifesto as it was not published in the Arab papers. The fact that it was issued is mentioned in Battershill's letter to Ormsby-Gore of 14.10.37. C.O. 733/332/75156/Pt I

- including photographs and pictures dealing with the Mufti's movements and activities to be prohibited matter, liable to seizure.

On the night of 14/15 October, the Mufti, disguised as a woman, reached the sea-shore where a boat was waiting for him and he reached Beirut on the morning of 16.10.37 under the name of Mohammad al Jaafari.<sup>153</sup>

Two nights earlier, on 12/13 October, the Mufti convened in the court of the Haram ash Sharif a meeting of the band leaders and instructed them to renew the rebellion. The Mufti prepared a manifesto to that effect to be published on the morning of 15.10.37.<sup>154</sup>

On the evening of 14th October, according to a pre-determined timetable, the comparative peace which had prevailed in Palestine since the end of the strike in October 1936 was suddenly and violently broken by a series of violent activities. The second stage of the rebellion was on. By the end of October, however, it had almost subsided and during November the normal life of the country had been little affected and the day to day routine of life in Palestine had not been untowardly disturbed.<sup>155</sup>

The Arabic press adopted a very careful tone and the opposition papers discussed the political developments as if nothing had happened.<sup>156</sup> "al Sirat al Mustakim" published on 26.10.37 a leading article under the heading

153. "Al Ahram" 16.10.37. Waters Op Cit. p.17. Incidentally when it was learned on Friday morning 15.10.37 that the Mufti did not attend prayers in the al Aqsa Mosque rumours began to spread that he had left the Haram. These rumours "were denied from authorized Arab quarters where it was given out that he was suffering from tonsillitis". Battershill to Ormsby-Gore 23.10.37 C.O. 733/332/75156/ Pt I
154. The memoirs of the Mufti, published by "Ahabar al Yam" 5.6.57. No other source to the best of my knowledge mentions the Manifesto. The Mufti explains his escape by the fact that he had learned of the Government's intention to send Moslem soldiers from India into the Haram area to arrest him there. See also Y. Orman Op Cit. p.82.
155. Probably because of the winter. The Rebellion started again in early 1938. The Mufti, however, claimed that the renewal of the rebellion forced the British to drop the partition plan. See Haqaiq Op Cit. p.47
156. See "Falastin" "Sirat al Mustakim" and "Mirat al Sharq" of 16/31.10.37.

"What happened is enough" in which it proposed to open a new chapter and called upon R. Nashashibi and the "National Defence Party" to lead the people and to defend their interests as there was no one else to do it.<sup>157</sup>

The Government desired to believe that by his escape, the Mufti had lost influence and ceased to be the leader of the Palestinian Arabs.<sup>158</sup>

It also wished to impress the Arabs that the strong action taken during October had been taken solely due to the necessity for keeping public security and that these actions did not prejudice the Arab case.<sup>159</sup>

In both these assumptions, however, the Government was wrong. Battershill

157. "Sirat al Mustakin" 24.10.37.

158. On 21.11.37 Battershill wrote Shuckburgh: "The influence of the Mufti has definitely waned in Palestine, though the fear that he may come back still operates in that some Arabs, who would otherwise be willing to give us information and help, still fear to do so. Some villagers believe that they have been exploited and then abandoned by the so-called leaders. Outside Palestine, the Mufti's stock is low. He is, in certain circles, looked upon as a coward for having run away, and as he no longer has large sums of money nor any patronage at his command he has much less influence. His personal prestige is not improved by his irritability and by his habit of petulantly blaming Arabs in other countries for not doing more on his behalf. He appears to have been of the firm conviction that his "hejira" (emigration) would be the sign for a general uprising in neighbouring Arab countries on behalf of the Palestinian Arabs. If he can be insulated from major politics, as he is now, for another year or so, he will only have a nuisance value and that a pretty low one". C.P. 286 (37) November 1937.

159. See the Official Communique No. 16/37 of 1.10.37. See also Battershill's letter to Shuckburgh 18.10.37. C.O.733/332/75156.

himself had to admit<sup>160</sup> that most of the Arab Palestinians thought that the Government's action in depriving them of their leaders had been done with the precise object of pushing through the partition scheme, which they considered was dictated by the Jews, without any effective Arab protest. And as for the leadership issue, even Amir Abdallah, the real competitor of the Mufti, had to admit that the only leader of Palestine (al Zaim al Wahid li Falastin) was the Mufti.<sup>161</sup> This reluctantly was also confirmed by the Government.<sup>162</sup>

The Mufti's flight brought to an end an era during which the national struggle against the foreigners was led by Palestinian leaders living in Palestine. Thereafter the command of the struggle moved abroad, and in 1948 it totally passed into the hands of the Arab states.

160. Ibid. Battershill wrote that, "the Arabs consistently confuse the political issue with the security issue". (the leaders, he said were doing that deliberately). "The large bulk of the Arabs cannot and will not believe that this Government has now taken drastic action for any other reason than for breaking down political opposition to H.M.G.'s partition plan".
161. In a conversation with the Iraqi Consul in Palestine 19.12.37. See letter of Iraqi Consul Haifa to the Iraqi Foreign Minister 21.12.37. Iraqi Consulate file No. 3761 I.S.A.
162. See Battershill's letter to Shuckburgh of 21.11.37 in which he wrote: " His (R. Nashashibi's influence in the country is very slight.... the Amir is suspect and carries no weight in Palestine at the moment...." "and though Battershill claimed that "the influence of the Mufti has definitely waned in Palestine" (see note), his description of the situation showed that actually the only one who still had any influence over the Palestinian Arabs was the Mufti. C.P. 286(37) November 1937.

THE MUFTI'S LEADERSHIP

"If great men ever existed, and more particularly, if individuals can in any sense be said to be the authors of revolutions that permanently and deeply alter human lives then" he "was a man of this order".<sup>1</sup> The "he" in this description applies to Weizmann, the Mufti's Jewish counterpart. The Mufti's leadership did alter the lives of his co-patriots, but very much for the worse.

The positive aim of the Arab National movement in Palestine was the establishment of Palestine as an independent Arab state. Its negative aim was to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine or in a part thereof. The personal aim of the Mufti was to lead this Arab movement and the country towards independence and to become its ruler.

In 1947/48, the Palestinians, led and directed for so long by the Mufti - directly until 1937, indirectly through the Husseini family until 1947/48 - were brought to utter ruin and destruction. The Jewish State of Israel was established in the greater part of Palestine, and the remainder of the country was salvaged for the Arabs by its incorporation in the Kingdom of Jordan under the crown of Amir Abdallah, the Mufti's arch Arab enemy.

And yet, it must be remembered, that the Palestinian Arabs, led by the Mufti, were very near - formally at least - to achieving their national aims. When, as a result of the approaching war in 1939, the friendship of the Arabs in the Middle East appeared to be of vital importance to the British Empire, and following the failure of the London Conference of February/March 1939<sup>2</sup>, the British Government published on May 17th its statement of policy known as the Macdonald White Paper<sup>3</sup>.

1. Isaiah Berlin, Chaim Weizmann London 1957 p.1.

2. See file "The London Conference" C.O. 733/406/75872/11.

3. Palestine, Statement of Policy. Cmd 6019. London May 1936.

"It provided for a virtual cessation of growth within the Jewish national home after five years and foreshadowed the creation of a self-governing Palestinian state having an Arab majority".<sup>4</sup>

This British decision, no doubt, was the result of two basic factors :-

1. The unmistakable existence of a more or less organised general will among the whole Arab population in Palestine, Moslems as well as Christians<sup>5</sup> for some kind of national independence, connected with fear and rejection of Jewish dominance and
2. The growing interest and involvement of the whole Arab and Moslem worlds in the fate and affairs of Palestine.

The Mufti contributed to and could have claimed credit for the existence of these two factors, more than any other individual, and the ultimate Arab failure does not change this fact.

It could be further claimed<sup>6</sup> that the Arab failure was not necessarily that of the leadership, but of the Arab society as a whole. In his very short and revealing comparative study of the Jewish and Arab societies in Palestine, W.K. Hancock has described<sup>7</sup> the emphatic inequality between the two communities, the comparative backwardness of the Arabs in the fields of education, political and economical organisation etc., added to which was the support given to the Zionists by the Jewish World community with its command of wealth, influence, intelligence and devotion.

4. P.L. Hanna Op-Cit. p.141.
5. On the situation of the Arab Christians in Palestine and on their participation in the national movement, see the Chapter "The Christians" in my work "The Arab National movement in Palestine During the 30's". Op-Cit.
6. As was actually done by the Mufti himself in his book, Hagaiq, see also the article of Musa Alami "The Lesson of Palestine" pp.373-405 in the Middle East Journal Vol. 3. No. 4. C. Zuraik "The Disaster of Palestine" (Nakbat Filastin) Beirut 1949, Walid Kamhawi "The Disaster and the Construction". (al Nakba wal Bina') Beirut 1955 and others.
7. Hancock, W.K. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs Vol. I. Problems of Nationality 1918-1936. London 1937.

The gap, it was said, between the two communities caused the Arab failure. I would not discuss here this wide subject; it should be noted, however, that the Mufti's leadership proved insufficient to face the Zionist challenge. As against the totality of the Jewish effort, the Arab national movement in Palestine presented disunity, lack of a unified leadership, diversity of opposing plans and policies, no solicitude for the people and their welfare, lack of long range planning, improvisation and lack of seriousness in directing national affairs.

As shown in this study, the Mufti on many occasions collaborated with the authorities in order to obtain some advantage for the Arab cause (and for himself) - which he did. My view is that on the whole the Mufti preferred during the early thirties to follow a moderate line of policy. He could not, however, bring himself to follow this line consistently and courageously.

Describing the policy of the Arab leaders, E. Kedourie writes: "These leaders no doubt calculated that by being intransigent they would obtain more from the British Government than by cooperating and thus tacitly acquiescing in the Mandate and the Zionist Programme which it incorporated."<sup>8</sup>

Being intransigent and extremist was a "must" for any Arab politician aspiring for the leadership. As early as February 1923 Mr. Moddy, the then Acting Chief Secretary, wrote -<sup>9</sup> "In Palestine, a politician cannot hope to be successful unless he is an extremist".

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8. Kedourie Op-Cit p.73. Kedourie goes on to say that this attitude may have been more than mere tactical calculation as they never accepted the fact that they were no longer the masters in the country and members of a ruling group which dominated not only Palestine, but also an extensive empire and that the consciousness of belonging to a ruling, an imperial group, played its part in making the Palestinian leaders adopt the rigid and cutting attitude towards Zionism.
9. In a minute dated 23.2.23 C.O. 733/42. See also Kedourie The Chatham House Version Op-Cit. pp.75-76.

The Mufti - and that was his tragedy - could not be an exception to that rule even if he wanted. Discussing the Mufti's influence in the summer of 1936 the Palestinian correspondent of the Times described it as one-sided, writing:-

"If he should openly declare a Holy War, then all the Arabs of Palestine would gather under his flag and fanatically destroy everything that stood in their way. But he possesses no power to check the stone that he would set a-rolling".<sup>10</sup>

The Royal Commission too in discussing this aspect stated :-

"the extremist has usually kept the lead, the moderate has rarely counted in a struggle for national independence."<sup>11</sup>

The result was that torn between his better judgement and the call of his nationalist followers, his policy gyrated from moderation to extremism, showing different postures at the same time to different observers. "Policies", says E. Kedourie<sup>12</sup> "are meant to succeed, if they fail they are bad policies".

According to that criteria, the Mufti's policy and the Mufti's leadership failed. We could assume, however, and the assumption would most probably be right, that no other Arab Palestinian leader would have fared better at the time.

10. As repeated in L. Farago Op-Cit p.60 I did not find the Times issue in which the a/m passage appeared.

11. The Peel Report p.146. In other places the Royal Commission wrote :  
"But the history of nationalist movements in all parts of the world goes to show that in a struggle for national independence, it is always easier for the extremist than for the moderate to secure the allegiance of his people. And the reason is plain. The mainspring of nationalism in revolt is the desire of a people not merely for freedom but for the equal status with other self governing peoples which freedom implies. And if freedom can be, equality cannot be a matter of degree. Every time, therefore, that a moderate nationalist appeals to his people to accept something less than national independence, he is invariably outbidden by the extremist who demands it in full". Ibid. p.57.

12. Kedourie Op. Cit p.229

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