

CHAPTER IV

THE MU'ARADA AND THE MAJLESIYOUN IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLE (1929-32)

During the British Mandate, Arab opposition to Zionist aspirations was never a transient phenomenon. In fact, it grew in strength with the development of Arab nationalism. Naturally, the desire for self-determination and independence also increased among the Arabs of Palestine. Ironically, after ten years of Mandate rule, the national aspirations of Arabs and Jews became so crystallized as opposite forces the success of one meant the inevitable failure of the other.

The Palestine national movement, in all of its critical stages, failed to obtain diplomatic successes to redress its grievances. Consequently, extreme alienation made it resort to violence as the only means by which it could express its frustration and anger. Undoubtedly, violence also related to the social and economic dilemma within the Palestinian Arab society. These social imbalances contributed to the ultimate failure of the national movement.

The violence of 1920, 1929, 1933 and 1936, could illustrate best Arab frustrations in achieving their goal of independence. Although each outbreak differed in intensity and duration, the constant factor remained the Arab sense of political deprivation which resulted from the growing fear of Zionist domination and the awareness that Zionist ambitions and activities were the only obstacles to the achievement of Arab independence. It was natural then that Arab nationalism in Palestine would become fiercely anti-Zionist and anti-British in form as well as in substance. There were parallels and strong opposites between Zionist achievements and Arab political omission and want of success.

At any rate, the desire to dominate the political scene as manifested in the struggle between the Husseinis and the Nashashibis was marked by the former's manipulation of the religious sentiments of the people. At the end of the 1920's, Haj Amin's position became precarious due to the successful challenge put up by the opposition in both the municipal election of 1927 and the Arab Executive elections of 1928. However, the conflict between Muslims and Jews over the Western Wall in 1928-29 presented a golden opportunity for Haj Amin to regain political influence for himself and the SMC which he headed and directed. At the time, Muslims and Christians were bound together in the struggle against Zionism.

Indeed the issue of the Wailing Wall had mobilized all Palestinians including the mu'arada to counteract Jewish claims to the Holy place.

The Wailing Wall which had religious significance to Jews was adjacent to a Muslim Holy place and the dispute involved the extent of the rights and practices of the two religious groups. It is important to note, that the mu'arada in the beginning did not actively participate in the protest and demonstration preceding the riots and the violence associated with the 1929 Wailing Wall controversy. But when the violence widespread the mu'arada's attitude changed significantly. The Wailing Wall incident became a national issue around which Muslims of all walks of life rallied. The mu'arada feared the issue was enhancing the mufti's prestige and influence and did not want the trend to continue. Its attitude was best reflected in its newspapers Mir'at al-Sharq, Sirat al-Mustaqim and Filastin, whose editorials supported the struggle for the defense of Muslim rights in the Buraq al-Sharif, the Muslim religious shrine adjacent to the Wailing Wall.

Background to the August 1929 Disturbances

There was a background for the 1929 outbreak of violence which should be mentioned here. According to Shaw Commission, in 1928, Arab fears of Zionist schemes were stirred up by the sudden and sharp increase in Jewish immigration. However, in that year the British granted to Moses Novemeysky an affluent Jew - a concession to extract salt from the Dead Sea, which Arabs thought unfairly favored the Jews. However, Arabs' objections to such concessions were rationalized along the line, that the country's natural resources were being handed to Jews and hence the Arabs would not profit from such enterprises. Yet, the Arabs wanted the Government to take over and develop such enterprises in order to benefit the entire country. Also, the Arabs were alarmed that the Jewish National Fund had succeeded in buying additional land from Arab owners. But one of the major grievances that stirred strong resentments among Arabs was the tax structure of Palestine. Arabs believed that paying high taxes especially in terms of the low standard of living among them, was serving British interests in developing the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

These reasons along with other pertinent factors led the Arab community to momentarily forget their political differences and convene in July 1928, a general congress for the purpose of formulating a common position to deal with British Zionist policy. However, the 1929 disturbances abruptly discontinued the Arab dialogue.

The 1929 Wailing Wall Incident and The Outbreak of Violence

The issues of political representation, economic grievances, and Jewish immigration were major factors in the renewed violence of 1929. However, a more specific incident, the "Wailing Wall" or the "Buraq al-Sharif" controversy, triggered the violence that engulfed Arabs and Jews in a bloody war that spread to the other cities of Palestine. No doubt, the 1929 violence left its mark on the inhabitants, both Arabs and Jews, and, for a long time, promised that the future would be even worse than the present.

The Religious Significance of the Wall

Initially, the disturbances occurred in Jerusalem and their immediate causes were the Wailing Wall which had religious significance for both Muslims and Jews.(1) According to the report of the Shaw Commission,

"This Wall forms part of the Western exterior of the Ancient Jewish Temple; being the last remaining vestige of that sacred place it is regarded with the greatest reverence by religious Jews, whose custom of praying there expended back to at least the Middle Age . . . The Wall is also part of the Haram-esh-Sherif, which is an Islamic place of great sanctity, being reckoned next to the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina as an object of veneration to Muslims."(2)

The wall is also the Western boundary of the "Haram-al-Sharif", the Muslim sacred precinct which contains "Masjid al-Aqsa" and the Dome of the Rock from which, Muslims believe, the Prophet Mohammed "tethered" his "Winged mount" al-Buraq when he ascended to Heaven.(3) Muslims consider the Haram to be the third Holiest Shrine in Islam as well as "the center of Muslim Worship in Palestine."(4) The pavement in front of the Wall and the surrounding area form part of the Abu Madian Waqf, (pious foundation), "a Muslim religious and charitable trust which is said to have been founded in the time of Saladin for the benefit of a sect of Muslims of Moroccan origin known as the Mughrabis."(5)

In 1925, Ronald Storrs, then governor of Jerusalem, authoritatively asserted the fact that the Wall and its pavement were: "Legally and juridically . . . a portion of the surface of the "Haram-al-Sharif" and as such, the absolute property of the Muslim Community."(6) Consequently, the British administration in Palestine supported the Muslim position on legal grounds but its position did not end the controversy over Jewish claims and religious practices.

Expansion of the Dispute in 1928

The British position was based on Ottoman regulations of 1840 and 1911, according to which Jews had no ownership right to the site. However, Jews did have the right to visit and worship provided they brought with them no appurtenances as chairs and benches and provided they did not erect a screen to separate men from women.(7) The rationale behind these Ottoman requirements was the fear that the pavement might become an outdoor synagogue thereby giving legitimacy to Jewish claim of ownership, a claim which would violate the rights of the Abu Madian (Muslim) endowment.(8)

However, during the British Mandate, Zionist elements renewed the Jewish challenge to the status quo of the Wall, and, during the 1920's demanded the possession of the Wall and the area adjacent to it. This, of course, became a central issue in Arab politics and another obstacle in Jewish-Arab relations.(9) According to Abboushi, "unfortunately, the British administration did not have a specific governmental agency to deal with issues relating to such matters, nor did it enact new regulations to govern such situations."(10) This was why ". . . the government relied on precedents established during the Islamic period of Palestinian history. In other words, the status quo inherited from the Turks was accepted as the law."(11)

The controversy over the Wailing Wall was made more threatening by the appearance at the scene of the extreme Zionist elements which were led by Vladimir Jabotinsky who, by 1928, had created a "sizable and politically disciplined Revisionist following in Europe and had expanded the training of his . . . Brit Trumpeldor (BETAR) units which were sent to Palestine for military and pioneer service."(12) The Wall issue gave Jabotinsky and his followers the opportunity to mobilize new support for the revisionist movement.(13) The Hebrew press in Jerusalem was supportive of Jabotinsky's position on the Wall for it had already made public demands for a revision of the status quo.(14) Such demands could

not fail to excite the Arabs and stir them to a frenzy. Haj Amin and other Muslim leaders began "an active internal campaign to raise Palestinian religious consciousness of the perceived danger to the Haram-al-Sharif."(15)

The uproar was rapidly being transformed to a war. An incident occurred in Jerusalem on September 24, 1929, the Jewish Day of Atonement that later triggered a series of violent clashes. This incident involved a group of Ashkenazi Jews who "brought a larger ark than was ordinarily used, some mats and lamps, and attached a screen to the pavement in front of the wall, all in preparation for the religious services the next morning."(16) This flagrant violation of regulations governing the Wailing Wall was reported in a "complaint . . . made to the Deputy District Commissioner of Jerusalem (Keith-Roach), by the Mutawalli (guardian) of the Abu Madian Waqf . . ." (17) However, upon the request of Haj Amin, Keith-Roach visited the area and saw the screen put up by the Jewish worshippers "to separate as in a synagogue the women worshippers from the men. This has never been done before, and was objected to by the Muslims."(18) The following day, Mr. Keith-Roach ordered the police to remove the screen. His decision caused an uproar in Palestine and overseas. Jews demanded that this decision be rescinded and recognition be extended to include the right of Jews to control the Wall.(19) However, the British government issued a White Paper in November 1928, reaffirming its previous interpretation of the Law governing the Wall. The status quo remained unchanged.

A widespread Arab campaign of protest against Jewish threats to alter the status quo swept Palestine.(20) Haj Amin, together with other Palestinian religious leaders, started a new plan to protect Muslim Holy places. They publicized their views in Arab newspapers and sent secret messages to Muslim leaders in India. A committee for the Defense of the al-Buraq al-Sharif was founded.(21) According to Abboushi :

"The SMC saw the incident as part of a Zionist plot to usurp the Muslim's religious rights. It feared that Jews wanted to rebuild their ancient Temple, an act which could result in the total destruction of Muslim religious buildings. Jewish leaders denied such intentions, but the excitement continued, and it became obvious that during the crisis the Jews displayed obstinacy, the Arabs acrimony."(22)

The British administration justifies its status quo policy by stating that :

". . . the intervention by the police at the Wailing Wall was necessary to prevent a disturbance of the peace between Muslims, who are the legal proprietors of the site and Jewish attendants who, contrary to long-established custom and precedent, had introduced seats and benches for the use of Worshippers . . ."(23)

The British administration of Palestine asked Haj Amin to use his influence to calm people and bring the situation under control. The mufti expressed his readiness to comply with the government's request after he was assured that the Abu Madian Waqf would not be expropriated.(24) Accordingly, he announced a new strategy consisting of these elements :

"Publicizing the issue to Arabs of Palestine and to the Arab and Muslim Worlds, in order to unite them on the issue; cooperating with the Palestine and British governments while challenging them to adhere to and enforce their traditional policy of the status quo; and taking such action as would uphold Muslim rights around the Wall."(25)

Haj Amin attempted to galvanize Muslim sentiments by convening a General Muslim Conference in Jerusalem on November 1, 1928. The Assembly drew Muslims from all over the Fertile Crescent and Egypt. The resolutions which the Conference passed appeared to embody the same points already communicated by the mufti to the Palestine Government, they were also the same points which the mufti maintained throughout the conflict.(26)

Many participants in the Conference blamed British imperial policy for causing the Wall crisis and "forewarned of a Muslim rising against any European powers attempting to encroach upon the Haram-al-Sharif . . ."(27) The Conference expressed determination to hold the British government responsible for maintaining "public security and the safeguarding of the Muslim Holy Places to prevent any such intrusion on the part of the Jews."(28) Moreover, as a result of the 1928 Muslim Conference a "Society for the Defense of al-Masjid al-Aqsa and the Muslim Holy Places was established primarily to publicize the Wailing Wall controversy. Several appeals and manifestos were published in the pro-Husseini

weekly al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya in late 1928 and early 1929. The British concluded that Haj Amin and "public opinion in Palestine had definitely removed the matter from the purely religious orbit and had made it a political and social question.(29) Following the Conference, the SMC resumed with its remodelling and construction near the Wall. However, one house of the Abu Madian foundation was converted into a Zawiya (religious hospice) and to renew traditional prayer calls, a mu'azzin was authorized. Within a few weeks a British White Paper appeared which,

". . . expressed the Government's hope that Jewish and Muslim officials could agree upon a protocol regulating the conduct of the services at the Wall without prejudice to the legal rights of the Muslim owners in such a way as to satisfy normal liturgical requirements and decencies in matters of public worship."(30)

The Arabs were not satisfied with the terms of the White Paper, because it showed sympathy with the idea of extending Jewish religious practices beyond those that had been allowed by the religious authorities in past centuries. Nonetheless, the mufti informed the British that he would be satisfied with the Government's policy if it would strictly uphold ownership rights as established during the Ottoman regime. By December of 1928, the Muslims' position on the Wailing Wall issue to maintain the status quo(31) despite [British] predisposition toward a negotiated modus vivendi in which Zionist rights would be enlarged."(32)

During the first half of 1929, as the conflict over the Wall intensified, the Zionists seized the opportunity to curtail the Muslims' rights of repairing their own facilities near the Wall. In response to Zionists' initiatives, Muslim religious leaders insisted on the legal status quo as guaranteed by the British White paper of 1928. On the other hand, the Zionists were opposed to British interpretation of the status quo. Consequently, in mid-August, thousands of Jabotinsky's followers in the Betar and Maccabee organizations vowed to regain the Wall even if violence were the only method to attain their goal.(33) However, "early in 1929, the Palestine Government decided to conduct a closer examination of the principal question in the Wailing Wall dispute, namely, the rights of the Jewish worshippers to bring appurtenances to the Wall."(34) Accordingly, the British authorities asked both the SMC and the Chief Rabbinate to submit evidence supporting their

respective views on the question of the wall.(35) However, according to the British Shaw Commission, Haj Amin and the SMC

"returned an early reply to this request and in part supported their statement of the case by documents derived from the time of the Turkish regime. On the other hand, repeated reminders to the Chief Rabbinate failed to elicit any response to the request which had been made to them by the Government."(36)

The Jews organized demonstrations to support the extreme Jewish position. Joseph Klausner led these demonstrations despite efforts by Jewish moderates to stop the militants from demonstrating at the Wall. Jewish militant demonstrations, according to the Shaw Commission, were the immediate cause of the violence.(37)

On the Jewish holy day of Tisha b'Av (August 9, 1929) ceremonies at the Wall, set in motion a chain reaction of events that immensely angered the Muslim Arabs. A group of Jewish extremists raised the Zionist flag at the Wall, sang the Zionist national anthem (ha-Tiqvah) and proclaimed the Wall to be Jewish property. In retaliation, 2,000 Muslims marched to the Wall the following day, tore up a Torah Scroll, and burned some Jewish religious documents.(38) The sheikh of al-Aqsa had instigated procession while Haj Amin was negotiating with the Chief Secretary, and sheikh Hassan Abu Sa'ud, a rival of Haj Amin, delivered an inflammatory speech at the Wall.(39) This Arab counter-demonstration increased tension, however. On the following day, a Jewish boy accidentally kicked a ball into an Arab woman's tomato garden, and he was stabbed by an Arab man while in the garden trying to retrieve the ball. Jews retaliated by killing an Arab picked at random.(40) The funeral for the Jewish boy turned into a political demonstration against the British administration and the Arabs.

During the next week Jabotinsky's "defense" squads and Arab villagers clashed in a number of violent incidents.(41) The British finally quelled the riots, but not before 133 Jews and more than 116 Arabs had been killed.(42) The usual British response to violence was for the London government to send out an investigation Commission in order to recommend pacification measures. On September 14, 1929, the British government announced that a Special Commission under the chairmanship of a colonial judge 'Sir Walter Shaw' would proceed to Palestine, "to

inquire 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."(43) The Commission's report remains to be the most thorough and balanced study of the disturbance.

The Reasons for the 1929 Riots

According to the Shaw Commission :

" . . . racial animosity on the part of the Arabs, consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future, was the fundamental cause of the outbreak of August last."(44)

However, the Muslims felt threatened by Zionist violation of the status quo. They felt it a matter of considerable importance that Jews "had not contented themselves with bringing benches and appurtenances of prayer as in the past . . ." (45) The Shaw Commission described the disturbances in the following terms :

"Racial antipathy, accentuated among the Arabs by a sense of religious grievance and among the Jews by a feeling of humiliation and dissatisfaction, found its outlet in a series of attacks and assaults of varying degrees of severity, which, during the week following the Muslim demonstration, were made by Arabs in the Old and New cities of Jerusalem and, to a less extent, in other parts of the country. On the 23rd of August the more serious disturbances began."(46)

Next in importance were the various activities of the Society for the Protection of the Muslim Holy Places, and, to a lesser degree, of its Jewish counterpart, the Pro-Wailing Wall Committee.(47) Inflammatory articles published in the press by both sides added another dimension to the conflict.

The Wailing Wall affair undoubtedly marked the beginning of the transformation of the Palestine Question from local problem into a pan-Arab Muslim one.(48) Yet, it is important to note the mu'arada's opposition to Haj Amin's position on the Wailing Wall crisis. It accused Haj Amin to have cooperated

with the British during the crisis.(49) Moreover, it also accused him of manipulating the crisis to enhance his position as President of the SMC despite the fact his tenure had been renewed for nine additional years. Finally, the mu'arada attacked the mufti for allegedly embezzling funds contributed by the Muslim World, particularly India, for the renovation of the Dome of the Rock.

Canning's Visit to Palestine

When the riots were over and the Arab Executive was still trying to recompose itself to pacify the situation and control the nationalist movement, a British personality by the name of Captain Robert Gordon Canning came in November 1929, to visit Palestine. Canning was known to be an ardent supporter of the Arab cause in Palestine and a critic of British Arab policy.(50) His visit was historically significant because he carried on unofficial but extensive talks with Palestine's Arab leaders, in which the possibility of introducing a quasi-parliamentary system in Palestine was explored. In these talks, Canning was reviving the 1922 issue of the legislative council. This was the British proposal for self-government which the Mandate agreement required as one of the two British responsibilities in Palestine. As mentioned earlier, the proposal was rejected by the Arabs as being insufficient fulfillment of the obligation.

While in Palestine, Canning was hosted by Fakhri Nashashibi, a relative of Ragheb Nashashibi, the leader of the mu'arada. Fakhri arranged for him several meetings with Arab leaders in both the mu'arada and the majlesiyoun. In these meetings, Canning was trying to develop a dialogue between the British government and the Arab leaders which would lay the foundation for somekind of understanding between the two parties. Several important ideas about the Arab position regarding self-government emerged. The Arabs had suggested changes in the original 1922 proposal that would make it acceptable to them.

One suggestion for changes involved the official language of Palestine. Hebrew, which was, along with Arabic, the country's two official languages, was to be dropped. The only official language to be recognized was Arabic, the language ". . . of the majority of the inhabitants." English was to be used only "under special circumstances."(51)

Also, the Arabs agreed to let the High Commissioner appoint the "President of the Government" who was to be the "President of the Executive Council." The administration of the High Commissioner "will consist purely of English

people."(52) But when (the Arab) President of the Executive Council performed his duties, he "will respect the rights of the minorities," of course, the minorities would "have representation in the council." The High Commissioner would be allowed to appoint "British advisors to all ministries."(53)

In a letter dated November 14, 1929, sent by Canning to the High Commissioner, the former stated that the head of the mu'arada would not accept a parliamentary government without the Arabs having majority control.(54) In respect, Ragheb Nashashibi was not at all different from Haj Amin.

The head of the mu'arada, reported Canning, was vehemently opposed to the veto power held by the High Commissioner over all decisions made by the council under the 1922 proposal. He thought this power was too excessive and unfair in view of the fact it had more weight than that of the majority on the council. Indeed, Ragheb proved to be "the most difficult to convince . . ." on the question of the proposed constitutional changes in the Palestine political system.(55)

The Arabs, according to Canning, expected the constitution embodying the changes they proposed should not, at any rate, be a permanent feature of the system. They implied that more progress toward self-government should be made in five or seven years when another constitutional revision would be affected.(56) The most important changes Arabs anticipated were in the area of executive power which seemed to make the Arab leaders unhappy with the political status quo.(57)

Efforts to End the Violence

As mentioned earlier, the mu'arada really had no choice but to support the 1929 riots and identify with its causes, primarily because people supported them. In doing so, it joined forces with the Grand mufti and the SMC. A great effort was made to unify the national movement. For instance, a letter was drafted on November 15, 1929, to the Times of London to be signed by Ragheb Nashashibi and the Grand mufti, the content of which undoubtedly was very important for it underscored the fact that the riots had received the support of all political factions in the national movement:

"We the undersigned, earnestly desire once again to draw the attention of the British government and the British people to the fact that the recent trouble in Palestine were a spontaneous outbreak on the part of the Arab inhabitants suffering from the effects of ten years of privileged political

Zionism . . . We desire to draw the attention of the British government to the fact that Article 2 of the Mandate is in direct contradiction to the fundamental spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations and if brought before the Hague Court of International Law, would be almost certain declared illegal . . . This land which is Holy soil to nearly half of humanity and which should be in consequence the home of peace has been turned into a land of discord and bloodshed of the attempt to install a political Jewish National Home in Palestine. We think once again that no country can possibly be the national home of 2 different nations."(58)

The statement closed with a request to establish a Constitution recognizing the Arab majority as well as rights of the minorities in Palestine that would continue to be under British Mandate.

The British, however, were not responsive to the appeal by the two principle Palestinian leaders. The British Government imposed severe punishment against those Arabs who had been accused of inciting the riots. Collective punishment was characteristic of the punitive measures carried out by the British administration in Palestine. However, one particular event made things worse. Three Arabs were accused of causing the killing of many Jews in Safad and Hebron and they were sentenced to death. They were Fouad Hijazi, Ata al-Zir and Mohammed Jamjourn. Many concerned Palestinians pleaded on behalf of the three Arabs who were on death row awaiting execution. Even the Arab delegation which had departed to London in 1920, sent to the High Commissioner another urgent appeal stating that:

". . . we have lately received scores of telegrams from all parts of Palestine asking us to beg your Excellency to use your prerogative in commuting these death sentences into periods of imprisonment. Therefore, the Palestine Arab Delegation being well certain of your Excellencies honorable feelings and intentions, dare to beg your Excellency to make good use of your judicial power in changing these death sentences into sentences of imprisonment. By so doing your Excellency will contribute a great deal to public peace and prosperity and will prevent several families composed of old men, women, and children, from becoming a burden on the country and a dangerous element to public peace."(59)

The appeal was rejected and the death sentences were carried out. However, a frantic effort to prevent the Palestinian situation from deteriorating was being made in London.

The Arab Delegation in London (1930)

Before the issuance of the Shaw Commission's Report, the Arab Executive decided to send a delegation to London to try to negotiate some kind of a settlement of the Palestinian problem. The delegation consisted of the leading personalities of the Palestinian Arabs representing almost all shades of political opinion. At the head of the delegation was a Husseini, Mousa Kazim and with him as members were Haj Amin and Ragheb, in addition to three members of the Arab Executive, Awni Abdul-Hadi, Jamal al-Husseini and Alfred Rock.(60) However, there was a small minority of Palestinian Arabs who were opposed to the idea of sending a delegation to London. They believed that the future destiny of the Palestinians should not be determined by London, but by the Arabs of Palestine themselves.(61)

On March 31, 1930, Mousa Kazim delivered the opening speech in the House of Commons in the presence of Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister and Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.(62) He Stated:

"The Palestine Arab Executive which represents all the Arabs of Palestine - Moslems and Christians - have delegated me and my colleagues to submit to His Majesty's Government the following: The people of Palestine joined the Allies during the war, and many of them actually and actively joined the British in the fight against the Allies' enemies. They did it because in 1915 the British Government through their representative, then King Hussein, promised them independence. They were already promised independence of the Arab countries, including Palestine. Therefore, they request that the pledges should be executed . . . The execution of the Balfour Declaration for the purpose of making of Palestine a national home for the Jewish people, has placed the country under certain economic, administrative and political conditions and the policy pursued has curtailed all the disasters and troubles that have occurred in Palestine during the past twelve years."(63)

Concerning the particulars of the Balfour Declaration, Mousa Kazim Said:

"Owing to the dangers that are inherent in the present policy executed in Palestine, we make the following requests. We request that Laws

should be enacted in order to stop instantly Jewish immigration into the country Laws should be enacted to prohibit from now on Jews from acquiring land purchased or otherwise, and to restore to their Arab owners the State Lands that have been taken by the British Government. The other Lands, from which the Arabs were evicted by Jewish Land purchase, would be returned. The present policy, based on the Balfour Declaration, should be altered The present policy is detrimental to the Arab interests as well as to the British interests. Our experience during the last twelve years has shown this"(64)

Mousa Kazim also stressed the need for the establishment of a National Democratic Government representing all the people of Palestine, Muslims, Christians and Jews, without discrimination against creed or race.

On April 5, 1930, the Palestine Arab Delegation sent a letter to Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which the Delegation stressed three main objectives:

1. "The fulfillment of the pledges given to the Arabs by His Majesty's Government in 1915.
2. The establishment of a National democratic government in which the inhabitants of Palestine will be represented in proportion to their numbers without differentiation in race or creed.
3. The alteration of the Zionist policy founded on the Balfour Declaration."(65)
- 4.

Moreover, the Delegation put forward the following demands :

1. "That immigration into Palestine should be stopped pending the establishment of this government when this vital question will be considered from all points of view.
2. That the sale of Land to Jews would be prohibited."(66)
- 3.

It is important to note that the mu'arada was represented in the person of Ragheb Nashashibi whose speech at a meeting of a group of members from both houses of the British Parliament describes best the mu'arada's position. We mention it here because the speech embodies a position very contrary to the image of the mu'arada among many Palestinians who accused it of being soft on Zionism and British imperialism.

"Go through the pages of your glorious history and you will see there a small black spot. Is it the desire of the Great British nation that this black spot should remain there? The answer is certainly "No". Then it is within your own power you representative, of this Great Nation to eradicate this black spot and replace it by a Golden spot which would brighten the already bright and glorious pages of History of British justice . . . Will there be amongst you who would stand on the pulpit of your great Parliament and cry for Justice to us as you have already cried for Justice to other nations of the World?"(67)

This position of the mu'arada did not differ from that of the majlesiyoun and this could be substantiated by the records of the House of Commons. These records prove beyond any doubt the fact that the Arab delegation spoke the same political language regardless of the divisions and factions within it.(68)

Unfortunately, the United Front of the Arab parties in the delegation failed to persuade the British Government to adopt a more flexible policy towards the Arabs and Palestine. On April 21, 1930, the Colonial office told the Arab delegation that Britain "Would continue and administer Palestine according to the terms of the Palestine Mandate," and that the mandate "was an international obligation from which there could be no question of receding."(69)

Furthermore, on the question of Self-Governing institutions, the Colonial office blamed the Arabs for the failure of attempts to introduce it:

". . . the absence of any such measure of Self-Government in Palestine is directly due to the failure of the Arab representative leaders to take advantages of the opportunities which have been offered them in the past to co-operate with the Administration in the government of the country."(70)

At any rate, the Delegation's negotiating efforts were not that successful. However, even on the question of the possibility of a meeting between the Arab Delegation and Zionist leaders, there was unanimity of opinion that such meeting should not take place. The idea of the meeting was brought up by R.S. Reute a British mediator, in a letter wrote to Ragheb Nashashibi on April 25, 1930, in which he stated:

"On several occasions when I met the members of the Palestinian Arab Delegation - I suggested to them that an informal and not binding meeting with one of the leaders of the Zionist Organization might well serve to create a favorable atmosphere for negotiations which the government will probably bring about in the near future . . . While I am under the impression that the Delegation is not disinclined to reconciliation and cooperation, provided that its fundamental claims are admitted, I feel convinced that they are firmly determined to deal exclusively

with the Govt, from which they expect the acceptance or the rejection of their well considered demands and this is in accordance with the strong anticipation of their countrymen."(71)

Reute reported that Zionist leaders gave him the idea that they were prepared "to adjust their maximum concessions as near as possible to the minimum demands of the Arabs."(72) Nashashibi never did respond to Reute's letter, and, as a matter of fact, he declined to meet with him fearing that such meeting would be contrary to the purpose of the delegation's visit to London.

However, before leaving for Palestine, the Arab Delegation issued an official statement lamenting the failure of its mission :

". . . In view of this deadlock our discussions were closed and we have decided to leave for home with the impression that the Palestine Arab case will not be justly solved by the British Government with whom the Zionists have such great influence as to hinder them from doing justice or from removing injustice in our case. Whereas we are deeply convinced by experience that continuation in usurping our rights in Palestine in favor of the Zionist policy means our extirpation as a nation and our consequent disappearance from our country . . ." (73)

The failure of the mission of the Arab Delegation had repercussions in many parts of the Muslim World. Even before the Arab Delegation left London, an All India Muslim Conference on Palestine was held in Bombay to show support for the Palestinian Arabs. It was attended by 50,000 persons who came from all parts of India.(74) And to support the purpose of the Conference about 200,000 demonstrated in the streets of Bombay.(75) The resolutions of the Conference reflected the solidarity of the Indian Muslims with the Palestinian Arabs. These resolutions insisted "that both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate must go" they also supported ". . . the efforts of the Arab Delegation in London in securing the just rights and claims of their countrymen . . ." (76)

Ironically, the British Press did report on the ALL Indian Muslim Conference and it gave it ample coverage in its newspapers. However, the overwhelming support the Arab Delegation received from various Muslim and Arab quarters did not dissuade the British Government from supporting Jewish Zionism and continuing its Balfour Declaration policy.

Upon the return of the Delegation to Palestine, it was obvious that the country had entered a new stage in its political development and orientation. This was Arab radicalism which would ultimately resort to violence as the only method available for the Arabs to stop what they considered to be the Zionist threat to their national interests and rights.(77)

The White Paper (October, 1930)

Every time conflicts develop into violence the British were in the habit of forming Commissions to investigate the violence and recommend solutions to the problems that caused it. The Shaw Commission investigated the 1929 disturbances and filed its report in April, 1930. According to the British Government, the report :

"gave rise to acute controversy, in the course of which it became evident that there is considerable misunderstanding about the past actions and future intentions of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in regard to the administration of Palestine."(78)

As a matter of fact, the report of the Shaw Commission drew attention to certain aspects of the problem which promoted the Government to order another study of the problem and weigh the possibility of introducing change in its future policy towards Palestine.(79) Accordingly, it sent to Palestine an expert by the name of Sir John Hope-Simpson to confer with the High Commissioner of Palestine and report to the Government on Land settlement, immigration and development. This decision was taken by the Government on the assumption that these issues represented the crux of the matter - the Palestinian problem.

Sir John Hope-Simpson (formerly a civil servant in the Government of India) reached Jerusalem on May 20, 1930, did his investigations and left Palestine in August when he went to Athens to write his report.(80) The report was published on October 20, 1930, as cmd. paper 3686 also known as the Hope-Simpson Report. The paper also included an official 'Statement of Policy' unofficially known as the 'Passfield White Paper'. The Zionists considered this Statement of policy as a repudiation of the pledges made to the Jews and they promised to go to the League of Nations to repudiate it. Of course, the Arabs saw some hope in the Statement, although they suspected the British would not implement the policy.

In his report, Hope-Simpson stressed the fact the Palestine was a very small place, an area of only 10,435 square miles, of which more than three-quarters was uncultivable.(81) This fact had something to do with the problem of Jews and Arabs, in the sense that the Zionist project was difficult in such a small area.

Hope-Simpson, according to Abboushi, "was to test the findings of the Shaw Commission."(82) His report of October 1930, made it explicit that the economic condition of the Arab worker suffered a great deal as a result of Jewish

colonization and also as a result of the traditional economic system. The Arab worker's low-pay and chronic unemployment was partly a "by-product of Jewish settlement of Land and Jewish methods of colonization." (83) Hope-Simpson pointed out that before Zionist intervention Jewish presence in Palestine was peaceful and friendly. The policy of the P.I.C.A. (Palestine Jewish Colonization Association) during the nineteenth century was useful to the Arabs: "Arabs profited largely by the installation of the Colonies, and relations between the colonists and their Arab neighbors have in the past been excellent." (84) However, "Hope-Simpson pointed out that the Zionists practiced discriminatory Labor policies [against Arabs] while proclaiming in public that they were fair labor policies." (85) The Zionists argued that if jobs were open to competition in the open market, Jewish workers would "fall to the lower standard of the Arab." (86) Hope-Simpson came to the conclusion that Zionist "colonization" was causing Palestinian land to be "extra territorialized." The land, he stated "ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future." (87)

However, Hope-Simpson's basic conclusion was that the Jewish National Home Project could not be implemented without the massive development of Arab agriculture. Moreover, he warned that with the existing poor condition of land, "the country could not absorb 'agricultural' immigration." (88)

The Zionists rejected Hope-Simpson's conclusions and recommendations regarding his assessment of Palestine's "absorptive economic capacity," Jewish immigration, land and labor policies.

At any rate, the White Paper of 1930, brought no changes to British policy in Palestine. It simply reiterated the old policy in a language less offensive to the Arabs. Even such a mild document could not fail to irritate the sensitive Zionists who were determined not to sit idle allowing the Arabs to get any concessions from the British. They used all their influence in London and threatened to move the headquarters of the Jewish Agency from London to New York and to reduce their business activities in Britain. (89) Zionist tactics worked. The Prime Minister sent a letter on February 13, 1931, to Weizmann, the Zionist leader, in which he expressed the government's good intentions in facilitating Jewish immigration and landownership :

"Further, the Statement of Policy of His Majesty's Government did not imply prohibition of acquisition of additional land by Jews. It contains no such prohibition nor is any such intended. What it does contemplate is such

temporary control of land disposition and transfers as may be necessary, not to impair the harmony and effectiveness of the scheme of land settlement to be undertaken . . . His Majesty's Government did not prescribe and did not contemplate any stoppage or prohibition of Jewish immigration"(90)

The MacDonald letter, known to the Arabs as the Black letter, went a long way to assuage the Zionists. Weismann, the leader of the Zionists, issued a friendly statement to which the Executive of the Jewish Agency and Dr. Nahum Goldman and Dr. I. Grunbaum, representatives of the Radical Zionists had agreed. In part, the statement said:

". . . this action [the MacDonald letter] has in my opinion reestablished a basis for that cooperation with the Mandatory on which our policy is founded. The losses which the past years severe political crisis has inflicted on our work are serious. Palestine has suffered from an economic depression which, while to a certain extent [is] connected with the worldwide economic crisis, has been rendered very much worse by the political situation. The confidence required for economic enterprise and development has been lacking. The basis for cooperation having been restored, confidence in the economic future of Palestine should revive, and with redoubled endeavour World Jewry should resume work in Palestine."(91)

Weizmann stressed that the work undertaken by the World Zionist Organization to build the Jewish National Home was bound to benefit Palestine as a whole, and that all three parties involved, the Mandatory, the Arabs and the Jews, will work together constructively for the future good and development of Palestine.(92)

Arab Reactions to MacDonald's "Black Letter"

Immediately after the content of the "Black Letter" became known, the Arabs reacted quite negatively and forcefully believing that Zionist influence in London

could change Government policy very easily. Mousa Kazim wrote a letter of protest on February 31, 1931, to the High Commissioner rejecting what he considered to be a retreat from the Passfield White Paper Policy.(93) Generally, the Arabs ruled out any possibility, of cooperation between Jews and Arabs.(94) However, the Arab Executive went even further, when it published its "Declaration to the Noble Arab Nation" stating that the British Government could not be trusted to safeguard the legitimate interests of the Arab people of Palestine because it was to resist Zionist pressure. However, many elements in the Arab National Movement were not satisfied with the Arab Executive's mild reaction. Cables and letters were sent to the Arab Executive demanding the convening of a nation-wide conference to discuss measures of non-cooperation with the government.(95) The A.E. was too divided to respond to popular demands regarding such a conference. While radical members like 'Abd al-Qadir al-Muzaffar, Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim demanded the adoption of a policy of non-cooperation with the government and even went further to advocate civil disobedience, the moderate members from the mu'arada like 'Isa al-'Isa, 'Umar al-Baytar preferred the political and economic boycott of the Jews.(96)

Although, the British Government attempted to put into effect some of the proposals of the 1930, White Paper, for example, the 'agricultural development scheme' the Arabs determined not to cooperate. Moreover, the A.E. declined the invitation extended to it by the British Government to visit London for the purpose of negotiation. However, "the H.C. did not consider as final the negative reply of the A.E. to the suggestion to send a delegation to London."(97) Before the H.C.'s departure for London, he held a meeting at the A.E. Office with Ragheb al-Nashashibi and Haj Amin al-Husseini. In the meeting, the A.E. forwarded its conditions for further talks with the London government. The main points stressed were the following: a) The Government should provide land to those Arabs who were evicted from land sold to the Zionists; b) Land should be provided by the government to those poor fellahin who did not own land; and c) Loans intended to finance the 'development project' should be allocated in proportion to the size of the communities.(98)

The news of this meeting with the H.C. leaked out and was the subject of the controversy among the Arabs and this led to the weakening of the A.E. in the eyes of the Arab public. From the summer of 1931, the A.E. was scarcely convened and its prestige and influence began to wane,(99) according to Porath. As a result, Arab politicians, in particular, the radicals, began to pursue different political paths. Some opted to establish, in the early 1930's, political parties thereby

opening a new phase, which was different from the traditional style of political moderation. The National movement had become more modern, more diversified, and more radical.

The Majlesiyoun and the General Islamic Congress in Jerusalem (1931)

The British Government's retreat from its White Paper Policy prompted Haj Amin to call upon the Islamic World to help the Palestinian Arabs in their confrontation with the British and the Zionists, an idea which had strong appeal among many of the Arab leaders. The MacDonald's letter was an important factor in the adoption by the Palestinian leadership of a new strategy of closer alliance with the Arab and Muslim worlds to achieve 'Palestinian independence within the framework of Arab Unity'.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ This strategy helped Haj Amin and the radical wing of the nationalist movement to assume greater importance not only in the affairs of Palestine but also in the politics of the region as a whole. However, support for the idea of an Islamic congress had also been enhanced by the events of 1928 and 1929 which had strong religious overtones. Also, of even greater significance was the formation of the Zionist International Wailing Wall Commission in June 1931, which, from the Arab point of view, was an additional threat to their religious rights.

Haj Amin's Early Islamic Appeals

Early efforts to win political and diplomatic support from Husayn, Faysal and Mustafa Kamal Atatürk in the late 1920's were successful. They, nevertheless, proved to be inadequate to alter the course of events in Palestine.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Simultaneously, continuing efforts to secure Islamic support outside the Arab World underscored the importance of Jerusalem to Muslims as a sacred place reminding Muslims of their responsibility for maintaining al-Haram al-Sharif, in which stood Masjid al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Early ties with the Muslim World went back to 1921, when the SMC was established. At the time the Haram area which had been neglected by the Ottoman authorities desperately needed reparation. Haj Amin, as the appointed President of the SMC, took upon himself the responsibility of collecting funds from the Muslim Arab and non-Arab World in order to repair part of the Haram area. He used the fund drive as a

means to heighten Muslim concern for Palestine and to enhance his position as guardian of the sanctuary. He travelled, as head of several delegations, to Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain and even to Iran in the early 1920's, and appealed for help to all Muslim sects, Shi'ites and Sunnis.(103) Good amounts of money were collected reaching the total of 95,000 (Palestinian pounds) by the summer of 1928, enough for the first stage of the repairs.(104) These delegations brought the Palestine problem to the fore of Muslim concerns securing for the Arabs of Palestine the active support of the Muslim world. And when the 1929 disturbances took place in Palestine, Muslim scholars and notables came rushing to assist the Palestinian Muslims in arguing their case before the International Commission which came to Palestine in May, 1931, to investigate the ownership of al-Buraq.(105) The thrust of their argument was that the Muslims of Palestine were merely the custodians of al-Haram al-Sharif which belonged to Muslims everywhere.(106) It seemed Haj Amin's manoeuvring proved to be successful in focusing Muslim international attention on the plight of Palestinian Arabs. According to Darwazah, the idea of convening the Islamic Congress was brought up when the Tunisian leader 'Abdul-'Aziz al-Tha'alibi was in Jerusalem. During his visit, the Tha'alibi argued that the internationalization of the Palestinian problem would give it an Islamic character. The idea was accepted by many prominent Islamic notables, and, consequently, a preliminary committee was established with Haj Amin as President and 'Abdul-'Aziz al-Tha'alibi, Amin al-Tammimi, Izzat Darwazah, Ahmad Hilmi 'Abdul-Baqi, Sheikh Mahmoud al-Daoudi, Sheikh Hasan Abu al-Su'ud and Ajaj Nuweihed as members.(107) The effort to promote the status of Jerusalem in the Islamic World was further boosted in January 1931, when the body of Mohammed Ali, the former president of the Indian Islamic Khilafat Committee, was brought to Jerusalem and buried in Haram al-Sharif.(108) This event gave Haj Amin status and prestige among the Muslims of India who subsequently came to Jerusalem in huge numbers to visit the tomb of their dead leader.(109)

However, Haj Amin did not publicly call for the convening of the Congress until after the idea was approved by the SMC on July 27, 1931. The actual invitations went out on October 20, 1931.(110) Many of the invited guests were prominent 'Ulamas who came from twenty two different countries.(111) In addition, there were representatives of the national movements in the Arab East.(112) From Iraq, for instance, several MP's scientists and men of letters like Kashif al-Ghata'i and Sa'id Thabit, Sheikh Bahjat al-Athari, Ibrahim al-Wa'ith, Majid al-Karghouli and Hasan Rida, were invited.(113) However, invitations were also sent to kings,

political leaders and notables. One king responded: he was the Imam of Yemen.(114)

The invitations set forth the intention of the Congress to discuss the protection of the Holy Places in Jerusalem and to discuss other Muslim affairs.(115) It was decided that the congress should be held on December 17, 1931, the date commemorating Laylat al-Isra' (according to Muslim beliefs, the date marks the occasion when the prophet Mohammed journeyed from Arabia to Jerusalem).

Opposition to the Congress

Before discussing the resolutions and recommendations of the Congress, it is worthwhile to shed some light on the background of events that prompted leading personalities like Haj Amin and Shawkat 'Ali of India, to make the entire venture of convening a World Islamic Congress in Jerusalem, possible. However, since the inception of the idea, there were many who opposed it due to various reasons; a) the opposition of the British authorities and the Zionist movement to the Congress, b) the political and religious leaders of the Islamic World, who were afraid that the Congress would deal with the Caliphate issue, c) the mu'arada in Palestine, which was scared of Haj Amin's manipulation of the Congress in bolstering his undisputed leadership in Palestine and the Islamic World.(116) However, these oppositions created obstacles as to the success of the Congress.

Although many leading Palestinian notables supported a World Islamic Congress to be held in Jerusalem, there were also many who opposed it. As mentioned earlier, the mufti saw the Congress as the means for strengthening the Arab movement in its struggle against Zionism and the Mandate. Of course, the prospect of an Islamic Congress in Jerusalem was naturally not appealing to the Zionists.(117) They, of course, opposed the Congress because they feared that the Wailing Wall controversy might be revived. Moreover, they believed that 'the mufti's position may be strengthened, and at the same time the position of the forces opposing him weakened . . ."(118) The fact that Haj Amin could obtain more power and prestige from the convening of such a congress was equally unappealing to the mu'arada.

Championed by the Nashashibis, the mu'arada printed in Mir'at al-Sharq a series of anti-congress articles in which it criticized the program of the congress for ambiguity. In particular, it attacked the idea prevalent among members of congress, of founding an Islamic University in Jerusalem similar to the al-Azhar

University of Cairo on the grounds such a University would be wasteful of resources since it duplicates the older institution.(119) The mu'arada also criticized the discursive manner in which the preliminary committee was selected i.e., without informing the Arab Executive.(120)

The mu'arada also published a statement in which it raised twenty-one questions, directed to the mufti and the majlesiyoun, regarding improprieties in the convening of the Congress.(121) In addition, petitions were signed by its leaders and made public in which Haj Amin and the Majlesiyoun were severely criticized for exploiting the Congress issue to promote their private interests. Some of these leaders went as far as contracting several members of the Congress urging them to stand up against Haj Amin and his supporters.(122)

On November 19, 1931, the mu'arada addressed a statement to the Islamic World in which it expressed its dissatisfaction with the whole idea of an Islamic Congress that did not adequately represent all the Muslims of Palestine. This statement was signed by fifty leading personalities, eight of whom were mayors, seven were Arab Executive members, two were members of the SMC in addition to the President of the High Shar'i court of Appeal and several prominent leaders of families and clans in the towns and the villages.(123)

To be constructive, the mu'arada made certain proposals which it claimed were necessary for the success of the Congress. These proposals concentrated on methods to be followed to guarantee fairness and a more representative Congress.(124) However, the principle objective of the mu'arada was to restrict Haj Amin's power and influence in the Congress, to give a chance to the opposition a public forum to articulate its position and policies and a fair opportunity to participate effectively in the forthcoming Congress.(125)

Naturally, Haj Amin had to respond to the accusations of the mu'arada in a counter-statement published in the al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya. The statement reiterated previous arguments concerning the idea of convening of the Congress.(126)

According to Zionist sources, Fakhri al-Nasashibi, a mu'arada leader and a relative of Ragheb, was sent to Egypt "to spread rumors about the object and program of the Congress, moving some of the Egyptian press to write anti-Congress."(127) During his stay in Cairo, Fakhri met Mohammed 'Ali 'Allubah Pasha and Dr. 'Abdul Hamid Sa'id, to clarify the mu'arada's position on the issue of the Islamic Congress. Consequently, the Egyptian government decided to delegate Mohammed 'Ali 'Allubah to go to Palestine and narrow the differences between the majlesiyoun and the mu'aridin. Another Egyptian, Dr. 'Abdul Hamid

Sa'id, President of the Young Muslim Associations in Egypt, went to Jerusalem before the convening of the Congress for the same purpose as that of Mohammed 'Ali's.

However, most of the effort of reconciliation was made by the Indian leader Shawkat Ali. Shwkat met with the leading figures of the mu'arada and after much debate and lengthy sessions he suggested as a solution to the problem allowing twenty members of the mu'arada to participate in the Congress. The mu'arada accepted Shawkat's proposal but Haj Amin would not. Other attempts and alternative solutions were advanced by Shawkat and the Egyptian conciliators but to no avail. Haj Amin and the majlesiyoun seemed obstinate at the same time the mu'arada was constructive and cooperative. The majlesiyoun's rationale was backed on the assumption that they were the true representatives of the Palestinian people while the mu'arada was not.

However, the controversy notwithstanding the Islamic Congress was convened on December 7, 1931, without the mu'arada participation. Ironically, Shawkat 'Ali's peaceful endeavors were not rewarded by the majlesiyoun. He was unfortunately, not elected to the Bureau of the Congress.

The General Islamic Congress (1931)

Haj Amin's strenuous efforts to elevate the status of Jerusalem in the Islamic World received its greatest achievements at the General Islamic Congress of December, 1931.(128) Presided over by Haj Amin and largely financed by the Khilafat Committee, the "Congress almost foundered on the Egyptian and Saudi rulers' rival ambitions to become the Caliph and their fear that Haj Amin was seeking that position for himself."(129) However, because the Congress cancelled this item on its agenda, Ibn Sa'ud sent an official delegation. The Congress began its sessions on December 7, 1931, and lasted till December 17, 1931. During that period of time, seventeen sessions were held(130) at Rawdat al-Ma'aref school in Jerusalem, and 150 delegates representing twenty two different Arab and Islamic countries attended.(131) On the first day, the participants staged a peaceful demonstration to dramatize Islamic unity and the centrality of Jerusalem in the Islamic World. They walked to Masjid al-Aqsa, where the opening session took place and Haj Amin delivered the opening speech. In his speech, Haj Amin made it clear that the Congress would not be used as an occasion for inciting trouble or as a forum for dissidents who wish to spread discord among Muslims. In the first

session, numerous other speeches were heard,(132) and it was not until the second session that the working days of the conference began and its administrative bureau was elected.(133) It is important to note that the largest delegate was the Palestinian, which had fifty members, most of whom were the majlesiyoun and their supporters.(134)

After two weeks of deliberations, the conferees resolved to elect an Executive Committee of twenty five members to be presided over by Haj Amin, and consisting of ten Arabs, three Egyptians, four Indians, four North Africans (in exile), one Persian, one Javanese, one Turk (in exile) and one Bosniak.(135)

The Executive Committee chose a permanent bureau consisting of seven members to implement its decisions.(136) Moreover, eight committees were formed at the Congress to study and to report on matters of concern to the Congress.(137) During discussions of the second session 'Awni-'Abdul Hadi brought the Mandate issue to the fore of the Congress and proposed its termination. However, Shawkat 'Ali, the Indian leader, repudiated the proposal which, consequently, led the members to criticize him and accuse him of being a British surrogate. Nevertheless, in the tenth session held on December 13, the Mandate question was again discussed more thoroughly and a collective anti-Mandate attitude was evidenced.

The resolutions of the Congress were numerous. They dealt with the following topics: 1) The growth of cooperation between all Muslims of the world and the spreading of Islamic culture and virtues; 2) The protection of Islamic interests and the preservation of the Islamic sanctuaries from outside control and intrusion; 3) The limitations of the Christian missionaries' efforts among the Muslims; 4) The establishment of institutions for the unification of Islamic culture and the founding of al-Aqsa University; 5) The full consideration of Islamic affairs that are pertinent to the Muslim World in general.(138)

There were resolutions condemning Zionism, the Mandatory system and colonialism, French policy in Morocco, the Soviet Government's anti-religious policies and Italian actions in Libya.(139)

The Congress of the Palestine Muslim Nation

Haj Amin's refusal to include the mu'arada in his Islamic Congress prompted the latter to call for a separate Islamic Congress to be known as the Congress of the Palestine Muslim Nation. Certain members of al-Khalidi family (specifically,

Khalil and Ahmad Samih), and also the Nashashibi family had met with few of the delegates of the Islamic Congress to protest Haj Amin's actions and policy,(140) sensing that their efforts were futile, Ragheb, Fakhri and Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri travelled throughout Palestine to encourage opposition to Haj Amin and to drum up support for the idea of an alternative congress to be sponsored by the mu'arada.(141)

The "Congress of the Palestine Muslim Nation", as this alternative Congress was known, was convened on December 11, 1931 at the King David Hotel on Jerusalem and was attended by 1500 people. Among the participants were mayors, village leaders, few members of the SMC, and leading Palestinian personalities.(142) However, a small number of individuals attending Haj Amin's congress chose to attend the mu'arada congress as well.

The Congress elected Administrative Board of thirty eight members which in true elected an Executive Committee of eighteen members to put into effect its resolutions. Ragheb, who was presiding over the whole congress, was elected head of the Executive Committee.(143) In addition, special committees were established to deal with various matters of interest to the mu'arada. One of them was essentially a watch dog committee organized to observe the activities of SMC and make sure there was no missing of Awqaf funds or abuse of Shari'i institutions. Moreover, this committee was empowered to prepare, if needed, legal arguments against the mufti and the SMC. The mufti was suspected of corruption and among the illegal practices for which the mu'arada accused him of were the payment of wages to the Muezzinin (individuals who call for prayers) which was prohibited by SMC regulations, charging admission fees to non-Muslim visitors of the Haram al-Sharif without the specific authorization of the SMC, and the misuse of money (the amount of 4,500) received from the Jaffa Awqaf schools.(144) Later, on January 25, 1932, the Administrative Board would send a memorandum to the special committee on corruption directing it to commence legal proceedings against the mufti and the SMC for unlawful conduct. Haj Amin was accused of violating the law for accepting two salaries one from the government and one from the Awqaf funds. Apparently, the aim of this measure was to force the mufti to give up his SMC position.(145)

The principle objections of the mu'arada against the mufti and the SMC were outlined in a letter sent by Rageb Nashashibi to the High Commissioner on December 13, 1931. The letter made certain demands which, in the opinion of the mu'arada, were necessary in order to rectify certain errors in the organizations and procedures of Islamic institutions.(146) Among these demands were the

cancellation of the laws and regulations which placed the Shari'i courts under the jurisdiction of the SMC. The mu'arada wanted these courts to be separate and independent. The letter objected to the procedure by which heads of the Shari'i courts of appeal were appointed by the High Commissioner. The mu'arada wanted these judicial officials selected by the ulamas (learned men of Islam). It also desired that the entire Islamic court system be controlled through its own internal mechanism so that the High Court of Appeal would be able to appoint and dismiss judges, formulate rules and regulations for all religious courts and control the Orphan's Fund. The High Commissioner would receive periodical reports on the judicial system from the President of the High Court of Appeal.

Obviously, the mu'arada went beyond the negativism of rejection to propose alternatives to the status quo. Nevertheless, it did consider the SMC to be a political institution rather than a religious institution. And it accused it of violating Article 9 of the Mandate Agreement, thereby objecting to some aspects of its controversial activity. Specifically, it did not approve Haj Amin's handling of SMC finances and Shafiq Abdul Hadi represented the mu'arada when he wrote a letter to Haj Amin requesting a full report on SMC finances saying such statement was overdue since the SMC did not issue one after 1923.(147)

The importance of the mu'arada congress was in providing a public forum from which it could express its political views and concerns, of course, it justified the congress on the grounds it was refused participation in the other congress, the one led by Haj Amin. Yet it was clear that the Palestine Arab National movement was haplessly divided. The two congresses made this unfortunate division very clear and obvious. Neither the majlesiyoun nor the mu'arada benefited from the outcome.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 34.
- (2) cmd. 3530, p. 27.
- (3) Holy Qoran, Sura 17.
- (4) Philip Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem in the Political Struggle Over the Western Wall, 1928-29", Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 19, January 1983, p. 104.
- (5) cmd. 3530, p. 28.
- (6) Jbara, Al-Haj M. Amin Al-Husseini, p. 103.
- (7) See the Wailing Wall Commission Report, p. 67.
- (8) Porath, The Emergence, vol. I, p. 258; see also Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 35.
- (9) Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem", p. 105, and Porath, The Emergence, vol. I, p. 258.
- (10) Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 34.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Mary Ellen Lundsten, "Wall Politics: Zionist and Palestinian Strategies in Jerusalem, 1928" Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. 3, Autumn 1978, pp. 12-13.
- (13) Emile AL-Ghouri, Al-Mou'amarah al-Kubra (The Great Conspiracy) Beirut, 1955, p. 66.
- (14) Lundsten, "Wall Politics", p. 13.
- (15) Johnson, Islam and the Politics of Meaning, p. 25.
- (16) Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem", p. 105.
- (17) Jbara, Al-Haj M. Amin Al-Husseini, p. 109.
- (18) Bentwich, Mandate Memories 1918-48, p. 131.
- (19) Lesch, Frustration, p. 426.
- (20) Al-Kayyali, Tarikh Filastin al-Hadith, p. 139.
- (21) cmd. 3530, p. 32.
- (22) Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 35.
- (23) Fannie Fern Andrews, The Holy Land Under the Mandate, Boston, 1931, pp. 225-26; see also the Western Wall in Jerusalem, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies presented by the Command of His Majesty, November 1928, Cmd. 3229, p. 108.
- (24) Lundsten, "Wall Politics", p. 20.
- (25) Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem", p. 108.

- (26) Ibid., see also 'Arif, Al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh al-Quds, p. 402, and Bayan al-Hout, Al-Qiyadat wa al-Mou'assassat, pp. 220-222.
- (27) Lundsten, "Wall Politics", p. 20.
- (28) Cmd. 3530, p. 32.
- (29) Andrews, The Holy Land Under the Mandate, p. 243.
- (30) Lundsten, "Wall Politics", p. 21.
- (31) White Paper of 1928, cmd. 3229.
- (32) Lundsten, "Wall Politics". p. 21.
- (33) An eye witness account of the Zionist militancy on the Wall issue was offered by the Journalist Vincent Sheean in Personal History, N.Y., 1937, and reprinted in Walid Khalidi, ed. From Haven to Conquest, Beirut, 1971, pp. 237-301, and in David Hirst, The Gun and the Olive Branch: Roots of Violence in the Middle East, London, 1977, pp. 66-71.
- (34) Al-Kayyali, Tarikh Filastin al-Hadith, p. 40.
- (35) Ibid.
- (36) Cmd. 3530, p. 34; see also the Stoker's Statement, published in Filastin, February 15, 1930, p. 4.
- (37) Ibid., p. 155.
- (38) Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem", p. 113.
- (39) Lesch, Frustration, p. 428.
- (40) Issa al-Sifri, Filastin al-'Arabiyyah Bayn al-Intidab wa al-Sahyuniyya (Arab Palestine Between the Mandate and Zionism), Jaffa, 1937, pp. 124-125.
- (41) Lundsten, "Wall Politics", p. 23; see also Al-Sifri, Filastin al-'Arabiyyah, pp. 125-128.
- (42) A Survey of Palestine, vol. I, p. 24; see also Al-Sifri, Filastin al-'Arabiyyah, p. 127.
- (43) Great Britian, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1929, p. 4.
- (44) Cmd. 3530, p. 150.
- (45) Porath, The Emergence, vol. I, p. 261.
- (46) Cmd. 3530, p. 155.
- (47) Ibid., p. 164.
- (48) Porath, The Emergence, vol. I, p. 271.
- (49) Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim, August 8, 1929, as quoted in CZA, Z4/5793; see also Filastin, Stoker's Statement, March 8, 1930.
- (50) Darwazah, Al-Qadiyah al-Filastiniyah, vol. I, pp. 62-63.

(51) The Mu'arada's Papers, Captain Gordon Canning's negotiations with the leaders of the Palestine National Movement: Mousa Kazim al-Husseini, Ragheb al-Nashashibi, Fakhri al-Nashashibi and Ya'coub Farraj, on the establishment of a legislative Council in Palestine, November 12, 1929, File 21. Mu'arada's Papers are cited hereafter as MP, however, these private papers are kept with Fakhri al-Nashashibi's relative, Mr. Ghaleb al-Nashashibi in East Jerusalem.

(52) MP, File 21.

(53) MP, file 21.

(54) Gordan Canning to John Chancellor (HC), November 14, 1929, MP, File 21.

(55) Same to same, Ibid.

(56) Ibid.

(57) John Chancellor to R.G. Canning, November 15, 1929, MP, File 21.

(58) Suggestions for a letter to the Times, to be signed by Ragheb al-Nashashibi and the Grand Mufti, November 15, 1929, MP, File 21.

(59) A letter sent by the Arab Delegation in London to the HC, April 4, 1930, MP, File 14. However, the context of this letter is published in Arabic too.

(60) For the complete list of the Arab Delegation's names, see Al-Hout, al-Qiyadat wa al-Mou'assassat, p. 870.

(61) Ibid., pp. 234-235.

(62) Deputation to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Colonies from Palestine Arab Nationalists, regarding the position of the Arabs in Palestine. House of Commons -Monday, March 31, 1930. Along with Mr. Ramsay McDonald and Lord Passfield, there were Dr, Drummond Shields-Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, -Sir John Schuckburgh, Mr. G.I. Clauson and Mr, O.G.R. Williams. MP.The Delegation's Negotiations, File 14.

(63) MP, The Delegation's Negotiations, March 31, 1930, File 14, p. 4.

(64) Ibid.

(65) The Palestine Arab Delegation's letter to Lord Passfield, April 5, 1930, MP, The Delegation's Negotiations, File 14.

(66) Ibid., p. 8.

(67) Copy of the Speech delivered by Ragheb al-Nasashibi at the meeting held in the House of Parliament on April 10, 1930, and was attended by members from the House of Commons and House of Lords. Lord Brentford was in the Chair. MP, File 14.

(68) Deputation to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Colonies from Arab Palestine Interests regarding the position of Palestine-House of

Commons, March 31, 1930, May 1, 1930, May 2, 1930, Colonial Office, May 6, 1930. All these were the complete minutes of the Delegation in London, MP, File 14.

(69) O.G.R. Williams to Arab Delegation, April 21, 1930, MP, File 14.

(70) Ibid.

(71) R.S. Reute to Ragheb al-Nashashibi, April 25, 1930, MP, File 14.

(72) Ibid.

(73) Statement by the Palestine Arab Delegation, May 13, 1930, MP, File 14.

(74) Bayan al-Hout, al-Qiyadat wa al-Mou'assassatm p. 236.

(75) Ibid.

(76) The entire text of the All-Indian Muslim Conference was received by 'Awni 'Abdul-Hadi on April 22, 1930 in order to get published in the British press, MP, File 14, however, a copy of the text had also been published in Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya, issue 372, May 14, 1930.

(77) See, for instance the content of the Telegram sent by the Arab Delegation in London to the Arab Executive in Jerusalem, in Al-Kayyali, Wath'iq al-Muqawamah al-Filastiniyah 1918-29, p. 72.

(78) Cmd. 3692, 1930.

(79) Ibid., p. 3.

(80) John and Hadawi, Palestine Diary, p. 218.

(81) Ibid., p. 219.

(82) Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 57.

(83) Ibid., p. 58.

(84) Cmd. 3692, p. 17.

(85) Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 59.

(86) Ibid., p. 60.

(87) Cmd. 3686, (The Hope-Simpson Report 1930).

(88) Abboushi, The Unmaking of Palestine, p. 66.

(89) Weizmann to Prime Minister R, MacDonald, London, February 14, 1931, published in the Palestine Bulletin, Sunday, February 15, 1931, MP, File 14.

(90) Ramsay MacDonald to Dr. Chaim Weizmann, February 13, 1931, printed for the use of the Colonial Office. Middle East No. 39 Confidential Report. MP, File 14, pp. 8-9.

(91) Weizmann to Prime Minister R. MacDonald, London, February 14, 1931, MP, File 14.

(92) Same to same, Ibid.

(93) Arab Executive President to the HC, February 16, 1931, ISA, AE, 1022.

- (94) Y. Porath, The Palestine Arab National Movement, 1929-39, London, 1977, p. 34.
- (95) Islamic Society in Haifa to the AE, March 2, 1931, ISA, AE, 1022.
- (96) Porath, The Palestine Arab National Movement, 1929-39, p. 34.
- (97) Ibid., p. 37.
- (98) Awni 'Abdul-Hadi's words in AE Session, August 16, 1931, ISA, AE, 3797.
- (99) Porath, The Palestine Arab National Movement, 1929-39, p. 38.
- (100) Khillah, Filastin wa al-Intidab al-Biritani 1922-1939, p. 325.
- (101) Lesch, Frustration, p. 280.
- (102) Ibid.
- (103) Ibid., p. 281.
- (104) Ibid., p. 284.
- (105) Bayan al-Hout, al-Qiyadat wa al-Mou'assassat, p. 231, however, the Muslim Scholars were Mohammed Ali 'Allubah Pasha, Ahmad Zaki Pasha, Mazahim Al-Bajahji, Fayiz al-Khoury al-Ghuneimi, and al-Taftazani.
- (106) Filastin, (English Edition), June 28, 1930, p. 2.
- (107) Darwazah, al-Qadiyah al-Filastiniyah, vol. I, p. 79.
- (108) ESCO, 1949, vol. II, p. 762.
- (109) Adel Ghneim, "Al Mu'tamar al-Islami al-'Am 1931", (The General Islamic Congress 1931), Shu'un Filastiniyah, September 1973, p. 119.
- (110) H.A.R. Gibb, "The Islamic Congress in Jerusalem in December 1931", in Survey of International Affairs 1934, by A.J. Toynbee, Oxford, 1935, p. 101.
- (111) For the complete list of the countries that participated in the Islamic Congress, see al-Sifri, Filastin Bayn al-Sahyuniyya wa al-Intidab, p. 178.
- (112) Neguib Sadaqa, Qadiyat Filadtin (The Palestine Case), Beriut, 1946, p.
- (113) Darwazah, Hawla al-Haraka, p. 79.
- (114) ESCO, p. 762.
- (115) Jbara, Al-Haj M. Amin Al-Husseini, p. 151; see also, Naji 'Alush, Al-Muqawamah al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin 1917-48 (The Arab Resistance in Palestine 1917-48), Beirtu, 1967, p. 81.
- (116) 'Alush, Al-Muqawamah, pp. 81-82.
- (117) Al-Kayyali, Tarikh Filastin al-Hadith, p. 165.
- (118) CZA, S/25, 5689.
- (119) Ohanna, The Internal Struggle, p. 82.
- (120) Darwazah, Hawla al-Haraka pp. 80-81.

(121) Mir'at al-Sharq, November 20, 1931, as quoted in Ohanna, The Internal Struggle, p. 83.

(122) Darwazah, Hawla al-Haraka, p. 77.

(123) Some of those who signed the Statement were: 'Abdul Rahman al-Taji al-Farouqi, Muhyi al-Din 'Abdul-Sharif, members of the SMC, Khalil al-Khalidi, President of the High Shari'i Court of Appeal in Palestine, 'Omar al-Bitar, member of the Arab Executive of the Seventh Palestine Congress, Ragheb al-Nashashibi, mayor of Jerusalem, Nasser al-Din Nasser al-Din, member of the Arab Executive, As'ad al-Shuqayri, President of the Islamic Shari'i Council, Sa'id al-Karmi, formerly a judge in Transjordan, 'Assem al-Sa'id, mayor of Jaffa, Suleiman 'Abdul Razeq Touqan, mayor of Nablus, Mohammed Mass'oud al-Jarrar of Jenin, 'Aref Abdul Rahman of Jenin, and Fahmi al-Husseini, mayor of Gaza, in addition to the mayors of Ramleh, Mustafa al-Kheiri, and of Acre, 'Aref al-Soufi.

(124) Statement to the Islamic World, MP, File 23.

(125) Gheneim, "Al-Mu'tamar al-Islami", p. 125.

(126) Ibid.

(127) CZA, S/25, 5689.

(128) Gibb, "The Islamic Congress", pp. 99-109.

(129) Lesch, Frustration, p. 286.

(130) Sadaqa, Qadiyat Filastin, p. 159.

(131) Darwazah, Hawla al-Haraka, p. 55.

(132) Many speeches were delivered by the representatives to the Congress, and here is a list of some participants: Kashif al-Ghata one of the Great Iraqi Shi'ite Mujtahideen, and Dr. 'Abdul Hamid Sa'id, president of the YMMAs in Egypt, Dia' al-Din al-Tabataba'i ex-Prime Minister of Iran, and the Indian Poet Mohammad Iqbal, the Tunisian leader 'Abdul Aziz al-Tha'alibi, 'Abdul Rahman 'Azzam, and the Prime Minister Sa'id al-Jazairi, Mustafa al-Ghalayini representing Beirut's men of letters, Riyadh Ishaq representing Russian Muslims, the Javanese 'Abdul Qahhar Mudakhar, and Bahjat al-Athari one of the leading Iraqi scientists and Sheikh nu'man al-'Athami President of the Science Center in Iraq; these names were published in the Balagh (Announcement) newspaper published in Egypt, December 12, 1931, as cited from 'Adel Ghneim, al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-'Am, p. 126.

(133) The list of names elected to the Bureau: Mohammed Amin al-Husseini as President, Dia' al-Din al-Tabataba'i, Mohammed 'Allubah Pasha, Egypt's Ex-Minister of Awqaf, Mohammed Iqbal, Sheikh Mohammed Ziyara representing the Imam Yehia Wikala of Yemen, Ra'uf Pasha delegate of Ceylon, Ibrahim Bey al-

Wa'th, Iraq's member of Parliament, Mohammad Izzat Darwazah and 'Abdul Qader Muzaffar as Secretary-Generals, Shukri al-Quwatli delegate of the National Bloc in Syria and Riyadh al-Solh of Lebanon acting both as observers with Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, President of the Arab Bank on Palestine as treasurer along with Sheikh Mahmoud al-Dajani as his assistant-manager, as cited from 'Adel Ghneim, al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-'Am, p. 127.

(134) Here is a list of the prominent leaders who represented mostly the Majlesiyoun: Mousa Kazim al-Husseini, Jamal al-Husseini, Amin al-Tammimi, Amin 'Abdul Hadi, 'Awni 'Abdul-Hadi, Izzat Darwazah, Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, Subhi al-Khadra, Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, 'Abdul Qader al-Muzaffar, Ajaj Nuweihed, Mohamoud al-Dajani, Ya'coub al-Ghossein, Tawfiq Hammad, 'Adel al-Shawwa, and Is'af al-Nashashibi who was outcasted by his family, albeit, he was considered as one of the prominent poets in Palestine. See Bayan al-Hout, for a complete list of the names of the 150 delegates to the Congress, pp. 871-872.

(135) Gibb, "The Islamic Congress", pp. 99-109.

(136) These members were: Haj Amin as President, Mohammed 'Allubah as treasurer, Dia' al-Din al-Tabataba'i as General-Secretary, Nahib al-'Athma as Assistant Secretray-Genral, along with 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Tah'alibi, Riyadh al-Solh and Sa'id Shamil as members. As quoted in Darwazah, Hawla al-Haraka, pp. 80-81.

(137) These matters were: 1) The status of the Congress; 2) Publicity and publications associated with the Congress; 3) Finance and Organization; 4) Moslem culture and the proposed University of the Sanctuary of al-Aqsa; 5) The Hijaz Railway; 6) The Holy Places at the Wailing Wall; 7) Islamic Information and Guidance; 8) Proposals laid before the Congress. As quoted in Gibb, "The Islamic Congress", p. 105.

(138) Ghneim, 'Al Mu'tamar al-Islami", p. 128.

(139) Lesch, Frustration, p. 286; see also Bayan al-Hout, al-Qiyadat wa al-Mou'assassat, pp. 246-247.

(140) Alush, Al-Muqawamah, p. 82.

(141) Jbara, Al-Haj M, Amin Al-Husseini, p. 158.

(142) Statement to the Islamic World issued by the Administrative Council of the "Congress of the Palestine Muslim Nation", signed by Sa'id al-Karmi, Ex-Transjordan Chief of Justice, December 13, 1931, MP, File 25.

(143) Ragheb al-Nashashibi to Nsouhi Beydoun, District comissioner of Jerusalem, February 1, 1932, MP, File 24.

(144) Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani to Shaykh Suleiman Taji al-Farouqi, January 10, 1932, MP, File 24.

(145) Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani to a group of lawyers who were: Fahmi al-Husseini, Hassan al-Budeiri, Ibrahim Kamal, 'Omar el-Salih and Shaykh Isma'il al-Khatib, January 10, 1932, MP, File 24.

(146) Ragheb al-Nashashibi to HC, Sir Arthur Wauchope, December 13, 1931, MP, File 24.

(147) Shafi 'Abdul Hadi to Haj Amin and the SMC, January 14, 1932, MP, File 24.