

As the date for the introduction of civil government drew nearer, Palestinian Arab protests, against the Sam Remo decisions and the appointment of Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner became more vehement. Faisal begged Allenby to urge the British Government 'to reverse a decision which vitally affects both interests and *amour propre* of Arab population'.¹¹

Opposition to Samuel's appointment was not confined to diplomatic notes: 'rumours of intended Arab raids on June 30th, with intention of impressing Sir Herbert Samuel. Further reports that attempts to assassinate him are intended'.¹² The Zionists gave information regarding an alleged impending outbreak at the end of Ramadan.¹³ When Samuel arrived on 30 June 1920, he found the Military Authorities nervous 'and had made the most formidable preparations against any possible eventuality'.¹⁴

Samuel's Two-pronged Policy

Prior to his arrival Samuel had decided to adopt a two-pronged policy devised to bring about Palestinian Arab acquiescence to Britain's JNH policy in Palestine. On the one hand he intended to bring home to the Arabs that the gradual establishment of the national home for the Jews in Palestine was a *chose jugée* as far as HM Government were concerned.¹⁵ On the other hand Samuel intended to win over the moderate Palestinians, i.e. vested interests, by a display of personal friendliness, political liberalism and impartiality within the framework of the Balfour Declaration.

Soon after his arrival, Samuel summoned the notables of Jerusalem and the neighbouring districts to a meeting on 7 July and those of Haifa on the following day. The Palestinian national movement, which had earlier declared that the Palestinians cannot recognise Herbert Samuel whom they regarded as a Zionist leader,¹⁶ called for a boycott:

for a few days, and in certain districts some of the leading men were wavering as to the course they would pursue, in the end with exceedingly few exceptions they all attended.¹⁷

The failure of the boycott exposed the timidity of the political notability in Palestine. At both of these assemblies, Samuel read a message from the King to the people of Palestine and delivered speeches promising freedom and equality for all religions, good administration and economic development, and declared an amnesty for all who were in prison on account of the Easter disturbances in Jerusalem. Further-

more, Samuel disclosed his plans for a 'first stage in the development of self-governing institutions'.

The 'Advisory Council' was a step calculated to permeate a feeling of participation in the government, and a channel of peaceful expression of feelings that would help avert sudden and violent political explosions. In his report to the Foreign Secretary, Samuel expressed his satisfaction at the favourable effect of his pronouncements throughout the country: '...the extremists will no doubt continue their criticisms'.¹⁸

In reply to Samuel's seemingly moderate announcements, *al-Karmal* pointed out the basic irreconcilability of the two injunctions of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate:

We do not understand how the making of a national home for strangers in our country can be without prejudice to our religious and civil rights. . .

'We strongly protest against separating Palestine from its mother, Syria, and making it a national home for Jews and we appeal to the British Government and to the liberal British Nation for Justice.'¹⁹

The Advisory Council foreshadowed in Samuel's inaugural address had its first meeting on 6 October 1920. It consisted of twenty members, with Samuel as Chairman, of whom half were British officials and half nominated Palestinians — seven Palestinian Arabs (four Muslims and three Christians) and three Jews.²⁰ The Arab members were pro-British notables with entrenched vested interests. Deedes described the first meeting of the Advisory Council as a great success in spite of the criticisms voiced by the non-official members. Furthermore, Deedes reported the presence of 'a feeling amongst a section (notably Moslem) of the population that members of the Council should be elected and not nominated'.²¹

Three weeks later the optimistic outlook of the Administration gave way to a more solemn mood. Deedes explained that the reasons for this change included a new initiative by the 'so-called Intelligentsia': 'In the East this Class is almost impossible to compete with', and 'the existence of such movements, as Arab Nationalism, Pan Islamism etc.',²² and the necessity of dealing with certain practical questions arising out of the Zionist programme.

The Third Palestine Arab Congress

Another factor was the prospect of a Third Palestine Conference. The