

No definite decision was reached on this cardinal issue. However, certain conclusions may be drawn from the respective backgrounds of the supporters and the opponents of the motion for non-payment. Jamal Husseini was mainly supported by 'Isa al-'Isa and 'Isa Bandak, both educated middle-class Christian journalists, while his opposite number was mainly supported by Amir Bey Tamini and Hafez Bey Tuqar, both of whom were rich effendis, the latter on friendly terms with the Zionists.

An authoritative explanation of the motives of those who opposed the idea of non-payment of taxes was provided by the Governor of Samaria:

Before the meeting (Congress) was held I had the Mayor's assurance that resolutions to refuse to pay taxes would not be adopted. He told me that Hajj Said Shawa was very anxious that the resolution to refuse to pay taxes should not be adopted because he was a large landowner and would be the first to suffer from whatever action the Government would take.¹³⁸

It should be further noted that the political leadership failed to use the powerful weapon of non-payment of taxes at a time when such a measure stood a good chance of being adhered to by large sections of the population. According to the Administration's reports Jamal Husseini's speech advocating non-payment of taxes has given satisfaction to the Arab population.¹³⁹ In Northern Palestine an attack on British gendarmes took place on 10 June. In the Southern District the inhabitants were discontented:

Their state of mind is such that anti-Government propaganda and in particular non-payment of tithes and taxes propaganda would be sympathetically received.¹⁴⁰

After electing a new Executive Committee the Congress adopted twenty-four resolutions, and charged the new Executive with carrying out the boycott of the Rutenberg Scheme and of Jewish goods and activities in general. Money was collected for the departing Delegation and for the London pro-Arab British Bureau.

No Change of Policy

Stimulated by news from England that a Cabinet Committee was sitting

to report on the Palestine question the new Arab Delegation left Palestine on 15 July. The Cabinet Committee, however, refused to grant an interview to the Delegation, which caused disgust and disappointment in Arab nationalist circles.¹⁴¹ Instead of recalling the Delegation and convening a Congress to study the attitude of the British Government and draw the logical conclusions as to the line of action the Arabs should adopt, the Executive Committee resolved to instruct the Delegation to remain in England and visit America for propaganda and fund-raising purposes.

An explanation of the attitude was provided by Gilbert Clayton, an experienced old hand in Arab and Palestinian affairs, who replaced Deedes as Civil Secretary in the spring of 1923. In a letter to Devonshire, Clayton reported the gist of a conversation he had with 'some of the more advanced members of the Moslem-Christian Association', who revealed to him the line of action the Association proposed to follow in the event of the return of the Delegation empty-handed. Far from contemplating a revolutionary course of action the Palestinian opposition to the Government intended to stick to constitutional and legal methods. They were particularly encouraged by the growing support for their cause in the House of Commons, and they seem confident enough that their influence over their followers is sufficiently strong to prevent any violent or unconstitutional action as long as they can show that their present policy is giving good results.¹⁴²

Clayton shrewdly recommended to the Colonial Secretary not to dash these hopes to the ground too suddenly, and that the Arabs

... should have some grounds for maintaining their present policy which at least has the merit of causing them to refrain from other and more undesirable methods, thus giving time for wise counsels to prevail.

Soon afterwards Clayton's hopes for 'wise counsels to prevail' were taking their speedy course towards realisation:

A party which first termed itself the Liberal Moderate Party, and subsequently the National Party, is in process of formation. Its avowed policy, although nationalistic, is opposed to that of the Moslem-Christian Association inasmuch as it proposes to attain its