

deseccration of the Holy places and the rebuilding of the Temple on its original site, then there could be little doubt that Arab hostility would be more unanimous, more fanatical, and more desperate than it had ever been.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, Jewish encroachments against the third most sacred shrine in Islam was bound to elicit solidarity and backing to the cause of the Palestinian Arabs from all Muslim quarters in the world, which the Palestinians hoped to use as a countervailing force *vis-à-vis* Jewish and Western backing enjoyed by their adversaries.

Nevertheless, the Arab religious and political notability continued to show restraint in order to avoid trouble with the Government. The Muslim Conference which was held on the first of November passed off quietly,<sup>38</sup> as did the Balfour Declaration's anniversary on the second of November.

A few days earlier Hajj Amin expressed his readiness to comply with the Government's request to restrain the Palestine Arab press, despite his belief that the alarm felt by all classes of Muslims at Jewish encroachments and propaganda in connection with the Wall was genuine.<sup>39</sup>

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. Accordingly, both the Supreme Muslim Council and the Chief Rabbinate were requested to produce documentary evidence of rulings given under the Turkish regime and any other evidence in regard to the bringing of various appurtenances of worship to the Wall. The Supreme Muslim Council

returned an early reply to this request and in part supported their statement of the case by documents deriving 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.<sup>40</sup>

Four months after the issue of the Government's White Paper which called -- to the Muslim's satisfaction -- for the maintenance of the *status quo*, Hajj Amin complained to Chancellor that

Jews were bringing benches and tables in increased numbers to the Wall, and driving nails into the Wall and hanging lamps on them.

This constituted an infringement of the status quo on which the White Paper was so explicit.<sup>41</sup>

Hajj Amin added that the situation 'was getting serious and might even become critical', since there was 'a widespread fear amongst the Muslim masses that the surrender of any right relating to the Wall might endanger their exclusive title to the Haram'. The Muslim authorities were thus motivated to lower one of the walls in the *Haram* area in order to check any Jewish attempt to contravene the *status quo*. The Muslim structural alterations in the neighbourhood of the Wall were suspended by the Hajj Amin, as an act of courtesy, at the request of the High Commissioner, while the matter was referred to the Law Offices of the British Crown.<sup>42</sup>

#### Anti-British Agitation Revived

Although the Mufti's relations with the British Authorities were friendly it was reported that in the course of his travels abroad to collect funds for the restoration of the *Haram* building he was agitating in favour of the Arab cause in Palestine. During May, Hajj Amin was

Reported to have said to King Fuad (of Egypt) that he would be happy to place his services at the King's disposal in Palestine for the purpose of his ambitions regarding the Khalifate, and that Palestine was the one place under British rule where Moslems could without difficulty carry out anti-British agitation.<sup>43</sup>

Anti-British propaganda, however, was not Hajj Amin's preoccupation, despite the fact that the task of agitating against the British was becoming increasingly easier in view of the economic situation and the gradual resurgence of Zionist immigration and land acquisition.

Reflecting the exasperated mood, the Secretaries of the Executive Committee submitted during June 1929, a strongly worded memorandum demanding Parliamentary Government, and repudiating the Government's policy of 'Legislation without Representation'. Moreover, the Arabs believed that the economic crisis was a natural result of the Government's policies:

The inhabitants of Palestine can no longer tolerate any injustices in addition to the injustices done to them up till now as an outcome of the present system of Administration. In fact this Administration